

Request for Funding

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

Program or Project Title: SW MN Riparian Woodland Habitat Protection - Phase I

Funds Requested: \$5,086,500

Manager's Name: Mark Johnson

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County Locations: Brown, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Redwood, Rock, Waseca, and Yellow Medicine.

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Prairie

Activity Type:

- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Habitat

Abstract:

This project protects and restores/enhances declining wildlife habitats in strategically targeted riparian areas in southwestern MN. Fee-title acquisitions will become Wildlife Management Areas open to public uses consistent with the Outdoor Recreation Act.

Design and Scope of Work:

Pressures from residential development, industry, and agriculture continue to challenge wildlife habitat within Minnesota's southwestern farmland region. Despite collective investments in conservation, it is generally believed that many agricultural counties in southwest Minnesota continue to experience a net loss of wildlife habitat. This is being exacerbated by conversion of lands expiring out of CRP and being placed back into active row crop farming. Now, more than ever, is the time to increase strategic investments by permanently protecting high quality public wildlife habitat complexes that will protect, maintain, and increase Minnesota's wildlife populations. Of additional importance is the fundamental need to ensure that Minnesota's outdoor heritage and appreciation of the outdoors is promoted to future generations through available public lands and access for Minnesotans to hunt, trap, fish and otherwise recreate in the outdoors.

In our effort to confront and counter loss of habitat and declining wildlife populations, the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association (MDHA) and our partners will protect (via fee title acquisition) and restore/enhance high priority riparian oriented wildlife habitat. With emphasis being upon southwestern Minnesota (DNR's Region 4), this project will build upon landscape level habitat complexes directly oriented to riparian areas (creeks, streams, rivers, lakes and/or wetlands). Many of the parcels will be additions to existing Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and/or adjacent to other permanently protected habitat.

While MDHA's organizational species of focus is White-tailed Deer, this project is designed to benefit multiple species, both game and non-game, including but not limited to; wild turkey, pheasant, waterfowl, ruffed grouse, american woodcock, small mammals, raptors, multiple species of neotropical migratory songbirds as well as multiple riparian, prairie and woodland vegetative types and species.

Parcels are developed and selected in conjunction with local and regional DNR staff. All parcels 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 was used to develop the parcel 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 build upon natural community connectivity (riparian and terrestrial) within existing public and private land habitat (landscape scale significance)?
- Does the parcel have potential and focus for expanded future habitat protection and restoration?
- Does the parcel provide multiple benefits (recreation, access, water control, water quality, local community support, multi-species benefit, native vegetative communities, etc.)?

All acquired lands will meet the minimum initial development standards for WMAs. In addition to providing high quality habitat and considering future management concerns, all acquisitions will be restored and/or enhanced to the highest quality practicable, and in collaboration with local and regional DNR Staff, so as to result in lower subsequent management costs. Erosion susceptible tillable land and other lands that are acquired will be retired permanently into desired habitat states so as to prevent erosion, aid in collection of adjacent nutrient and ag chemical runoff and slow overground flow into standing and flowing waters. Acquired croplands that are deemed of low erosion susceptibility may be permanently retired and restored to diverse grasslands, native prairie, oak savanna or other appropriate habitat state, or may be continued in crops in coordination with DNR management plans and practices in collaboration with local farmer contacts to provide critical wintering food sources for game and non-game wildlife. Enhancement work will include removal of undesirable woody vegetation, seeding or planting of desirable woody vegetation, inter-seeding to increase desired diversity and structure, managed grazing, invasive species control, or any other activity that improves the diversity and health of the prairie-woodland-riparian habitat complex.

Minnesota Deer Hunters Association has 62 chapters and 15,000 members. MDHA has been actively involved in protecting and restoring lands in partnership with the Minnesota DNR, USFWS, County land agencies and other partners for over 30 years. WMAs are an integral component to the comprehensive conservation strategy within southwestern Minnesota as well as across most of the state. WMAs within this proposal will protect, increase, and sustain wildlife habitat and populations as well as provide public access and recreational opportunities, including hunting, to all Minnesotans.

