

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2017 / ML 2016 Request for Funding



Date: June 04, 2015

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

Funds Requested: \$19,272,000

Manager's Name: Eran Sandquist

Title: State Coordinator - MN

Organization: Pheasants Forever, Inc.

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County Locations: Blue Earth, Carver, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Douglas, Fillmore, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Lyon, Martin, Pipestone, Pope, Redwood, Stearns, Swift, and Yellow Medicine.

Regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Abstract:

This proposal accelerates the protection of 2,500 acres of strategic 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. Over 500,000 acres of CRP in Minnesota are set to expire in the next four years, with lower authority to re-enroll throughout the life of the Farm Bill. 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. Providing 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. In addition, these public areas help bolster the economy as hunter's in Minnesota support over 12,400 jobs and spend 733 million annually.

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) 2,500 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. Restorations will also consider the needs of the monarch butterfly and native pollinators. 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 25,000 members have been actively involved in protecting and restoring lands in partnership with the Minnesota DNR for 28 years. 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.

Crops:

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **Yes**

Explain

The primary purposes of WMAs are to develop and manage for the production of wildlife and for compatible outdoor recreation. To fulfill those goals, the DNR may use limited farming specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife. This proposal may include initial development plans or restoration plans to utilize farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is a standard practice across the Midwest to prepare the seedbed for native seed planting. In these restorations, PF's policy is to use non neonicotinoid treated seed and no herbicides other than glyphosate. On a small percentage of WMAs (less than 2.5%), DNR uses farming to provide a winter food source for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture-dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources. There are no immediate plans to use farming for winter food on any of the parcels in this proposal.

Are any of the crop types planted GMO treated - **Yes**

How does the request address MN habitats that have: historical value to fish and wildlife, wildlife species of greatest conservation need, MN County Biological Survey data, and/or rare, threatened and endangered species inventories:

Grant funding will primarily focus on prairie wetland and grassland habitats previously converted for row crop agriculture. Priority will also be given to protecting parcels with remnant native prairie. The well documented and number one threat to all of Minnesota's wildlife species is habitat loss and fragmentation. This program focuses on the protection of priority grasslands and wetlands that build upon existing investments in habitat. The aim is to increase functionality and productivity of grassland landscapes (e.g. Grassland Bird Conservation Area Concept) to maximize quality habitat for game production, for the benefit of important wildlife species, and for Minnesotans to recreate on.

What is the nature of urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible:

The incremental exodus of Conservation Reserve Program acres in Minnesota's farmland region over the last eight years has resulted in a loss of 700,000 acres of habitat. Meanwhile, economic and policy pressures on grasslands and wetlands continue. Fee-title acquisition is one essential strategy that protects foundational grassland habitat.

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.

Which sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are applicable to this project:

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

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

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

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

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

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- 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

Metro / Urban:

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

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

How does this proposal accelerate or supplement your current efforts in this area:

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.

Describe the source and amount of non-OHF money spent for this work in the past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
Annual	PF	150,000

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended:

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 also be used for the initial site development and restoration/enhancement work.

Explain the things you will do in the future to 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	Management

Activity Details:

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

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.

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.

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing - **No**

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	07/01/2016
Contract appraisals ordered	03/01/2017
Purchase agreements	09/01/2017
Re-evaluate tract priority	10/30/2017
Contract appraisals ordered	12/01/2017
Purchase agreements	06/30/2018
Close on tracts	06/30/2019
Restorations completed	06/30/2021

Federal Funding:

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **Yes**

Are the funds confirmed - **No**

What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds - **07/01/2016**

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.*

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$19,272,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$150,000	\$0		\$150,000
Contracts	\$1,000,000	\$75,000	Federal, Private, PF	\$1,075,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$17,500,000	\$650,000	Federal, Private, PF	\$18,150,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$140,000	\$0		\$140,000
Direct Support Services	\$54,000	\$0		\$54,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$100,000	\$0		\$100,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$328,000	\$0		\$328,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$19,272,000	\$725,000	-	\$19,997,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
PF State Coordinator - MN	0.21	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
PF Field Staff	0.32	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
PF Grants Staff	0.26	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Total	0.79	9.00	\$150,000	\$0	-	\$150,000

Amount of Request: \$19,272,000

Amount of Leverage: \$725,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 3.76%

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	500	2,000	0	0	2,500
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	500	2,000	0	0	2,500

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

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	30
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	30

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	\$3,854,400	\$15,417,600	\$0	\$0	\$19,272,000
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	\$3,854,400	\$15,417,600	\$0	\$0	\$19,272,000

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	2,100	0	2,500
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	80	320	0	2,100	0	2,500

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	\$616,600	\$2,466,600	\$0	\$16,188,800	\$0	\$19,272,000
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	\$616,600	\$2,466,600	\$0	\$16,188,800	\$0	\$19,272,000

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	\$7,709	\$7,709	\$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	\$7,708	\$7,708	\$0	\$7,709	\$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?
New WMA	10728224	177	\$1,100,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Carver

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Paterson Lake WMA	11625220	420	\$4,200,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Tiger Marsh WMA Addition Tr. 4	11526209	40	\$400,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Chippewa

