

Request for Funding

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

Program or Project Title: Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase 7

Funds Requested: \$18,409,000

Manager's Name: Joe Pavelko

Title: MN Director of Conservation Programs

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Organization Web Site: www.pheasantsforever.org

County Locations: Blue Earth, Carver, Cottonwood, Fillmore, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Pennington, Redwood, Stearns, and Swift.

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity Type:

- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Abstract:

This proposal accelerates the protection of 2,250 acres of prairie grassland, wetland, and other wildlife habitat as State Wildlife Management Areas open to public hunting.

Design and Scope of Work:

The pressures from development, industry, and agriculture continue to mount on wildlife habitat within the farmland regions of Minnesota. In fact, despite our collective investments in conservation, it is believed that many of the agricultural counties in Minnesota are continuing to experience a net loss of wildlife habitat. This unfortunate reality is currently being exacerbated by conversion of lands expiring out of CRP. Now, more than ever, is the time to accelerate our investments in permanently protected high quality public habitat complexes that will protect, maintain, and increase Minnesota's wildlife populations. In addition, being able to provide public areas for Minnesotans to hunt, trap, fish and otherwise recreate in the outdoors are urgent needs and is fundamental to ensure Minnesota's outdoor heritage and appreciation of the outdoors is passed on to future generations.

To help slow and reverse the loss of habitat and declining wildlife populations, Pheasants Forever (PF) and our partners will protect (fee acquisition from willing sellers) 2,250 acres of high priority grassland (native prairie if available), wetland, and wildlife habitat as state Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) throughout the pheasant range of Minnesota. Striving to build landscape level habitat complexes that will protect and sustain wildlife populations, many of the potential projects are additions to existing WMAs or WPAs, many of which were originally acquired in partnership with MNDNR, local PF chapters, and conservation partners.

Projects were developed and selected in conjunction with local and regional DNR staff. All projects will meet standards and requirements for inclusion into the WMA system and DNR Commissioner approval will be received for any project funded under this proposal. In addition to meeting the minimum WMA standards, additional criteria were used to develop the potential project list including:

Does the parcel contain habitat restoration potential that will result in an increase in wildlife populations?

Does the parcel build upon existing investments in public and private land habitat (landscape scale significance)?

Does the parcel contain significant natural communities or will it protect or buffer significant natural communities?

Does the parcel have the potential and focus for habitat protection and restoration in the future?

Does the parcel provide multiple benefits (recreation, access, water control, water quality, lakeshore, local community support etc.)?

All acquired lands will meet the minimum initial development standards for WMAs. In addition, providing high quality habitat and keeping future management concerns in mind, all acquisitions will be restored and/or enhanced to as high quality as practicable, with the belief that quality and comprehensive restorations utilizing native species result in lower management costs. Acquired croplands will be permanently retired and restored to diverse grasslands and wetlands to the fullest extent. Enhancement work may include undesirable woody vegetation removal, water control structure installation, inter-seeding to increase diversity and structure, managed grazing, invasive species control, or any other activity that improves the diversity and health of the prairie-wetland habitat complex.

Pheasants Forever's network of 76 Minnesota chapters and 26,000 members have been actively involved in protecting and restoring lands in partnership with the Minnesota DNR for 27 years and will continue to be a priority. WMA's are an integral component to the comprehensive conservation strategy within the prairie region of the state. The WMAs within this proposal will not only protect, increase, and sustain wildlife habitat and populations; they will provide access and recreational opportunities, including hunting, to ALL Minnesotans, so fundamentally important to our outdoor heritage.

How the request addresses MN habitats:

Grant funding will primarily focus on prairie wetland and grassland habitats previously converted for row crop agriculture. The well documented and number one threat to all of Minnesota's wildlife species is habitat loss and conversion. This project addresses this issue by focusing on the permanent protection (fee-title acquisition) AND restoration of those identified priority tracts that will provide multiple benefits to a myriad of wildlife, both game and non-game species. The end result of this project will be a net-increase of permanently protected wildlife habitat open for public recreation.

Please explain the nature of urgency:

The gradual ineffectiveness of temporary conservation measures in conjunction with a strong agricultural economy has resulted in unprecedented habitat losses. Every dollar invested in the permanent protection of high quality habitat now, will provide benefits to wildlife, water, and the public, that last forever.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Plans Addressed:

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years

Please describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

These potential additions to the WMA system are developed, reviewed, and selected in conjunction with the MNDNR area managers and acquisition staff. Partners employ numerous planning and evaluation tools including the SWAAT scoring tool and USFWS HAPET modeling (thunderstorm maps) to identify quality habitat tracts that also meet recreational requirements.