How the request addresses MN habitats:

This effort directly protects, restores or enhances riparian woodlands, adjacent prairie grasslands, wetlands and habitat for fish and wildlife through fee title acquisition and restoration/enhancement efforts. In consultation with area and regional DNR Wildlife managers, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association will ensure program activities conform to the various state conservation and resources plan objectives and outcomes. Existing data (MN DNR Region IV Conservation Focus Area Maps, County Biological Survey, Restorable Wetlands Inventory, DNR priority WMA acquisitions list, MN DNR Historic Core Wintering Deer Areas Maps, and protected lands GIS Maps) was used to identify, prioritize and protect habitats that would greatly increase habitat functions and connectivity for wildlife and water quality.

Consistent with multiple strategies and objectives of existing plans (including the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years, Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Plans, Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda, Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans, Long-range plan for the ring-necked pheasant in Minnesota, Long-range Duck Recovery Plan, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, etc.), this proposal addresses a strategically important historically significant component of the agriculture/prairie complex landscape; protection and restoration of riparian woodlands in southwestern Minnesota.

Please explain the nature of urgency:

Riparian corridors are of extreme strategic importance to wildlife and water quality, especially within the larger agriculture/prairie complex of southwestern Minnesota. Historically present and of tremendous conservation significance, riparian woodland habitats are suffering due to receiving minimal attention and investment by conservation interests and Outdoor Heritage funding.

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 work of this proposal is consistent with multiple strategies and objectives of existing plans. Historical preferred conditions, species of greatest conservation need, rare, threatened and endangered species (both plant and animal) and connectivity of ecological benefits within the habitat complex are of utmost consideration.

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

Using a programmatic approach, this proposal significantly increases the attention provided to woodland riparian complexes in southwestern Minnesota. With the majority of conservation attention in the southwest heretofore focused upon protection and restoration of native prairie and wetland complexes, this proposal concentrates upon protection and restoration/enhancement of historically present, environmentally strategic riparian woodland complexes and their critically important landscape significance to southwestern Minnesota. This focus will enhance attention by MDHA Chapters and other conservation partners upon all aspects of conservation protection/enhancement/restoration in the southwest through direct collaborative involvement, future maintenance partnerships with DNR and ongoing media exposure.

Non-OHF Money Spent in the Past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
None	None	None

Sustainability and Maintenance:

Upon fee title acquisition, parcels will be restored/enhanced and transferred to MNDNR ownership as new Wildlife Management Areas. MNDNR will subsequently and in perpetuity maintain parcels in their planned and desired habitat state. Additionally, future collaborative financial partnership between MDHA Chapters, other stakeholders and MNDNR will be solicited toward perpetual maintenance of these and other WMAs.

Maintain Project Outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2017 and ongoing	Private Contributions/MN DNR Traditional Funding	Engage MDHA Chapters with DNR under Adopt-A-WMA/Collaboration Agreements	Provide funding and potential volunteer labor for habitat enhancement activities per ongoing DNR WMA management plans.	Engage partnership with other conservation groups, local community business and agricultural interests to join in additional ongoing enhancement activities and community education.

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

We will notify the respective county board of commissioners of these transactions by written documents. It is always our goal to seek support for these transactions and to be fully transparent.

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

Land will be held in fee title by DNR with WMA designation.

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Parcel evaluations/selections	December 2015
Parcel appraisals, reviews, and purchase agreements	December 2016
Parcel, title opinions and closings	March 2017
Parcel restorations	November 2017
Parcel title transfers/closing to DNR	December 2017

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *Parcels of riparian woodland complexes, including native prairie, oak savanna, woodland, riparian buffer properties, wetlands, etc., will be protected and enhanced/restored. This outcome is measured in acres protected/enhanced/restored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through MNDNR policy and practices in coordination with conservation plans regarding prairie, wetland, riparian, woodland, etc.*

Relationship to Other Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$5,086,500