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Spartan WMA	11639218	66	\$360,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Cottonwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Farhagen WMA Addition Tr. 2	10536214	120	\$900,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Douglas

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Belle River WMA Addition	12936230	100	\$500,000	Yes	Full	Not Applicable
Klug WMA	12840222	92	\$650,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Fillmore

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Beaver Creek WMA Addition	10113228	320	\$2,200,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Jackson

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Caraway WMA Addition	10436225	99	\$800,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Heron Lake WMA	10437231	80	\$575,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Heron Lake WMA	10437232	80	\$575,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Petersburg WMA	10134226	96	\$575,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Sio ux Valley WMA Addition	10137228	246	\$2,000,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Teal Lake WMA Addition	10436230	185	\$1,665,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Lac Qui Parle

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Caerulean WMA	11945219	152	\$650,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Green Valley WMA	11240219	80	\$480,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Ringneck Ravine WMA	11042222	28	\$196,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Sodus WMA Addition Tr. 2	11042236	80	\$640,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Martin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Gruven WMA Addition Tr. 2	10330235	195	\$1,250,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Pipestone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Eden WMA	10547224	18	\$125,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Pope

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
New WMA	12438220	310	\$1,000,000	Yes	Full	Not Applicable
New WMA	12438221	0	\$0	Yes	Full	Not Applicable
New WMA	12438228	0	\$0	Yes	Full	Not Applicable

Redwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lamberton WMA Addition	10936217	160	\$800,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Phylis Voosen WMA	11238220	314	\$1,570,000	Yes	Full	Not Applicable

Stearns

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Mel Roehrl WMA Addition Tr. 3	12435204	160	\$600,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Mel Roehrl WMA Addition Tr. 4	12435205	120	\$500,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Swift

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Bench WMA	12238231	80	\$300,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Camp Kerk WMA Addition	12237218	24	\$40,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Yellow Medicine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Meager WMA T2	11443220	154	\$1,080,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

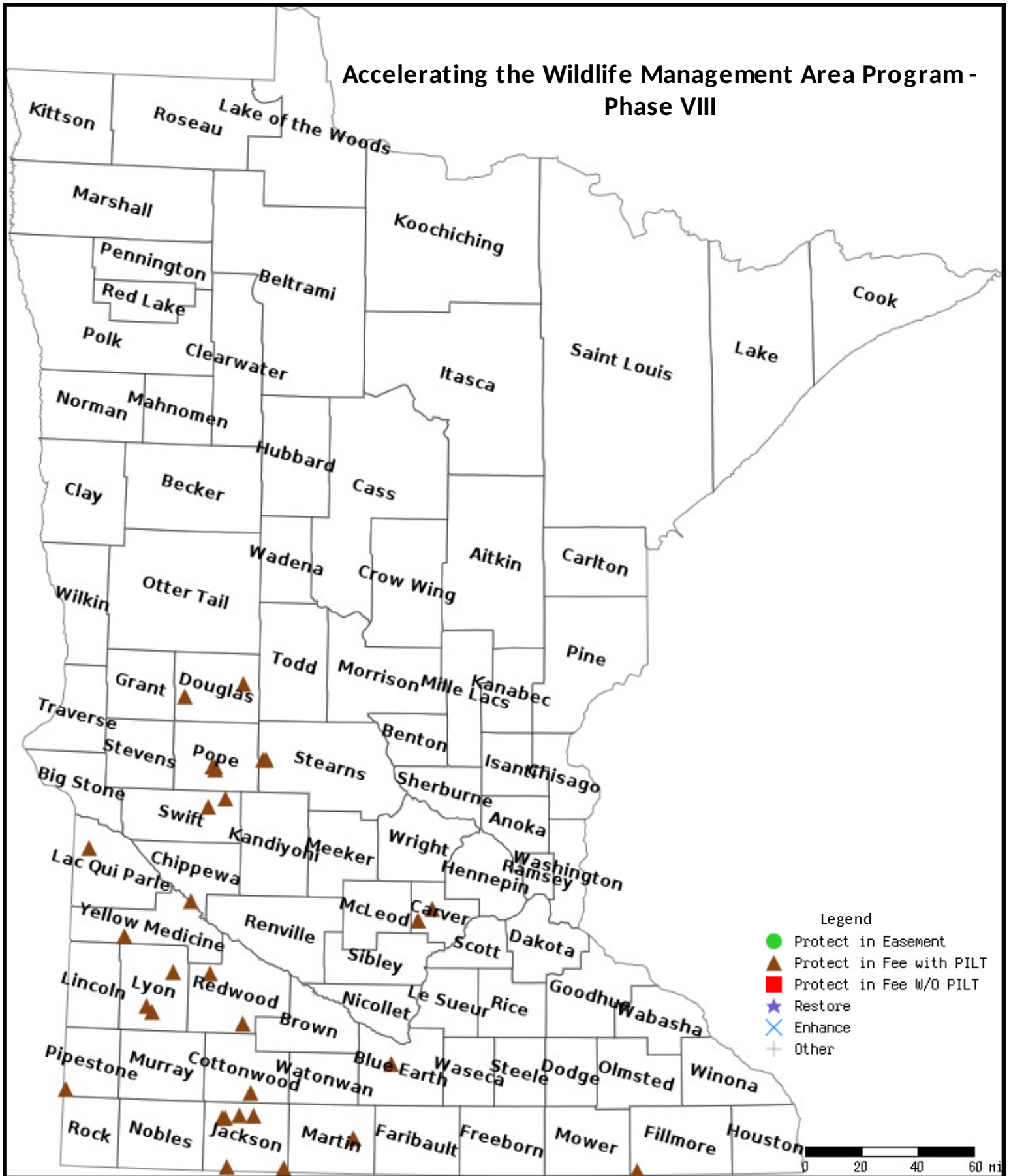
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase VIII

