

Request for Funding

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

Program or Project Title: Enhanced Public Land – Grasslands Phase II

Funds Requested: \$2,130,000

Manager's Name: Eran Sandquist

Title: MN Regional Representative

Organization: Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Street Address: 410 Lincoln Ave S

City: South Haven, MN 55382

Telephone: 763-242-1273

E-Mail: esandquist@pheasantsforever.org

Organization Web Site: www.pheasantsforever.org

County Locations: No Counties Listed

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity Type:

- Restore
- Enhance

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Abstract:

This project will utilize a combination of wetland restoration, invasive tree removal, seeding, and prescribed fire, to improve habitat quality, diversity, and productivity on Wildlife Management Areas and Waterfowl Production Areas within the prairie and metro regions of Minnesota.

Design and Scope of Work:

Greater than 95% of Minnesota's prairies have been lost to the plow and development. Many of the remaining acres of native and restored grasslands have been degraded from lack of fire and the spread of invasive trees. Many of these acres have low plant diversity and aren't reaching their potential for wildlife production.

Research from across the tallgrass prairie region has shown that trees are almost always detrimental to prairie/grassland wildlife, for several reasons. Tree branches provide perches for hawks, owls, crows, and magpies, while the bases of the trees provide dens for foxes, raccoons, skunks, all of which can prey on eggs or nesting hens.

Wetlands will be restored or enhanced by constructing low, earthen dams (some with water control structures) or removing drainage tiles.

Many public hunting areas were purchased as brome fields or were restored using low diversity seed mixes, often only grasses. At these sites, we will use a mix of cultivation, herbicide and prescribed fire to prep the site and plant with a high diversity native grasses and forbs.

Prescribed burning is the primary management tool for managing grassland habitat for waterfowl, gamebirds, and

songbirds. This project will increase capabilities of DNR and USFWS to conduct prescribed fires on public lands, including DNR Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA).

Each year woody vegetation and invasive species increase on our public hunting lands. Every year we delay management action, the problem becomes larger and the cost increases. The duration of the benefits of this program is ongoing. The goal of this program is to work towards having all WPAs and WMAs into a state where we no longer need mechanical or chemical treatments and high quality habitat can be sustained with maintenance burns.

We have developed an RFP process to solicit enhancement projects for lands open to public hunting owned and managed by the DNR and USFWS. PF board members, along with staff from these agencies will review and prioritize the projects. Priority will be given to any projects that are within a prairie plan core area.

Based on previous projects conducted on DNR and USFWS lands, we anticipate costs as below. The exact acreage and ratios of dollars spent on each category each year will vary depending on proposals.

Wetland Restoration - \$1000/acre

Prescribed Fire - \$3500/burn

Invasive Tree Removal - \$1200/acre

Diversity Seeding/Brome Conversion - \$400/acre

How the request addresses MN habitats:

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan- This project directly achieves 2 of the priorities of the plan: 1.

Grassland/wetland restoration activities 2. Enhancement of prairies and grasslands via prescribed fire and invasive species control.

Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare - This plan lists prairie chickens as well as at least twenty-six other bird, invertebrate, and plant species as SGCN. This project will enhance the habitat quality for all these species.

Partners in Flight - This project will improve habitat for all nine of the grassland obligate species in the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Plan (Physiographic Area 40)

Grassland Bird Conservation Areas (GBCA) - This project will improve the habitat quality for all grassland species within these areas.

Ecological Section Vision and Priorities - The project will improve condition of habitats on public lands and restore and enhance upland habitat (priority #1), increase wildlife productivity (#4), and restore and enhance habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species (#7). We will accomplish this by using multiple tools to enhance grassland habitats increasing the quality, diversity, and productivity of our public land grasslands.

Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan - This project will increase habitat quality for at least seventeen species in Bird Conservation Region

Please explain the nature of urgency:

Grasslands naturally degrade over time. The longer grasslands are allowed to degrade the more expensive and difficult they are to correct. This project aims to enhance public lands to produce at maximum capacity for the benefit of the public and as such is worthy and necessary for public money.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Plans Addressed:

- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Please describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

The science and strategy of habitat enhancement in this part of Minnesota is to build functional complexes of habitat where it once existed. Projects will be developed in conjunction MNDNR and USFWS Staff. We will blend the their knowledge with identifying opportunities to improve complexes for maximum wildlife production.