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$90,000	\$20,000	MDHA	\$110,000
Contracts	\$900,000	\$0		\$900,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$3,850,000	\$0		\$3,850,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$35,000	\$2,500		\$37,500
Professional Services	\$90,000	\$0		\$90,000
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$7,500	~\$18.44/ft2 - MDHA x 3 yrs	\$7,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$1,500	\$300	MDHA	\$1,800
DNR IDP	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
Total	\$5,086,500	\$30,300	-	\$5,116,800

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Multiple Positions	0.50	3.00	\$90,000	\$20,000	MDHA	\$110,000
Total	0.50	3.00	\$90,000	\$20,000	-	\$110,000

Amount of Request: \$5,086,500

Amount of Leverage: \$30,300

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.60%

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	0	0	700	700
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	0	0	0	700	700

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	\$0	\$5,086,500	\$5,086,500
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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,086,500	\$5,086,500

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	700	0	700
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	700	0	700

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	\$5,086,500	\$0	\$5,086,500
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	\$5,086,500	\$0	\$5,086,500

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	\$0	\$0	\$7,266
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	\$7,266	\$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

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Brown

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Sanborn	10935232	149	\$745,000	No	Full	Full

Cottonwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Dutch Charley Creek	10838235	775	\$3,875,000	No	Full	Full
Great Bend-Des Moines	10536206	710	\$3,550,000	No	Full	Full
Highwater Creek	10837215	581	\$2,905,000	No	Full	Full

Jackson

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
N. Huron Lake	10437233	164	\$820,000	No	Full	Full
Petersburg WMA	10134226	96	\$480,000	No	Full	Full

Lac qui Parle

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Florida Creek West	11745232	441	\$2,205,000	No	Full	Full
Lac qui Parle WMA	11842223	1,959	\$9,795,000	No	Full	Full

Lincoln

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Invanhoe WMA addt.	11145206	33	\$165,000	No	Full	Full
Lake Benton/Altona	10945207	380	\$1,900,000	No	Full	Full
Twin Lake	11346228	28	\$140,000	No	Full	Full

Mower

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Red Cedar River	10118217	625	\$3,125,000	No	Full	Full

Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Falcot Lake WMA	10538218	298	\$1,490,000	No	Full	Full
Klinker WMA	10743210	10	\$50,000	No	Full	Full

Nicollet

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Swan Lake	11029222	1,119	\$5,595,000	No	Full	Full

Redwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Gales WMA	11039201	9	\$45,000	No	Full	Full
Hawk Creek	11538222	1,357	\$6,685,000	No	Full	Full
Pell Creek	10937219	293	\$1,465,000	No	Full	Full
Plum Creek	10839202	192	\$960,000	No	Full	Full
Swedes Forest	11437218	1,021	\$5,105,000	No	Full	Full
Tiger Lake	11335235	474	\$2,370,000	No	Full	Full
Vesta Gravel Pit	11239219	270	\$1,350,000	No	Full	Full

Rock

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Split Rock Creek	10447213	1,257	\$6,285,000	No	Full	Full

Waseca

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Noonan-Findley WMA	10822236	478	\$2,390,000	No	Full	Full

Yellow Medicine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Florida Creek	11546228	464	\$2,320,000	No	Full	Full
Lazarus Creek	11446202	222	\$1,110,000	No	Full	Full
Long Slough	11740229	237	\$1,185,000	No	Full	Full
Spartan WMA	11640229	385	\$1,925,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

