



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2016 Final Report

General Information

Date: 10/21/2020

Project Title: Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project

Funds Recommended: \$3,150,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2016, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(c)

Appropriation Language: \$2,105,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources for agreements to acquire lands in fee in the Mississippi Headwaters and for agreements as follows: \$76,000 to the Mississippi Headwaters Board; and \$2,029,000 to The Trust for Public Land. \$1,045,000 the second year is to the Board of Water and Soil Resources to acquire permanent conservation easements and to restore wildlife habitat, of which up to \$78,000 is to establish a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of proposed acquisitions must be included as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Tim Terrill

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Location Information

County Location(s): Itasca, Aitkin and Crow Wing.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest
- Forest / Prairie Transition

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie
- Forest

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

The Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project Phase 1 (ML 16) achieved permanent protection of 1,478 acres of fish and wildlife habitat, including 11 miles of shoreland on the Mississippi River and on an adjacent lake. This accomplishment exceeded the appropriation goal by 178%. Utilizing fee-title acquisition and RIM conservation easements adjacent to public land, large habitat protection complexes were established, including one complex in Crow Wing County that protected over 9 contiguous miles along the Mississippi River. This Project is a partnership of the Mississippi Headwaters Board, The Trust for Public Land, and BWSR assisted by 7 Headwaters SWCDs.

Process & Methods

The Mississippi River is known as “America’s greatest river”, one of the largest in the world. It provides drinking water, industry, and recreation for millions of people and it embodies Minnesota’s outdoor heritage. Protecting the River’s headwaters--its first 400 miles from Itasca State Park to southern Morrison County—through strategically placed permanent land protection was envisioned as critical to maintaining fish, game, and non-game wildlife habitat as well as food and shelter for millions of migratory waterfowl annually on the Mississippi Flyway. This initial phase of a project that has now expanded into Phase 5 and the protection so far of over 31 miles of Mississippi shoreline, was envisioned by the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB), an 8-county joint powers board with zoning authority and collaborative conservation goals, and conservation partners The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

Public lands adjacent to the Mississippi River were increasingly in danger of losing habitat connectivity as private lands were under more development pressure potentially causing fragmentation of forests and critical upland and shoreland habitats. Creating or enlarging permanently protected upland habitat complexes would insure that game and non-game wildlife have a secure place to raise their young, seek shelter and food, and move around without disturbance and protect water quality as a necessary fish habitat while at the same time maintaining and opening up new opportunities for public recreation.

Fee-title acquisition with final public ownership (either the DNR or a headwaters' county) and RIM conservation easements were the tools used in strategic locations to create or expand permanently protected habitat corridors. (see the answers to questions below for the scientific methodology used to select priority parcels for land conservation). The targeted geography for the project was the minor watershed corridor of the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River, its major tributaries, and headwaters lakes.

Project partners (MHB, TPL, and BWSR) defined initial priorities for the project that guided the implementation of this Phase 1 (ML16) and subsequent phases for the Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project. (1) The acquired parcels, in fee-title or easement, were targeted towards the Mississippi River corridor to protect access to public lands and provide multiple benefits for hunting, fishing, and outdoor heritage experiences. (2) Acquisition priorities were to be focused on parcels that were adjacent to existing County, State, or Federal lands along the Mississippi River headwaters corridor to increase habitat and corridor connectivity; and (3) Prospective parcels were to be ranked according to their habitat quality, public access, location, size, and supporting conservation

plans by a Technical Committee comprised of the project partners and other public agency and private conservation entities to insure all parcels selected meet program criteria.

The completion of Phase 1 resulted in the permanent protection of 1,478 acres and 11 miles of shoreland achieved through 11 RIM conservation easements with private landowners, a 331-acre addition to a state forest, a 160-acre addition to a county forest, and the creation of a new 234-acre WMA with over two miles of shoreland. In Crow Wing County alone, the combination of fee-title acquisition and several RIM easements adjacent to existing public land created a 9 mile contiguous permanently protected wildlife corridor along the Mississippi River. Exceptional support from the 8 Headwater's county boards was a critical component of this Phase 1's success as trust was built around common heritage and conservation goals.