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

- Restore or enhance habitat on public lands

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:

This proposal is the second phase of an effort to enhance public lands for the benefit of wildlife and public recreation. All funding allocated in the first phase has been contracted and work is being completed as weather allows. Although we have accomplished a significant amount of quality work in the first phase, it was evident there is a significant amount of work remaining and an interest from agency managers to better our public lands. Pheasants Forever, USFWS, MN DNR and other partners are focused on managing grassland habitat for gamebirds, waterfowl, and all other species of grassland wildlife.

Non-OHF Money Spent in the Past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2002-2010	Heritage Enhancement Grants	\$145,000 HE / \$14,500 PF

Sustainability and Maintenance:

This project is part of an ongoing effort to keep our public lands viable and productive. PF is only part of this effort, but will continue to work with partners to manage our public lands through state, federal and foundation support as well as private fundraising efforts.

Maintain Project Outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Post Project Completion - WMA	MN DNR - Game and Fish Funds	Monitoring	Maintenance	
Post Project Completion - WPA	USFWS - Federal	Monitoring	Maintenance	

Applicable Criteria:

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

Best Management Practice:

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program? - **Yes**

Permanent Protection:

Is the activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - **Yes (WMA, WPA)**

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Distribute Project Request for Proposals to Area Land Managers	Fall 2015
Review Project RFPs with project selection committee	Winter 2015-16
Select Projects for completion and hire contractors to complete habitat work	Winter 2015-16
Enhancement / Restoration work begins	Spring 2016
Enhancement / Restoration work completed	June 2018

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- Improved condition of habitat on public lands. Outcomes will be measured by resource professionals and evaluated by using the best science available to land managers.

Programs in prairie region:

- Improved condition of habitat on public lands *Outcomes will be measured by resource professionals and evaluated by using the best science available to land managers.*

Relationship to Other Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$2,130,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$170,000	\$0		\$170,000
Contracts	\$1,900,000	\$0		\$1,900,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
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	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
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	\$2,130,000	\$0	-	\$2,130,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
PF Director of Conservation	0.10	3.00	\$20,000	\$0		\$20,000
PF Regional Staff	0.35	3.00	\$90,000	\$0		\$90,000
PF Grants Staff	0.20	3.00	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
Total	0.65	9.00	\$170,000	\$0	-	\$170,000

Amount of Request: \$2,130,000

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	100	0	0	0	100
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	15,000	0	0	15,000
Total	100	15,000	0	0	15,100

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	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$1,930,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,930,000
Total	\$200,000	\$1,930,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,130,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	100	0	100
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	300	0	0	14,700	0	15,000
Total	300	0	0	14,800	0	15,100

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$200,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,780,000	\$0	\$1,930,000
Total	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,980,000	\$0	\$2,130,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$129	\$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	\$2,000	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$121	\$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

