

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2014 Accomplishment Plan

Date: October 02, 2013

Program or Project Title: State Forest Acquisitions Phase 2 - RJ Dorer Memorial Hardwoods State Forest Land Asset Project

Funds Recommended: \$ 950,000

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Title: Lands Program Coordinator

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Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: Houston, and Winona.

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Southeast Forest

Activity Type:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Forest

Abstract:

Using the land asset plan for the RJ Dorer State Forest developed in 2013, acquire 236 acres of in-holdings within the state forest and critical access easements to state forest land to improve recreational opportunities, forest habitat and watershed protection.

Design and Scope of Work:

Minnesota's population has grown by over 1 million people, to 5.3 million, in the past 20 years and is projected to continue this growth rate for the next 20 years. Thousands of acres of habitat are being converted to intensive commercial, residential, and agricultural development each year. Due to the current recession, land prices have stabilized or declined and a short-term opportunity exists to purchase more value for our expenditures. This window of opportunity is quickly closing as the real estate market begins its recovery.

Lands acquired will become part of the Outdoor Recreation System (M.S. 86A.06) as State Forests. This project includes the initial land development of each parcel acquired including boundary surveys and signage, well and septic closure, building and dump disposal, and restoration of bare ground with native vegetation. This program is

supported by all traditional outdoor stakeholders. Specific organizations and letters of support are available upon request.

State Forests

This proposal will protect 236 acres of critical forestland habitat and provide access to over 3,000 acres of State Forest (SF) through fee and permanent access easement acquisition.

The Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwoods State Forest (RJ Dorer) in southeast Minnesota is a unique forest biome of rolling hills, goat prairie, and river bottom forest. This forest provides habitat to deer, turkey, rattlesnakes, trout, many migratory birds and flora and fauna of special concern. The state land within the RJ Dorer provides significant outdoor recreational opportunities. To provide public access to all of this forest, 170 private land parcels or easements are needed. To consolidate fragmented state forest, 120 additional private land parcels containing 4700 acres would need to be acquired. This proposal continues the work of acquiring key land parcels from willing sellers. The parcels to be acquired either provide access to large areas of currently inaccessible state land or consolidate fragmented forestland, mostly in connection with streams and rivers. These acquisitions will protect the declining forest base from fragmentation due to development and provide opportunities to further enhance habitat for fish, game and other wildlife.

Parcels were selected from a pool of desirable parcels identified in area land asset management plans. These pool parcels were selected from three classifications; those providing access to state land, those consolidating fragmented state land parcels, and those providing protection of a critical forest habitat. Parcels were further prioritized by the acres accessed, completion of consolidation and values protected. All known stakeholders are supportive of these acquisitions including county boards and forest user groups such as Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, and the Minnesota Deer Hunter's Association which have contributed funding for previous acquisitions. We coordinate efforts with these groups to develop complimentary proposals that prevent duplication and enhance outcomes.

Planning:

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H7 Keep water on the landscape
- LU6 Reduce Upland and gully erosion through soil conservation practices
- LU8 Protect large blocks of forest land
- LU10 Support and expand sustainable practices on working forested lands

Plans Addressed:

- A Vision for Wildlife and Its Use -- Goals and Outcomes 2006-2012
- Driftless Area Restoration Effort
- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Long Range Plan for the Wild Turkey
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- Minnesota Sustainability Framework
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare

LSOHC Statewide Priorities:

- Address Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife, wildlife species of greatest

conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions, as well as long-term or permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species

- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Attempts to ensure conservation benefits are broadly distributed across the LSOHC sections
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work; provides the most cost-effective use of financial resources; and where possible takes into consideration the value of local outreach, education, and community engagement to sustain project outcomes
- Leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities

LSOHC Southeast Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect forest habitat through acquisition in fee or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties
- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat
- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant goat prairies
- Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in area in recent decades

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Clean Water Fund

This project helps to meet the goals of the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund through protection of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources via the acquisition of state forest land. Specifically this project addresses land and water habitat fragmentation, degradation, loss and conversion goals of the fund's six year action plan.

This project helps to meet the goals of the Clean Water Fund through protection of watersheds in a managed forested state that retain and filter water to improve stream water quality.

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

As Phase II, this project continues and accelerates a renewed effort to protect critical habitat and watersheds in southeastern Minnesota made possible with Phase I funding from OHF in FY 2012. The goal of the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwoods State Forest, initiated over 50 years ago was to protect watersheds, habitat, goat prairies and forests on the highly erodible soils of southeastern Minnesota through the establishment and expansion of a state forest. Sporadic funding over the years has yielded 49,000 acres protected in state forest.

Sustainability and Maintenance:

Lands acquired in this project become part of the RJ Dorer Memorial Hardwoods State Forest. This project is very sustainable as management costs are reduced by the project through improved access to and consolidation of existing state forest lands. Funding for management comes from the Forest Management Investment Account of the Natural Resources Fund, funded by timber sales revenue from the existing portions of the state forest.

Government Approval:

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition? - **Yes**

Permanent Protection:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection? - **Yes**

Hunting and Fishing Plan:

Is this land open for hunting and fishing? - **Yes**

All land acquired under this project is designated as state forest which is open for hunting and fishing.

Permanent Protection:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection? - **Yes**

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Acquire 236 acres of land from willing sellers for access to and consolidation of state forest.	June 30, 2019

Outcomes

Programs in southeast forest region:

- High priority riparian lands, forestlands, and savannas are protected from parcelization and fragmentation *Fragmentation reduction is measured by the reduction in private/state boundary miles.*
- Landlocked public properties have increased access for land managers *Increased access will be measured by the acres of existing state land made accessible.*
- Forestlands and savannas are protected from parcelization and fragmentation and accessible for resource management purposes *Fragmentation reduction is measured by the reduction in private/state boundary miles.*
- Large corridors and complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat typical of the unglaciated region are restored and protected *Large corridors and complexes are measured by acres connected through acquisitions*
- Remnant goat prairies are perpetually protected *Acres of goat prairies acquired will be measured*
- Rivers, streams, and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat *Miles of additional riparian habitat corridors established will be measured.*

Budget Spreadsheet

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

Total Amount of Request: \$ 950000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$100,000	Gen Fund	\$100,000
Contracts	\$38,000	\$0		\$38,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$838,400	\$0		\$838,400
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$10,000	\$0		\$10,000
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$57,000	\$0		\$57,000
Direct Support Services	\$6,600	\$0		\$6,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$950,000	\$100,000		\$1,050,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
	0.25	4.00	\$0	\$100,000	Gen Fund	\$100,000
Total	0.25	4.00	\$0	\$100,000		\$100,000

Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	234	0	234
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	2	0	2
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	236	0	236

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$940,000	\$0	\$940,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$950,000	\$0	\$950,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	Forest Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	234	0	0	234
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	2	0	0	2
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	236	0	0	236

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	Forest Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$940,000	\$0	\$0	\$940,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$950,000	\$0	\$0	\$950,000

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

0 miles

Parcel List

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Houston

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Benson Creek	102040218	53	\$200,000	No	Full	Full
W Reno	102040217	2	\$10,000	No	Full	Full

Winona

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Minneiska	108090201	125	\$470,000	No	Full	Full
Pine Creek	10509234	10	\$60,000	No	Full	Full
Pine Creek 2	10509234	11	\$60,000	No	Full	Full
Preston Valley	10809225	5	\$30,000	No	Full	Full
Trout Valley	108090204	30	\$120,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.