Phase 2 (ML 17) and Phase 3 (ML18) are nearing completion with all money appropriated for acquisition dedicated to landowner projects that are completed or in process. The appropriation of Phase 4 (ML 20), which began several months ago, is already 40% committed to projects. The Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project partners thank LSOHC and the legislature for their support of this ML 16 appropriation's initial vision of protecting the "Mighty Mississippi" river for the benefit of current and future generations.

How did the program address habitats of significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, threatened or endangered species, and/or list targeted species?

The science-based targeting described in the next paragraph utilized the Minnesota Wildlife Action Network's data along with other state data sets, including The MN County Biological Survey, to identify priority areas for permanent fish and wildlife protection within the minor watershed of the first 400 miles of the Mississippi River--its Headwaters-- or along major tributaries. The Wildlife Action Network was developed to help implement the 2015-2025 MN Wildlife Action Plan, which identified species of greatest conservation need and rare, threatened and endangered species. The project's geographic targeting also considered specific areas of species richness and/or biodiversity importance and areas where aquatic and terrestrial habitats have been compromised. These identified priority areas were the primary focus geography in selecting parcels for permanent land protection using fee-title acquisition or RIM conservation easements.

How did the program use science-based targeting that leveraged or expanded corridors and complexes, reduced fragmentation, or protected areas in the MN County Biological Survey.

A science-based parcel screening tool—RAQ—was used to identify the highest priority privately owned lands for permanent land protection that would create or enhance large protected wildlife habitat corridors/complexes or provide key shoreland protection for fish habitat and migratory waterfowl. The RAQ tool scores private, forested parcels 20 acres or larger in the following manner: " R" ranks whether the parcel is riparian--next to the Mississippi river, a tributary, or a lake. "A" ranks the parcel's adjacency to existing public land (state, county or federal). "Q" ranks habitat quality using a number of existing data sets including the Minnesota Biological Survey, Minnesota Wildlife Action Network priorities, DNR areas of outstanding or high biodiversity, priority waterfowl lakes, DNR rare species and old growth forest data, and Audubon's important bird areas. The Nature Conservancy's multi-benefits (habitat, water quality and groundwater resources) science-based analysis of the Upper Mississippi River Basin was also considered in the "quality" ranking of parcels. Parcels with an overall RAQ score of 6 or better out of 10 maximum points were identified as priority prospects for landowner outreach and land protection. Using this tool helped to narrow and prioritize the over 7,000 privately owned parcels within the minor watershed of the river to a more manageable priority parcel list of under 1,000 parcels and 300 landowners who owned land with the highest priority for fish and wildlife protection.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

The Project is a partnership of the Mississippi Headwaters Board (administration, coordination, and LGU relationship building), The Trust for Public Land (fee-title acquisitions with and without PILT) and BWSR (RIM conservation easements). Supporting organizations included: 7 Headwaters County SWCDs (Beltrami, Itasca, Hubbard, Cass, Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Morrison counties) who provided conservation easement outreach and processing in cooperation with BWSR, the final easement holder. The Nature Conservancy provided technical support along with GIS-based habitat quality analysis; and the Minnesota DNR assisted with technical and land ownership support. A Technical Committee consisting of all project partners, supporters, and participating SWCDs developed ranking criteria for potential acquisitions and easements and reviewed and approved projects. There was strong local government support for fee-title acquisitions since the project obtained initial county board support for an acquisition before proceeding with due diligence and final county board support before completing an acquisition.

Exceptional challenges, expectations, failures, opportunities, or unique aspects of program

The Headwaters of the Mississippi River--its first 400 miles-- includes land in the minor watershed of the river, along with its tributaries and headwaters lakes. The Headwaters flow through 8 Minnesota Counties starting at Itasca State Park in Clearwater County to the Southern border of Morrison County. With such a large geography that includes high quality forests, pristine waters, and a critical part of the Mississippi flyway for migratory waterfowl, there were abundant opportunities for excellent fish and wildlife habitat protection, The challenge was identifying the highest priority lands for protection yet manageable for landowner outreach. This was addressed through the RAQ screening process previously described. The project not only met its original expectation for acres of protection, it exceeded it by 178% with a waiting list of interested landowners. A unique aspect of the program was the establishment of strong LGU support and relationships that have continued.

