

Request for Funding

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fiscal Year 2016 / ML 2015

Program or Project Title: Access to Isolated State Lands for Habitat Management

Funds Requested: \$2,021,000

Manager's Name: Susan E. Damon

Title: Land Acquisition and Legal Services Manager

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County Locations: Anoka, Becker, Blue Earth, Chippewa, Chisago, Clay, Fillmore, Houston, Isanti, Kittson, LQP, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, Olmsted, Pennington, Redwood, Sherburne, Wabasha, Wilkin, and Winona.

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Northern Forest
- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Southeast Forest
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity Type:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Abstract:

Strategic acquisition of land and easements to provide access to isolated state lands, including WMA and state forest lands, for habitat management.

Design and Scope of Work:

The Minnesota DNR manages over 5.5 million acres of state-owned land. While most of this land is managed in large contiguous blocks of state ownership, some DNR-administered land consists of smaller isolated parcels. These parcels may have limited or no access and, accordingly, are difficult to manage for fish, game and wildlife habitat. A recent DNR GIS analysis identified 1,005 parcels of DNR-administered state land, comprised of about 43,000 acres, which are completely surrounded by private and/or tribal land. These isolated state lands are located throughout the state in all five LSOHC Ecological Sections. The purpose of this project is to enhance the habitat values of some of these isolated state lands through strategic acquisitions of land or easements from willing adjacent landowners in order to provide access to the state lands for habitat management. Additional benefits of such acquisitions would be public access to the lands and enhanced connectivity.

This agency-wide strategic land asset management project will provide habitat management access to various types of management units and to lands outside of designated management units. Lands to which access will be acquired are comprised of various land types, but are primarily managed by the DNR Divisions of Fish and Wildlife

and Forestry. Project goals are to acquire approximately 350 acres in fee title and approximately 20 easements.

While specific parcels have not yet been selected for acquisition, a GIS and DNR land records system analysis has been conducted to determine which of the 1,005 isolated state land parcels would likely provide the greatest benefits from habitat management access. Prioritization of preliminary acquisition targets was accomplished primarily by applying the following criteria to the isolated state lands:

1. Contains native plant community (Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) data)
2. Contains rare species/features (MBS data)
3. Intersects with any component of the Minnesota Prairie Plan
4. Coincides with an “ecological patch” (a modeling analysis developed by DNR staff using satellite imagery, slope, soil, stream and land cover data to evaluate natural areas for habitat values)
5. Distance to road is 500-1500 meters
6. Distance to road is less than 500 meters

Isolated state parcels were awarded 1 point each for criteria 1-5 above and 2 points for criterion 6. Lands adjacent to those isolated state parcels with 6 points are considered highest priority for acquisition and those with 5 points are considered high priority. A land records system data analysis eliminated state parcels with existing forest road or easement access. Thirty-four isolated state land parcels (see parcel list), ranging from 23-327 acres each, with high habitat values but lacking access were identified as potential targets for acquisition of adjacent lands or easements. The project will focus on acquiring access to about 25 parcels. Size of the isolated state parcels will be considered with preference given to acquisition of lands or easements providing management access to state lands 40 acres or more in size. In addition, consideration will be given to the cost of access relative to the number of acres to be accessed through a particular acquisition. Final acquisition decisions will be based on divisional and regional priorities for habitat management access.

This project is part of the DNR’s strategic land asset management (SLAM) initiative, the primary purpose of which is to ensure that the conservation values of DNR-administered lands are optimized. The Commissioner of Natural Resources has identified SLAM as one of agency’s top five current priorities.

This project provides the opportunity to enhance habitat on and provide access to up to 2,500 already-protected acres of land at a relatively low cost.

There has not been direct stakeholder involvement in this specific proposal. However, external partners may be asked to participate in the acquisition process where special negotiations are necessary to acquire a key easement or fee parcel.

The DNR has submitted a 2015 proposal entitled “Enhanced Access to Isolated State Lands” to the LCCMR requesting \$1,017,396 in funding. This proposal has been selected by the LCCMR for a presentation on June 25, 2014 for further consideration. The LCCMR proposal compliments this proposal, as it includes funding for a detailed analysis and prioritization of all 1,005 isolated state land parcels. That analysis would be more rigorous than the GIS/land records system analysis used to identify preliminary acquisition targets for this project and would include identification of willing sellers and evaluation of parcels through field review. Findings from that analysis could inform and/or facilitate acquisitions funded through this proposal. The LCCMR proposal also includes land and easement acquisition funding and funding to develop restoration/enhancement or management plans for lands or easements acquired.

How the request addresses MN habitats:

Isolated state parcels to which habitat management access will be acquired through project funds will be selected based in part on the existence of native plant communities and rare species/natural features within the parcels, as determined through the Minnesota Biological Survey.