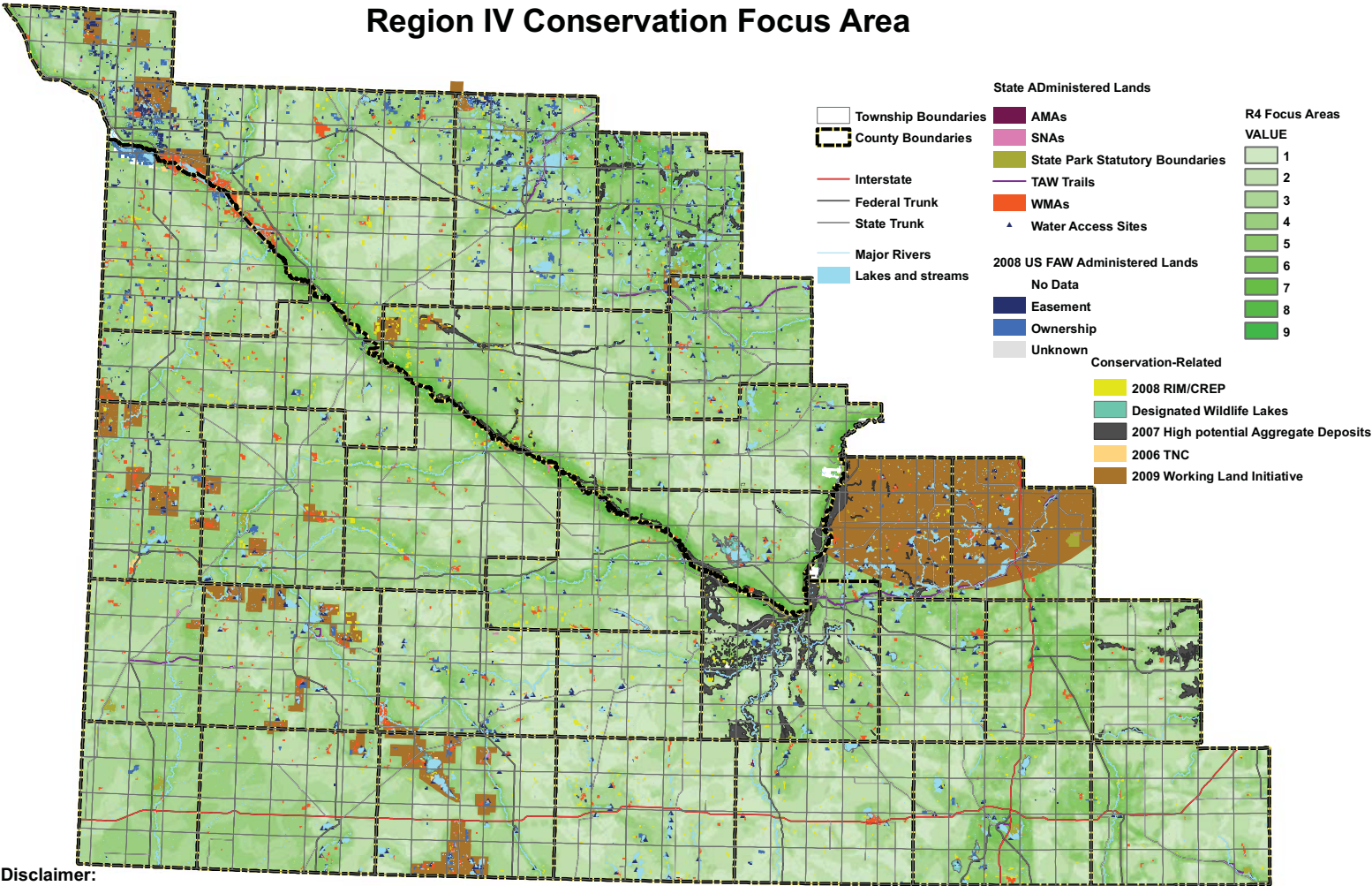
Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Legend

- ### Data Generated From Parcel List

Feb 19, 2010



Disclaimer:

This interdisciplinary map is the compilation of the "High Conservation Focus Area" layers developed by DNR Southern Region Area Managers.

This data is solely intended for Region and Countywide analysis and may not be appropriate for other purposes. Use of this map without accompanying written criteria is strongly discouraged.

This map shows varying degrees of overlap in conservation interests as identified by DNR Area Managers. The darker shades of green indicate that more disciplines identified a particular area as a high focus area.

The lighter green shaded areas do not indicate limited natural resources value, but do indicate lower priority areas for conservation efforts. Lack of GIS data layers, or current lower interest among the disciplines may also result in lighter shading.

Note: This is a working map and revisions will be made as deemed appropriate by Area managers.