What other funds contributed to this program?

- Other : Privately raised funds by The Trust For Public Land

How were the funds used to advance the program?

Used for Personnel, Direct Support Services and travel

What is the plan to sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

The lands acquired in fee-title will be managed according to the permanent land holder's (DNR and County) land management plans. Lands placed in RIM conservation easements will be monitored for easement compliance by the appropriate County SWCD according to BWSR's monitoring timetable. Ultimately, BWSR will be responsible for the ongoing stewardship of the conservation easement lands and enforcement of violations if necessary.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020 and ongoing	OHF Easement Stewardship Funds	SWCDs under contract to BWSR will conduct conservation easement onsite inspections for 5 consecutive years and every three years thereafter.	BWSR will enforce any violations noted by onsite inspection	BWSR will do required stewardship fund reporting to LSOHC.
2020 and ongoing	County Land	Land acquired by	Land will remain open	County ongoing

	Management Funds	Counties via TPL conveyance after purchase with OHF funds will be maintained and managed according to their county land management policies.	to the public in accordance with conveyance terms.	management
2020 and ongoing	DNR Land Management Funds	Property acquired by the DNR via conveyance by TPL will be managed according to DNR land management policies.	DNR lands acquired in fee-title will remain permanently protected and open to the public.	Ongoing DNR management

Budget

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Request	Spent	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$380,500	\$313,800	\$124,800	\$124,800	-, private	\$505,300	\$438,600
Contracts	\$39,000	\$67,400	-	-	-	\$39,000	\$67,400
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,401,000	\$1,401,000	-	-	-	\$1,401,000	\$1,401,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$150,000	\$165,000	-	-	-	\$150,000	\$165,000
Easement Acquisition	\$888,900	\$894,400	-	-	-	\$888,900	\$894,400
Easement Stewardship	\$78,000	\$71,500	-	-	-	\$78,000	\$71,500
Travel	\$9,100	\$4,300	-	-	-	\$9,100	\$4,300
Professional Services	\$80,000	\$80,000	-	-	-	\$80,000	\$80,000
Direct Support Services	\$65,400	\$53,200	\$63,900	\$53,200	-, private	\$129,300	\$117,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$25,000	\$8,300	-	-	-	\$25,000	\$8,300
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$1,500	-	-	-	-	\$1,500	-
Supplies/Materials	\$1,600	\$600	-	-	-	\$1,600	\$600
DNR IDP	\$30,000	\$17,600	-	-	-	\$30,000	\$17,600
Grand Total	\$3,150,000	\$3,077,100	\$188,700	\$178,000	-	\$3,338,700	\$3,265,800

Partner: MHB

Totals

Item	Request	Spent	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$71,000	\$20,000	-	-	-	\$71,000	\$20,000
Contracts	-	\$45,400	-	-	-	-	\$45,400
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$3,500	-	-	-	-	\$3,500	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$1,500	-	-	-	-	\$1,500	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$76,000	\$65,400	-	-	-	\$76,000	\$65,400

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Coordinator	0.1	3.0	-	-	-	-
Administration	0.1	3.0	\$20,000	-	-	\$20,000

Partner: BWSR

Totals

Item	Request	Spent	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$49,500	\$33,800	-	-	-	\$49,500	\$33,800
Contracts	\$24,000	\$22,000	-	-	-	\$24,000	\$22,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$888,900	\$894,400	-	-	-	\$888,900	\$894,400
Easement Stewardship	\$78,000	\$71,500	-	-	-	\$78,000	\$71,500
Travel	\$1,600	\$200	-	-	-	\$1,600	\$200
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$1,500	-	-	-	-	\$1,500	-
Supplies/Materials	\$1,600	\$600	-	-	-	\$1,600	\$600
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$1,045,100	\$1,022,500	-	-	-	\$1,045,100	\$1,022,500

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.1	3.0	\$20,600	-	-	\$20,600
Easement Processing	0.1	3.0	\$13,200	-	-	\$13,200