Please explain the nature of urgency:

Based on recent funding cycles, the amount of money being appropriated to the DNR for land acquisition is shrinking. Accordingly, it is imperative that the DNR take steps to better utilize lands it already administers.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation

Plans Addressed:

- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare

Please describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

Planning for this project was based primarily on a GIS analysis using several data layers based on Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) native plant community and rare species/features mapping, the Minnesota Prairie Plan and ecological patch data in order to identify isolated state lands with high habitat value.

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

- Restore or enhance habitat on public lands

LSOHC Forest Prairie Transition Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

LSOHC Northern Forest Section Priorities:

- Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement

LSOHC Metro Urban Section Priorities:

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

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

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

The DNR is currently undertaking a strategic land asset management (SLAM) initiative that seeks to improve its land asset portfolio through acquisitions, sales and exchanges. The SLAM initiative also includes continuous review of existing land holdings and proposed acquisitions to optimize the conservation values over time. Obtaining habitat management access to landlocked state parcels with high habitat values is one of the ways the DNR is seeking to optimize the conservation values of its land holdings. This proposal accelerates that effort.

Non-OHF Money Spent in the Past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
None	None	None

Sustainability and Maintenance:

Management of lands or easements acquired through this funding would be performed by the DNR division that currently manages the isolated state lands to which access will be acquired. If needed, the DNR will seek funding for development of the lands or easements.

Maintain Project Outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Ongoing	Various	A variety of funds that support management of state lands would be used to manage acquired lands or easements into the future.	If work above and beyond traditional management is needed, additional funds would be sought.	

Applicable Criteria:

*If funded, this proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056? - **Yes***

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***

Current Hunting and Fishing Plan:

*Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing? - **No***

Future Hunting and Fishing Plan:

*Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion? - **Yes***

Lands that are acquired in fee title in order to access state lands that are currently landlocked will be open for hunting and fishing.

Public Use:

*Will the eased land be open for public use? - **Yes***

Expected public use of easements would be for access to state lands that are currently landlocked.

Permanent Protection:

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

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Acquire approximately 350 acres of land in fee title	June 2018
Acquire approximately 20 easements	June 2018

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Landlocked public properties have increased access for land managers *This outcome will be measured the number of such properties that can be accessed because of acquisitions funded through this proposal.*

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Landlocked public properties have habitat management access.

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- Landlocked public properties have habitat management access.

Programs in southeast forest region:

- Landlocked public properties have increased access for land managers *This outcome will be measured the number of such properties that can be accessed because of acquisitions funded through this proposal.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Improved access to public lands *This outcome will be measured the number of public lands that are currently landlocked that can be accessed because of acquisitions funded through this proposal.*

Relationship to Other Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$2,021,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,550,000	\$0		\$1,550,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$200,000	\$0		\$200,000
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$250,000	\$0		\$250,000
Direct Support Services	\$21,000	\$0		\$21,000
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	\$2,021,000	\$0	-	\$2,021,000

Amount of Request: \$2,021,000

Amount of Leverage: \$0

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.00%

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	117	117	116	350
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	7	7	6	20
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	124	124	122	370

Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	0

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	\$607,000	\$607,000	\$607,000	\$1,821,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$66,700	\$66,700	\$66,600	\$200,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$673,700	\$673,700	\$673,600	\$2,021,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	50	150	150	0	350
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	4	5	5	5	1	20
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	55	155	155	1	370

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$292,400	\$764,300	\$764,300	\$0	\$1,821,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$10,000	\$200,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$40,000	\$342,400	\$814,300	\$814,300	\$10,000	\$2,021,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$5,188	\$5,188	\$5,233
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$9,529	\$9,529	\$11,100
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$5,848	\$5,095	\$5,095	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

Anoka

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Miscellaneous	03323216	41	\$0	No		

Becker

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Miscellaneous	14236226	40	\$0	No		

Blue Earth

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
MINNESOTA RIVER	10929225	51	\$0	No		

Chippewa

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
BERGO	11841225	40	\$0	No		
MINNESOTA RIVER	11639220	23	\$0	No		

Chisago

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
CHENGWATANA	03720231	37	\$0	No		

Clay

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
HAY CREEK	13845226	42	\$0	No		

Fillmore

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
R J D Memorial Hardwood	10411212	153	\$0	No		
R J D MEMORIAL HARDWOOD	10308236	39	\$0	No		

Houston

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Miscellaneous	10406216	40	\$0	No		
R J D Memorial Hardwood	10307235	40	\$0	No		
R J D MEMORIAL HARDWOOD	10207213	39	\$0	No		

Isanti

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Miscellaneous	03425216	119	\$0	No		

Kittson

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
unnamed	16246234	41	\$0	No		

LQP

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
FLORIDA CREEK	11645205	81	\$0	No		

Mahnomon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Miscellaneous	14542225	40	\$0	No		
White Earth	14340215	58	\$0	No		

Marshall

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Deerwood WMA	15846202	41	\$0	No		
Moylan WMA	15540211	80	\$0	No		
unnamed	15543206	98	\$0	No		

Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Faith WMA	14443225	40	\$0	No		
ROCKWELL	14345203	162	\$0	No		
VANGSNESS	14344203	327	\$0	No		