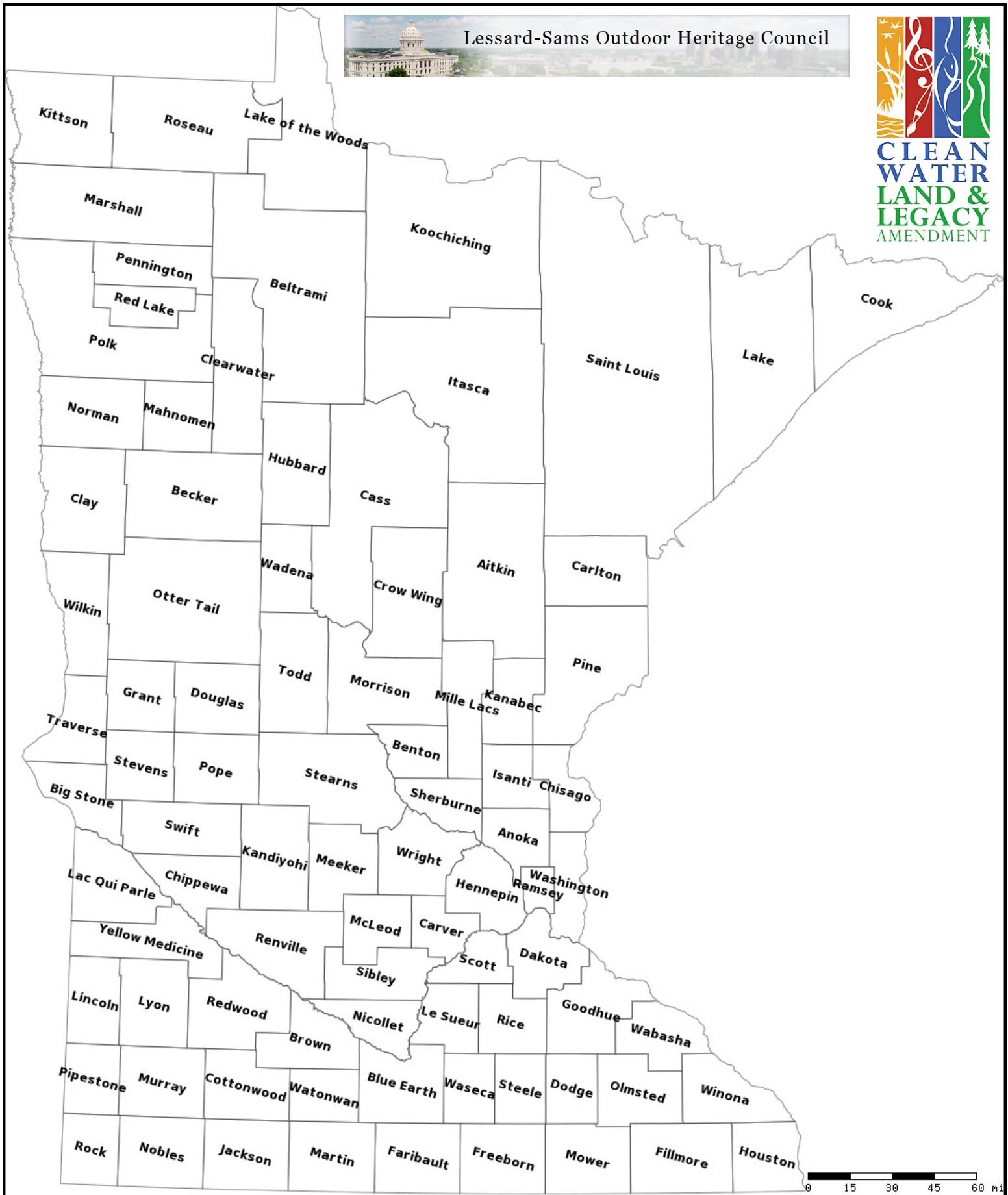
No parcels with an activity type protect.