Partner: TPL

Totals

Item	Request	Spent	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$260,000	\$260,000	\$124,800	\$124,800	private	\$384,800	\$384,800
Contracts	\$15,000	-	-	-	-	\$15,000	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,401,000	\$1,401,000	-	-	-	\$1,401,000	\$1,401,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$150,000	\$165,000	-	-	-	\$150,000	\$165,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$4,000	\$4,100	-	-	-	\$4,000	\$4,100
Professional Services	\$80,000	\$80,000	-	-	-	\$80,000	\$80,000
Direct Support Services	\$63,900	\$53,200	\$63,900	\$53,200	private	\$127,800	\$117,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$25,000	\$8,300	-	-	-	\$25,000	\$8,300
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$30,000	\$17,600	-	-	-	\$30,000	\$17,600
Grand Total	\$2,028,900	\$1,989,200	\$188,700	\$178,000	-	\$2,217,600	\$2,177,900

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Protection and legal staff	0.8	3.0	\$260,000	\$124,800	private	\$384,800

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

Based on TPL's Federal reimbursement rate

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

No unanticipated budget challenges. Excellent habitat protection opportunities resulted in spending all the appropriated acquisition monies for permanent land conservation.

Total Revenue: \$0

Revenue Spent: \$0

Revenue Balance: \$0

Of the money disclosed above, what are the appropriate uses of the money:

- E. This is not applicable as there was no revenue generated.

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Acres (AP)	Total Acres (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	350	445	0	0	350	445
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	40	52	0	0	40	52
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	440	981	0	0	440	981
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	830	1,478	0	0	830	1,478

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Funding (AP)	Total Funding (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	\$1,873,900	\$1,823,000	-	-	\$1,873,900	\$1,823,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	\$205,000	\$198,900	-	-	\$205,000	\$198,900
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	\$1,071,100	\$1,055,200	-	-	\$1,071,100	\$1,055,200
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	\$3,150,000	\$3,077,100	-	-	\$3,150,000	\$3,077,100

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	350	445	350	445
Protect in	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	52	40	52

Fee w/o State PILT Liability												
Protect in Easement	0	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	405	981	440	981
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	795	1,478	830	1,478

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,873,900	\$1,823,000	\$1,873,900	\$1,823,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$205,000	\$198,900	\$205,000	\$198,900
Protect in Easement	-	-	\$80,000	-	-	-	-	-	\$991,100	\$1,055,200	\$1,071,100	\$1,055,200
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$80,000	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,070,000	\$3,077,100	\$3,150,000	\$3,077,100

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	\$5,354	\$4,096	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	\$5,125	\$3,825	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	\$2,434	\$1,075	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,354	\$4,096

PILT Liability										
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,125	\$3,825
Protect in Easement	-	-	\$2,285	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,447	\$1,075
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

13 miles of shoreline

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Rivers and streams provide corridors of habitat including intact areas of forest cover in the east and large wetland/upland complexes in the west ~ *No land was acquired in fee-title or put in a RIM conservation easement in the forest-prairie transition region of Minnesota with this appropriation.*

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors ~ *This appropriation achieved permanent protection of 1,478 acres of fish and wildlife habitat. The outcome is measured by the actual amount of land acquired in fee-title (497 acres) and recorded in a RIM conservation easement (981 acres). Limiting development on these highly forested lands maintains and improves the forest integrity. In selecting projects, emphasis was placed on those that would adjoin or add to public land to create habitat protection corridors and complexes. One complex created in Crow Wing County with a combination of fee-title acquisition and easements protected over 9 contiguous miles along the Mississippi River.*

