

Request for Funding

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

Program or Project Title: Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex Phase V

Funds Requested: \$2,000,000

Manager's Name: Danielle Salus

Title: Project Manager

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County Locations: Le Sueur, and Rice.

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Prairie

Activity Type:

- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Abstract:

Protect approximately 400 acres in and near the Cannon River Watershed, including wetlands, prairies, Big Woods forest, and river and shallow lake shoreline to reverse habitat loss, improve watershed function and provide access.

Design and Scope of Work:

The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex Phase V effort will prevent degradation and loss of quality and diversity of habitat in the prairie section of the State as well as degradation of water quality in the Cannon River watershed. In addition, it will increase the amount of available public lands for hunting and angling opportunities, especially within an easy drive for over half of the state's population.

Located south of the Twin Cities metro in an area that has seen development pressure due to the I-35 corridor and the Cannon Lakes, much of this area has already suffered fragmentation and habitat loss. Historically inhabited by Big Woods, the landscape is now dominated by agricultural fields and, to a lesser extent, development. Agricultural practices and shoreline development are also the major contributors to the impaired status of stretches of the Cannon River and its associated lakes and streams.

This conservation effort is part of a multi-year effort that includes acquisition, protection, and restoration of core parcels of land that will contribute to a large complex of restored prairies, grasslands, wetlands, lakeshore, and river shoreline.

The DNR's Southern Region Conservation Focus Area assessment tool ranked the Cannon River area as having the highest level of inter-divisional conservation priority when examined at the landscape level. Acquisitions are

targeted toward existing large wetland/upland complexes, rare communities (Big Woods forest, tamarack swamp), shallow lakes, river shoreline, and lands adjacent to existing protected areas. Restoration work will be focused on the degraded portions of the lands acquired (approximately 65 acres) and will include restoration of agricultural fields near wetlands, lakes, rivers and existing protected areas to native habitat. There is an effort underway which involves several partners (including The Cannon River Watershed Partnership and MN DNR) to procure funding for landscape planning in the Cannon River watershed. This effort may be able to help the Partnership further identify priority conservation opportunities and protection strategies for high biodiversity areas.

Protection and restoration of these significant parcels will provide critical habitat for game species, including migratory waterfowl (mallards, canvasback, wood ducks, hooded mergansers, pintails, and lesser scaup), upland birds (dove, turkey, pheasant, and woodcock), deer, and fish (northern pike, black crappies, bluegills, and walleye). Protection will also provide access for a diversity of recreational experiences including duck, pheasant, turkey and deer hunting as well as river, stream, and lake fishing. A host of non-game wildlife, including Species in Greatest Conservation Need, likely to benefit from this protection and restoration work includes Bald Eagle, Bell's Vireo, Cerulean Warbler, Loggerhead Shrike, Sandhill Crane, Red-headed Woodpecker, Greater Yellowlegs, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Short billed Dowitcher, Blanding's Turtle, Mudpuppies, and the Giant Floater, a species of freshwater mussel.

Protecting and restoring vegetative cover within basins and the riparian areas of the lakes, rivers and streams in this focus area will also help protect water quality by reducing surface water runoff and by providing ecological services such as infiltration through natural buffers to our waterways. All wildlife-and humans -will benefit from improved water quality.

Work will be completed in phases depending on funding availability and landowner willingness to sell. Properties targeted for acquisition and restoration as part of this Phase V request to LSOHC (FY16) include the following:

Dora Lake WMA tracts 2 & 5 (Le Sueur County)

These lands build on the 510-acre Dora Lake WMA property that was created with FY 12 Outdoor Heritage Funds. This large upland-wetland complex with a mosaic of native plant types contains Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS)-identified native habitat including a portion of remnant Big Woods, some southern-most occurrence of tamarack swamp in the state, and over 2 miles of naturally flowing Cannon River, directly upstream from a concentration of rare freshwater mussels.

Boyd Sartell WMA – tract 3 (Rice County)

This tract contains diverse marsh habitats and uplands consisting of oak islands and grassy knolls, Big Woods and tamarack forests, and over ¼ mile of the headwaters of the Cannon River. It will add additional habitat for a variety of wildlife and provide greater connectivity to the tract 5 parcel that this program acquired with OHF funding last fall.

Le Tamaracque WMA (addition) – tract 28 (Rice County)

These 200 acres of rolling terrain with grasslands, forest and wetlands riparian to the Cannon River are located within a 1000-acre complex of MCBS identified habitat with high biodiversity significance. Rare communities include Big Woods, some of the southern-most occurrence of Tamarack Swamp in the state, and mixed emergent marsh and prairie.