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

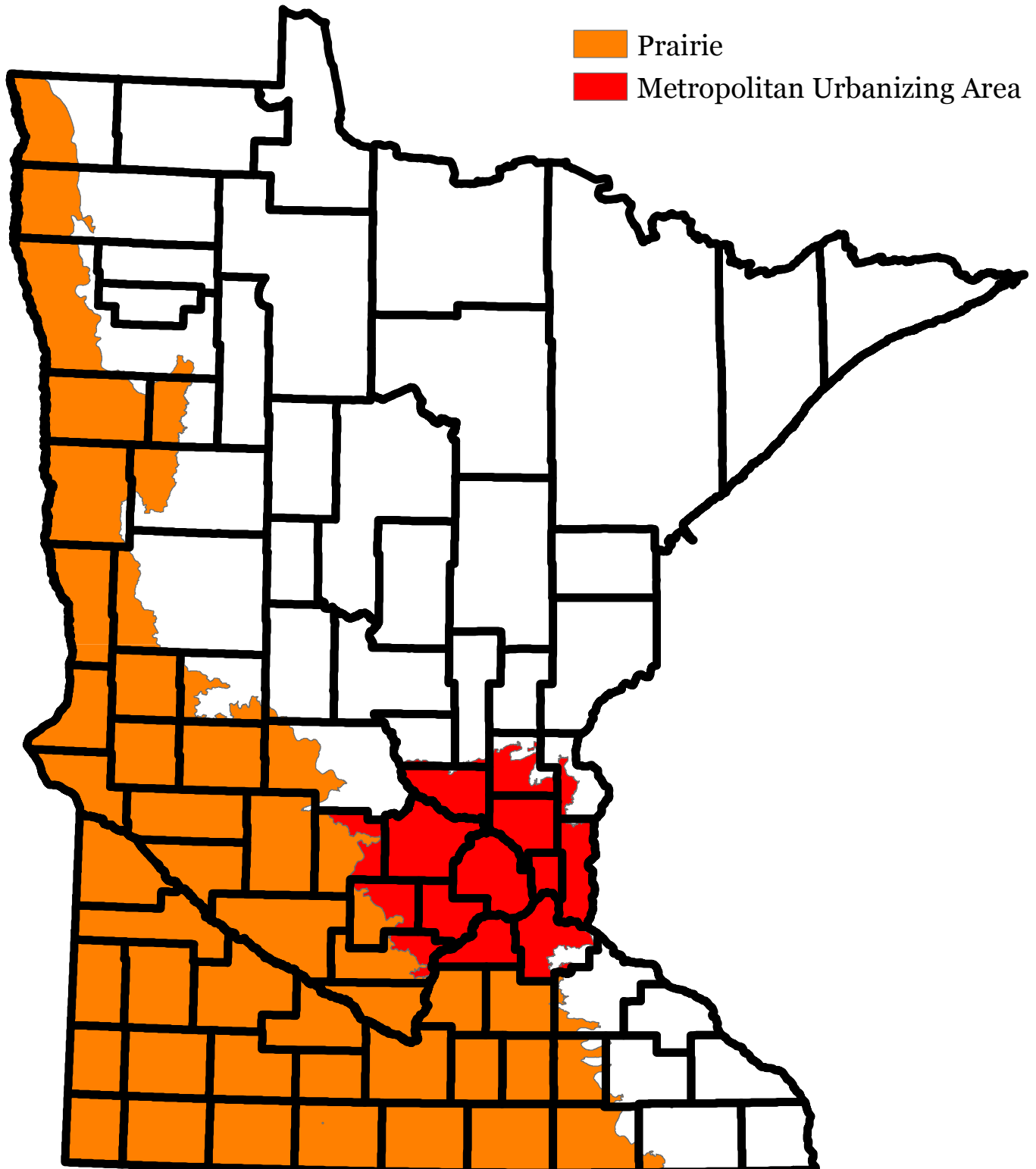
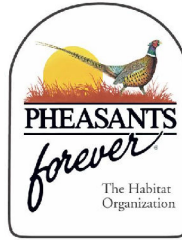


Enhanced Public Land – Grasslands Phase II

Legend

- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✕ Enhance
- ✚ Other

Enhanced Public Land - Grasslands - Phase 2



DRAFT!

Enhanced Public Lands - Grasslands

WMA/WPA Project Name:	County:	Township/Range/Section:	Date:
-----------------------	---------	-------------------------	-------

Type of Project

<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Removal	<input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed Fire	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Seeding	<input type="checkbox"/> Wetland Restoration
---------------------------------------	--	--	--

Project must meet these minimum criteria to be eligible:

- A. Project is located within the focus areas identified on map.
- B. Project will occur on existing Wildlife Management Area or Waterfowl Production Area.
- C. Project is approved by appropriate public land manager.
- D. Project is open to public hunting.
- E. Without these funds, project would not be completed.
- F. Project can be completed by private contractor.

Factors	Possible Points	Score
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Will this project benefit pheasants or prairie chickens?	0 or 10 pts.	
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Will project benefit any T&E or SGCN species?	0 or 10 pts.	
3 How large is existing contiguous public lands habitat complex? <input type="checkbox"/> > 240 acres <input type="checkbox"/> 81 acres - 240 acres <input type="checkbox"/> < 80 acres	25 pts. 15 pts. 5 pts.	
4 Will project help reduce future management costs? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	20 pts. 0 pts.	
5 Vegetative Diversity <input type="checkbox"/> > 20 Native species exist or planted <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 19 Native species exist or planted <input type="checkbox"/> < 10 species exist or planted	20 pts. 10 pts. 0 pts.	
6 Project Type <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Removal / Wetland Restoration <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Seeding <input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed Fire	15 pts. 10 pts. 5 pts.	
TOTAL	0 to 100 pts.	