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

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 Metro Urban Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

Land acquisition and restoration have not kept pace with habitat restoration needs or the backlog of willing sellers within the pheasant range. Opportunity is not the limiting factor in implementing the pheasant plan. Available funding is the limiting factor. With the mass amounts of CRP acres expiring in the near future, our conservation efforts must be accelerated. Before the passage of the OHF, PF would help acquire approximately 1,000 acres of land yearly that had been donated to a public agency. This grant significantly accelerates our ability to acquire priority parcels and more than doubles our historic yearly accomplishments. If funded, this proposal will accelerate the protection and restoration of Minnesota’s valuable wetland and grassland habitats and provide additional public hunting and fishing areas.

Non-OHF Money Spent in the Past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
Annual	PF	150,000

Sustainability and Maintenance:

All lands will be enrolled into the state Wildlife Management Area system and will be managed in perpetuity by the Minnesota DNR. All acquired lands will meet the minimum initial development standards for WMAs. In addition, providing high quality habitat and keeping future management concerns in mind, all acquisitions will be restored and/or enhanced to as high quality as practicable, with the belief that quality and comprehensive restorations utilizing native species result in lower management costs. In addition, our local Pheasants Forever chapter members and volunteers maintain a high interest in seeing the habitat and productivity of acquired parcels are at high-quality levels. PF and partners including the DNR and USFWS will develop an ecological restoration and management plan for each parcel. Grant and partner dollars will be used to for the initial site development and restoration/enhancement work.

Maintain Project Outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Post Transfer to MNDNR	MN DNR - Game and Fish Funds	Monitoring	Maintenance	Mangement

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? - **No**

Current DNR language requires acquisition partners to notify local government of acquisition. However, where local government approval is already required, or if DNR guidance was to change, we will adhere to all requirements and seek approval.

Permanent Protection:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection? - **No**

Because we are working within priority habitat areas, it is possible that parcels could have perpetual easements on a portion of them. If a parcel has a perpetual easement and is deemed a high priority by the partners, we will follow guidance established by the Outdoor Heritage Fund to proceed, or use non-state funding to acquire the protected portion of the property.

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**

No Variation from State of Minnesota regulations.

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Identify priority acquisitions	07/01/2015
Contract appraisals ordered	09/01/2015
Purchase agreements	02/01/2016
Re-evaluate tract priority	02/14/2016
Contract appraisals ordered	04/01/2016
Purchase agreements	07/01/2016
Close on tracts	01/01/2017
Restorations completed	06/30/2018

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need *Number of acres of wetlands and uplands protected and restored.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- Protected habitats will hold wetlands and shallow lakes open to public recreation and hunting *Number and acres of wetlands protected and restored. Number of acquisitions that provide additional access to existing public lands.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *Number of new parcels protected. Number of parcels added to existing habitat complexes and resulting percent increase in permanently protected acres of habitat complex.*

Relationship to Other Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$18,409,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$150,000	\$0		\$150,000
Contracts	\$800,000	\$90,000	Federal, Private, PF	\$890,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$16,875,000	\$650,000	Federal, Private, PF	\$17,525,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
Professional Services	\$140,000	\$0		\$140,000
Direct Support Services	\$41,000	\$0		\$41,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$70,000	\$0		\$70,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$328,000	\$0		\$328,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$18,409,000	\$740,000	-	\$19,149,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
PF Director of Conservation	0.13	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
PF Regional Field Representatives	0.13	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
PF Grants Staff	0.33	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Total	0.59	9.00	\$150,000	\$0	-	\$150,000

Amount of Request: \$18,409,000

Amount of Leverage: \$740,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 4.02%

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	450	1,800	0	0	2,250
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	450	1,800	0	0	2,250

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

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	40
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	40

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	\$3,682,000	\$14,727,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,409,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$3,682,000	\$14,727,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,409,000

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	80	320	0	1,850	0	2,250
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	80	320	0	1,850	0	2,250

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	\$736,000	\$2,394,000	\$0	\$15,279,000	\$0	\$18,409,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$736,000	\$2,394,000	\$0	\$15,279,000	\$0	\$18,409,000

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	\$8,182	\$8,182	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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	\$9,200	\$7,481	\$0	\$8,259	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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

Blue Earth

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Maple River WMA Addition	106270222	108	\$700,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Carver

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Paterson Lake WMA	116250220	420	\$4,200,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Tiger Marsh WMA Addition Tr. 4	115260209	40	\$400,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Cottonwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Farhagen WMA Addition Tr. 2	105360214	120	\$900,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Fillmore

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Beaver Creek WMA Addition	101130228	320	\$2,200,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Jackson

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Caraway WMA Addition	104360225	99	\$800,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Petersburg WMA	101340226	96	\$575,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Sioux Valley WMA Addition	101370228	246	\$2,000,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Teal Lake WMA Addition	104360230	185	\$1,665,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Follies WMA Addition	122340201	115	\$675,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Rolling Hills WMA Addition Tr. 2	111400205	120	\$1,100,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Sodus WMA Addition Tr. 2	110420236	80	\$640,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Martin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Gruven WMA Addition Tr. 2	103300235	195	\$1,250,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