Olmsted

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
R J D MEMORIAL HARDWOOD	10513213	117	\$0	No		

Pennington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Miscellaneous	15344217	81	\$0	No		

Redwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
MINNESOTA RIVER	11234209	57	\$0	No		

Sherburne

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
MISSISSIPPI	03226203	28	\$0	No		
MISSISSIPPI	03226204	34	\$0	No		

Wabasha

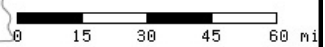
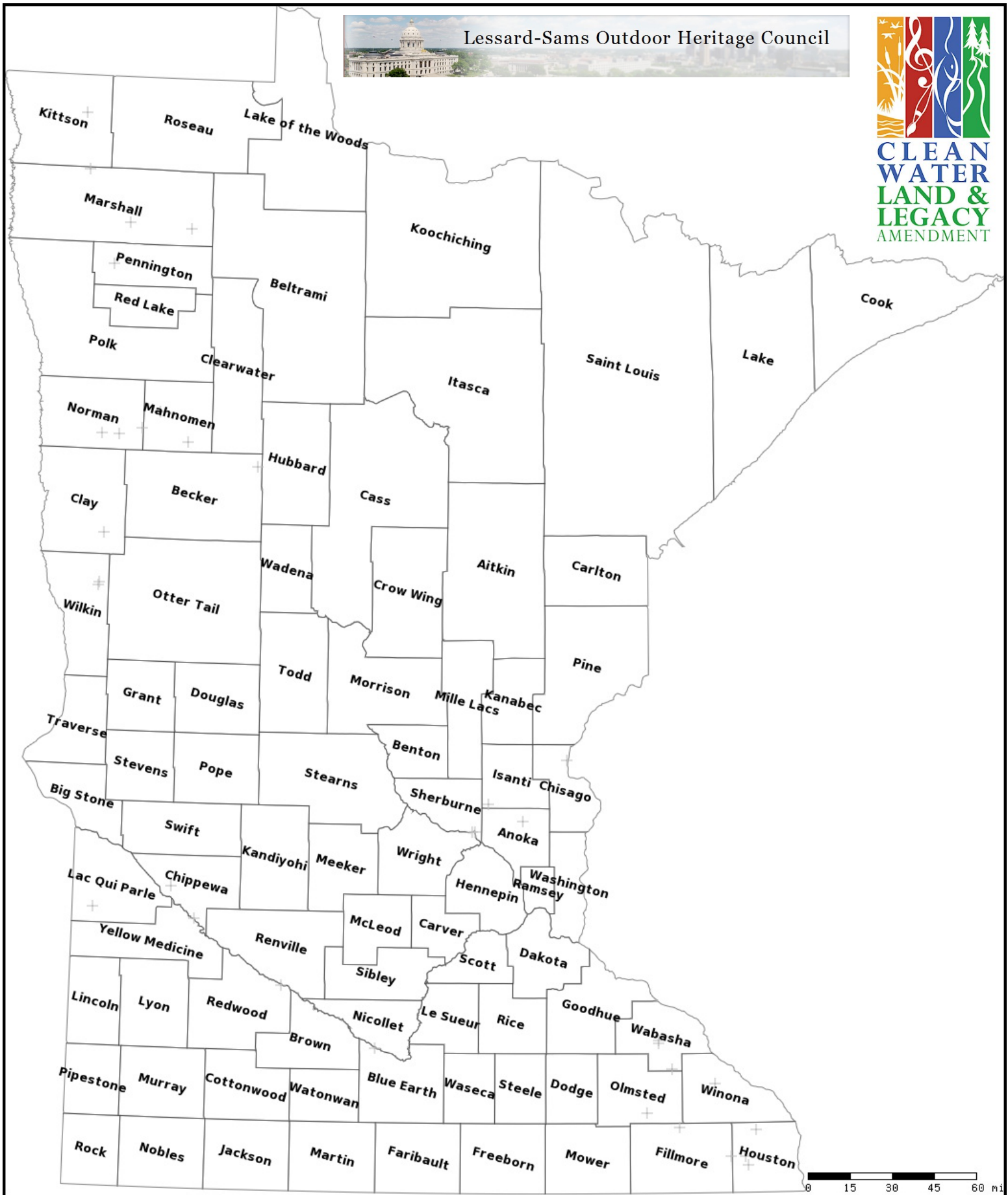
Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
R J D Memorial Hardwood	10912210	40	\$0	No		
R J D MEMORIAL HARDWOOD	10912215	277	\$0	No		
WHITEWATER	10811233	120	\$0	No		

Wilkin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Rothsay WMA	13545221	40	\$0	No		
Rothsay WMA	13545228	40	\$0	No		

Winona

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
R J D Memorial Hardwood	10709225	39	\$0	No		



Access to Isolated State Lands for Habitat Management

- Legend**
- Protect in Easement
 - ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
 - Protect in Fee w/o PILT
 - ★ Restore
 - ✕ Enhance
 - ✚ Other

Access to Isolated State Lands for Habitat Management