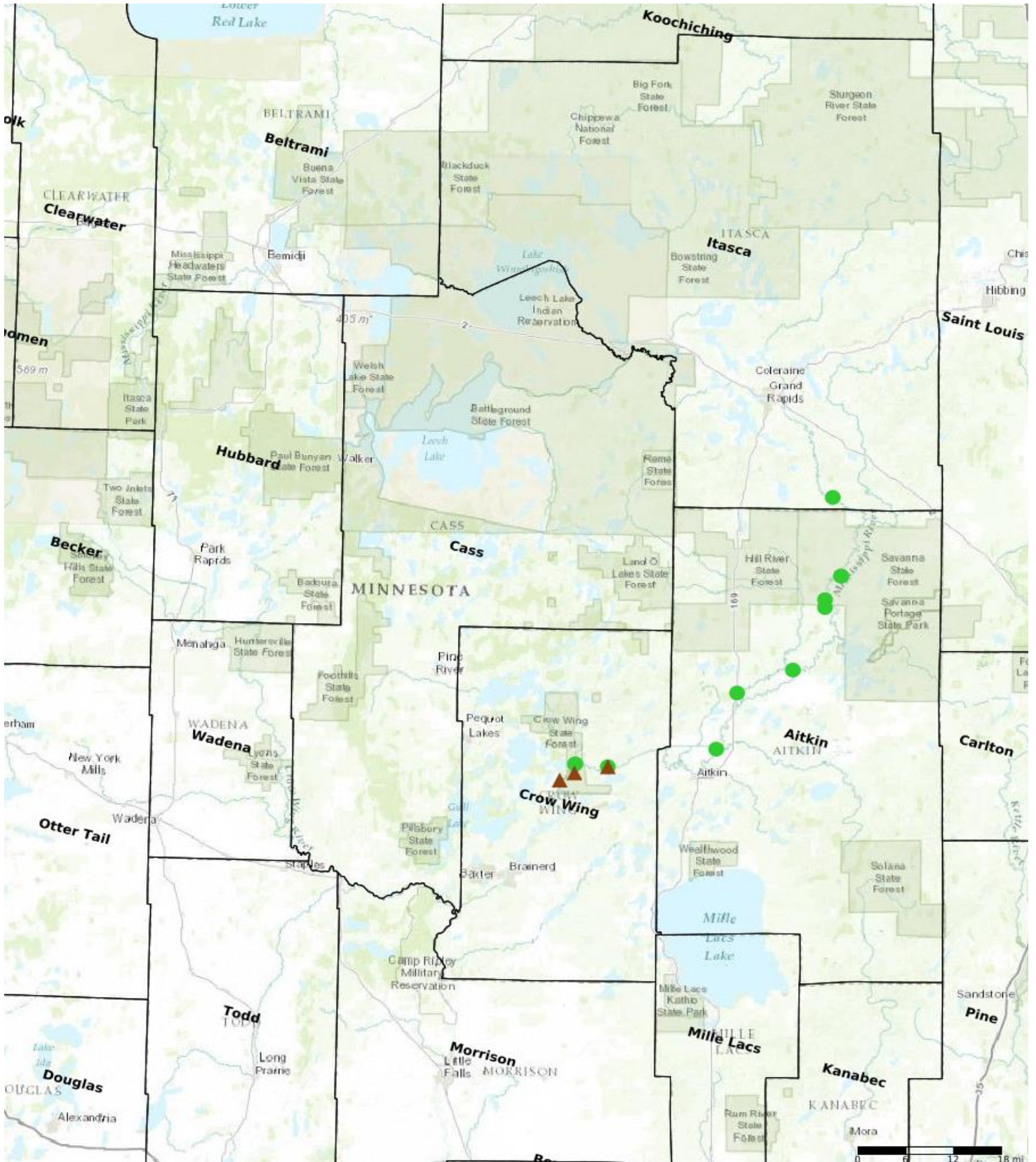
Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
01-04-17-13	Aitkin	05124234	58	\$49,000	No
01-09-18-13	Aitkin	04926235	44	\$28,300	No
01-02-17-13	Aitkin	04925213	67	\$50,000	No
01-09-17-13	Aitkin	05124213	25	\$20,000	No
01-08-17-13	Aitkin	05124213	42	\$32,000	-
01-03-16-13	Aitkin	04726205	257	\$160,000	No
01-03-17-13	Aitkin	05024203	39	\$41,000	No
Crow Wing Forest North	Crow Wing	04729220	52	\$165,000	No
18-05-17-13	Crow Wing	04729217	76	\$135,000	-
18-03-17-13	Crow Wing	04729217	166	\$225,000	No
18-16-16-13	Crow Wing	13626234	41	\$68,000	No
Indian Jack Lake WMA	Crow Wing	13626234	114	\$398,700	No
Crow Wing State Forest South	Crow Wing	04730225	331	\$700,000	No
31-02-16-13	Itasca	05324226	162	\$77,918	No



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

Parcel Map
Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project
(Data Generated From Parcel List)