Caron Lake WMA (new) – tracts 4,5,6,7 and 8 (Rice County)

These 260 acres of croplands, grasslands, forest and wetlands include lands riparian to the shallow Caron Lake and an unditched tributary, Devil's Creek, which is rare in this area of the state. The property is adjacent to the Caron Lake Aquatic Management Area, and contains approximately ½ mile frontage on Caron Lake.

Kelley Dudley WMA/AMA (new)

This land encompasses approximately 240 acres between French Lake and Kelley Dudley Lake in Rice County, with 1400 feet of shoreline along Kelley-Dudley Lake. Kelley-Dudley Lake is a deep and clear lake, with a relatively undisturbed shoreline and forested riparian zone. Wild rice in the lake provides important feeding ground for waterfowl. Acquisition of this parcel presents an opportunity to protect a pristine lake and quality fishery.

The Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex effort is supported by the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, the Dark House Anglers Southern Chapter, the Izaak Walton League Owatonna Chapter, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association South Central Prairieland Bucks Chapter (Le Sueur, Rice, Waseca, and Steele Counties), Minnesota Waterfowl Association – Scott-Le Sueur Chapter, Montgomery Sportsmen's Club, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Pheasants Forever – Le Sueur County Chapter, the Tri-Lake Sports Club, Waterville

Sportsman's Club, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

How the request addresses MN habitats:

All of the areas targeted by the Trust for Public Land have been identified and prioritized through state, regional and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity and connectivity. The Cannon River watershed includes Big Woods, oak savannas, wetlands and sensitive shorelines, which provide habitat for a variety of Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

Please explain the nature of urgency:

Sensitive land in the Cannon River Watershed continues to be converted to rural residential development and agricultural production. Protection and proper stewardship of high natural resource land is important for maintaining what is left of the region's unimpaired waters. Protecting this land is critical before it becomes degraded.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes

Plans Addressed:

- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Please describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

The project uses the Minnesota Biological Survey, and GIS mapping to identify priority lands for protection and restoration. We are optimistic that if watershed wide landscape planning efforts are successful, we will be able to dialogue with partner organizations and further identify lands in need of protection.

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

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

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

LSOHC funding would provide capital for the land acquisition and funding for the restoration work included in this proposal. These costs are not included in the Trust for Public Land's organizational budget. Additionally, TPL staff time, legal costs and costs for appraisals, title, environmental investigation, and survey work is not included in this request. Acquisition associated costs incurred by the DNR as part of accepting ownership of these lands are not included in the request. The LSOHC funding will not substitute for any traditional funding sources.

Non-OHF Money Spent in the Past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2009	ENTRF	350,000
2010	ENTRF	200,000
2010	RIM	105,000
2011	RIM	200,000
2012	N/A	N/A

Sustainability and Maintenance:

Once the Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex lands have been acquired and conveyed to the DNR to be managed as a WMA and/or AMA, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. Estimated costs for the restoration work are included in this proposal. The Trust for Public Land will work with DNR to complete a restoration plan and implementation of that plan will be completed in the following years. The property will be managed for the long term as a WMA and/or AMA and will be maintained by the Minnesota DNR according to their WMA and AMA guidelines.

Maintain Project Outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2016	OHF and DNR Fish and Wildlife	Post property as DNR WMA or AMA	Develop restoration/management plan for property	
2017	DNR Fish and Wildlife	Develop restoration/management plan for property	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	
2018	DNR Fish and Wildlife	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation		

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

Notification will be made unless otherwise required

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**

N/A

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Landowner negotiations, agreements and due diligence	June 30, 2017
Land acquired	June 30, 2017
Initial site development/restoration	Fall 2018

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *Core parcels are identified in partnership with the DNR as well as the partners of the Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex. Protected lands will be measured in acres.*

Relationship to Other Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

This effort is seeking the significant portion of funding for acquisition and restoration work from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Past matching funds have been provided from the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund as part of the Statewide Habitat Corridors Partnership. The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex partners will continue to try to seek additional restoration funds from the Clean Water Fund.

Budget Spreadsheet

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

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	\$90,000	\$10,000		\$100,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,900,000	\$200,000		\$2,100,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$10,000	\$0		\$10,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$2,000,000	\$210,000	-	\$2,210,000

Amount of Request: \$2,000,000

Amount of Leverage: \$210,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 10.50%

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	136	105	77	82	400
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	136	105	77	82	400

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	\$698,000	\$567,000	\$313,500	\$421,500	\$2,000,000
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	\$698,000	\$567,000	\$313,500	\$421,500	\$2,000,000

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	0	0	400	0	400
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	0	0	0	400	0	400

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	\$0	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000
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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000

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	\$5,132	\$5,400	\$4,071	\$5,140
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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$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