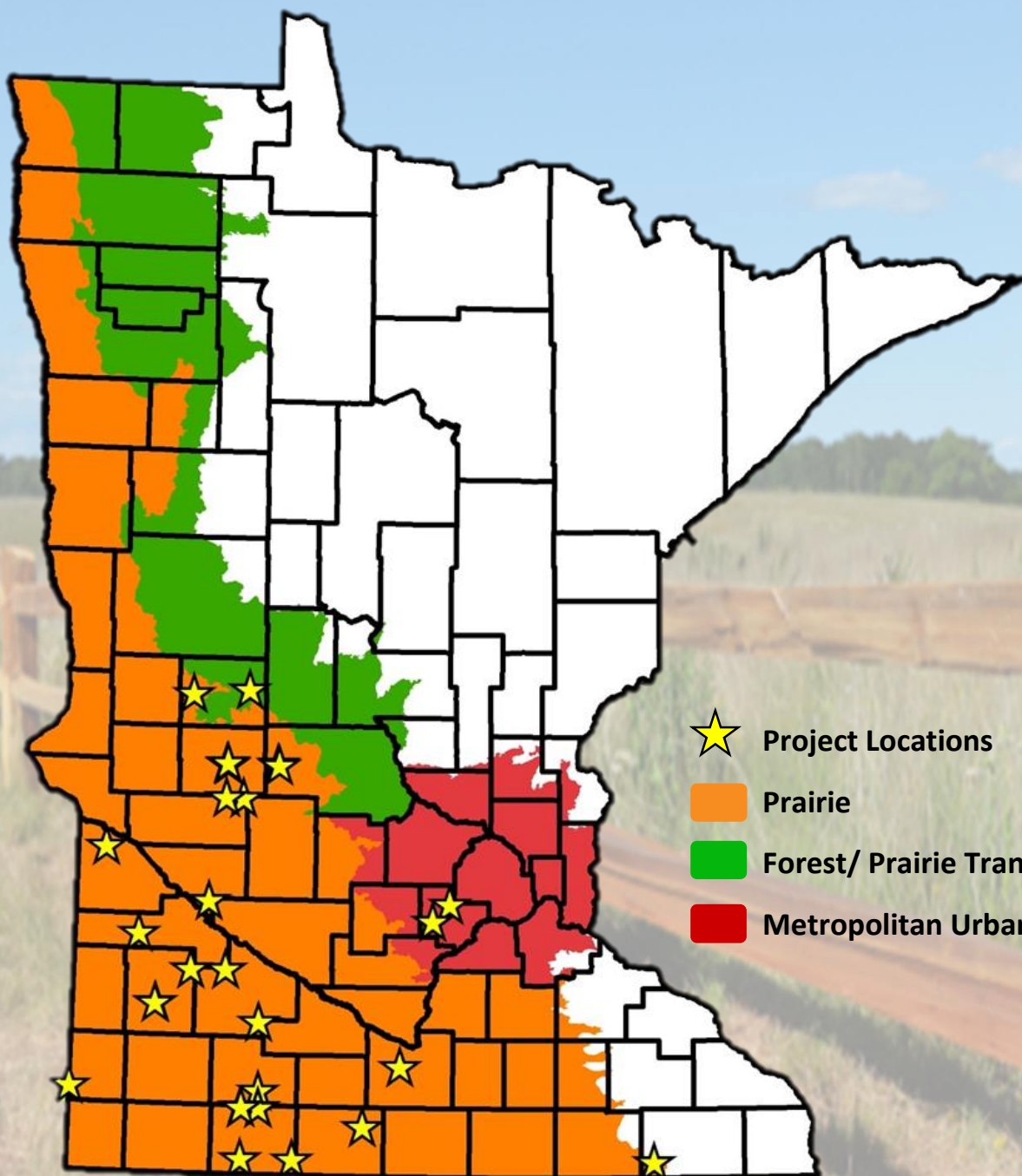
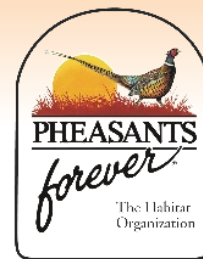


Data Generated From Parcel List

Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase 8



2,500 Proposed Acres to be Permanently Protected and Restored



- ★ Project Locations
- Orange Prairie
- Green Forest/ Prairie Transition
- Red Metropolitan Urbanizing Area