McLeod

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Ras Lynn WMA Addition Tr. 2	115300205	18	\$200,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Pennington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pembina WMA Addition	153450218	320	\$1,500,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Redwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lamberton WMA Addition	109360217	160	\$800,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Stearns

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
MeI Roehrl WMA Addition Tr. 3	124350204	160	\$600,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
MeI Roehrl WMA Addition Tr. 4	124350205	120	\$500,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Swift

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Camp Kerk WMA Addition	122370218	24	\$40,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

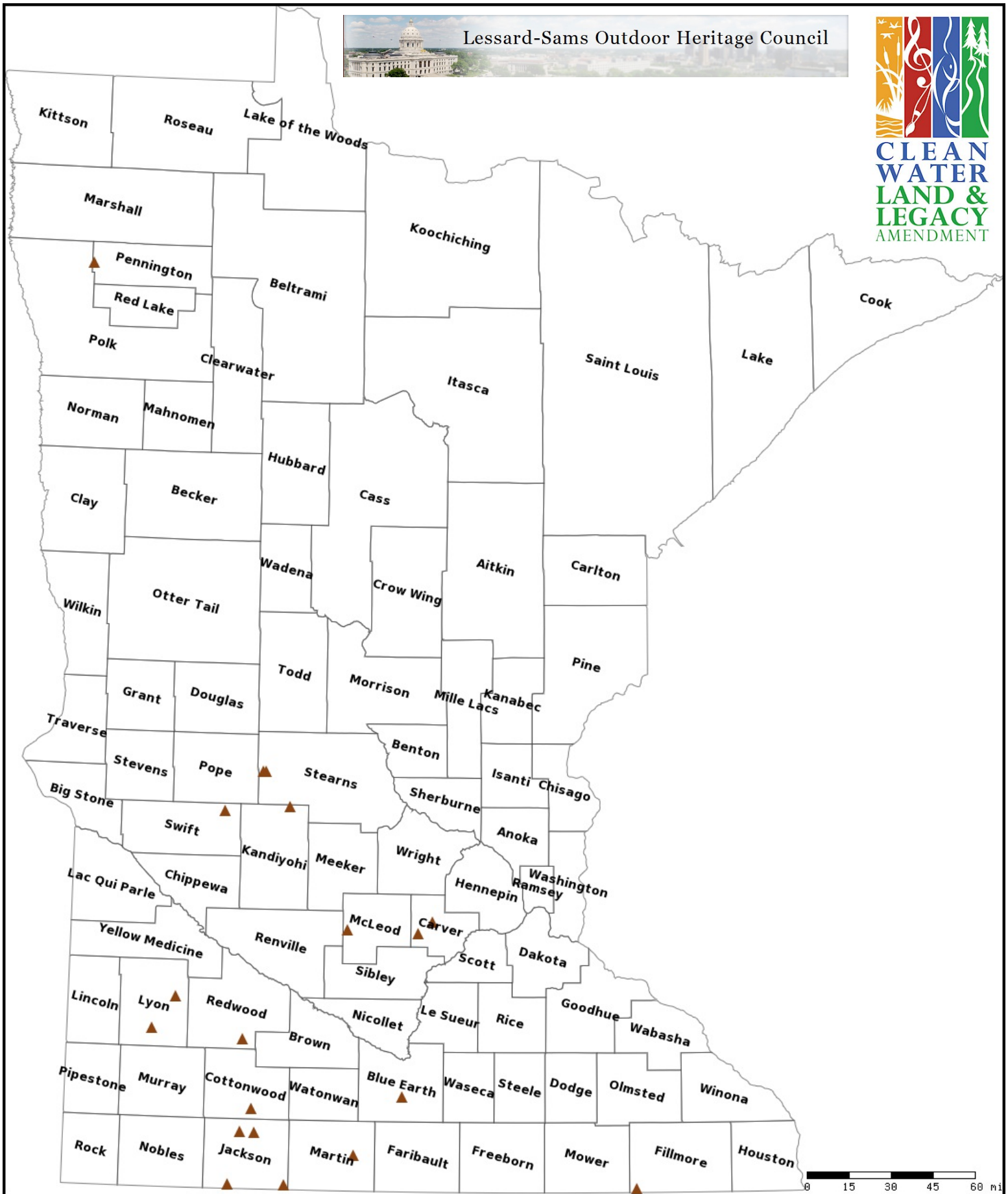
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.



**CLEAN
WATER
LAND &
LEGACY**
AMENDMENT



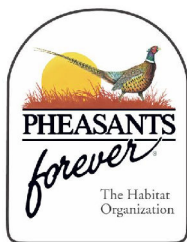
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Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase 7

Legend

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

Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase 7



2,250 Acres Acquired AND Restored