1

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Le Sueur

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Dora Lake WMA (tract 2)	11023211	80	\$330,000	No	Full	Full
Dora Lake WMA (tract 5)	11023210	125	\$361,000	No	Full	Full

Rice

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Boyd Sartell WMA (tract 3)	11022210	75	\$255,000	No	Full	Full
Caron Lake WMA (tracts 4-8)	11022232	586	\$1,550,000	No	Full	Full
Kelley Dudley WMA/AMA	11021207	240	\$750,000	No	Full	Full
Le Tamaracque WMA (tract 28)	11022218	200	\$750,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

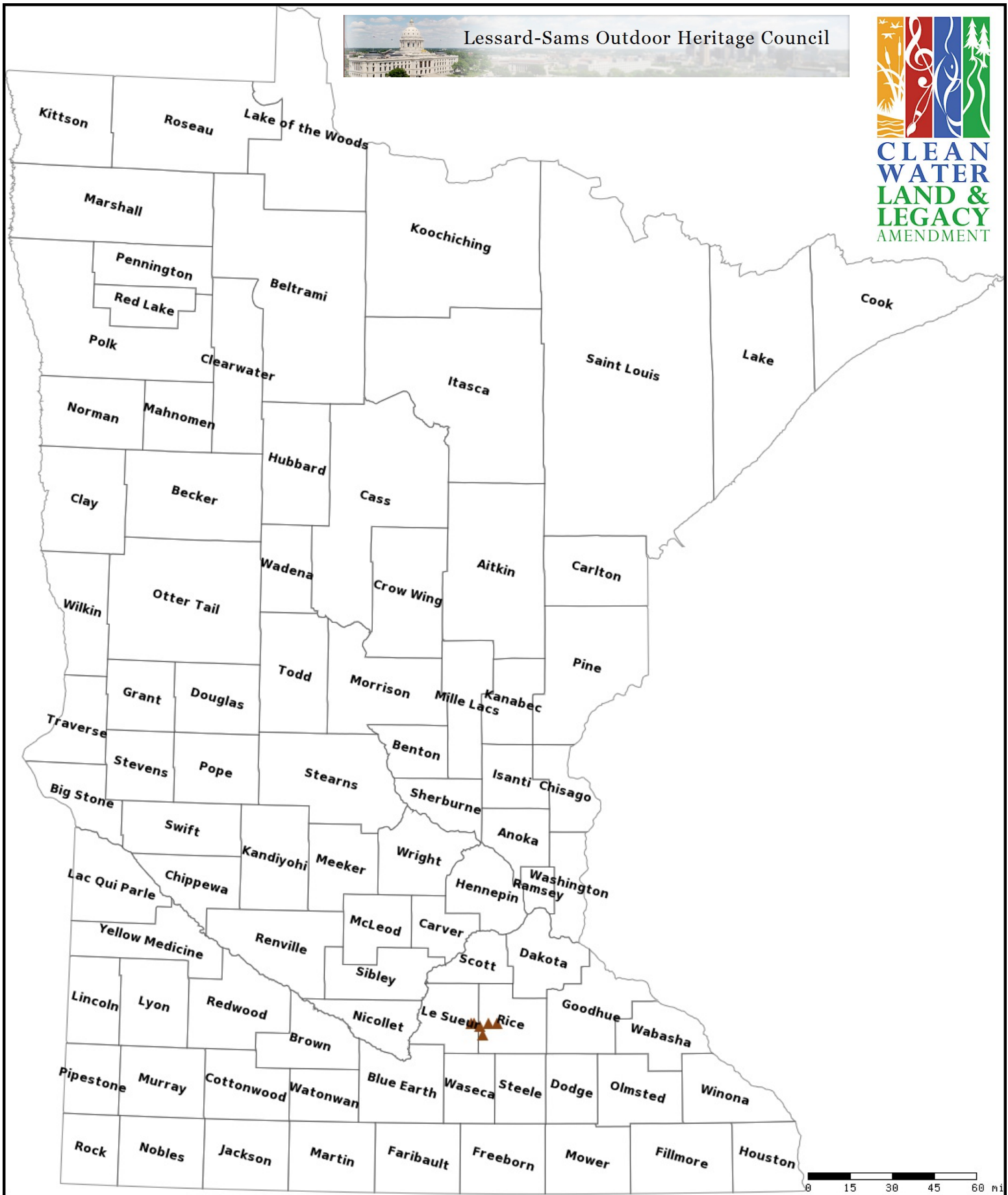
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.



**CLEAN
WATER
LAND &
LEGACY**
AMENDMENT



Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex Phase V

Legend

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

CANNON RIVER WATERSHED

MINNESOTA

