

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2018 / ML 2017 Request for Funding



Date: June 15, 2016

Program or Project Title: Critical Shoreland Habitat Protection Program - Phase IV (FA08)

Funds Requested: \$5,226,500

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County Locations: Cook, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis.

Regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Habitat

Abstract:

This project will protect up to 3 miles of critical shoreland and 1,000 acres associated high-quality wildlife habitats in Minnesota's Northeast region by securing permanent conservation easements in strategic locations along priority lakes and rivers, creating protected habitat complexes.

Design and scope of work:

The natural shoreline around Minnesota's celebrated lakes and rivers comprises one of the most biologically important systems in the state for fish, game and wildlife. It is also one of its most threatened. In order to preserve this important component of Minnesota's natural heritage, the Minnesota Land Trust proposes to implement Phase 4 of its Critical Shoreland Habitat Protection Program to protect important lakeshore and stream-side habitat. This project will build on the success of Phases 1-3 of this program and help fulfill the goals of the DNR's Aquatic Management Area program, the State Wildlife Action Plan, and many other state priorities.

In this fourth phase of the program, the Minnesota Land Trust will strategically concentrate its activity on important aquatic resources and associated forest habitat within northeast Minnesota, including DNR-designated high priority trout streams along the North Shore, sensitive shoreline along the deep-water border lakes and other high-quality aquatic habitats in the region. The Land Trust will protect 2.5 miles and 1000 acres of threatened shoreline habitat by acquiring permanent conservation easements from willing landowners. The program will continue to target projects that help complete gaps in existing public ownership, contain the highest-quality habitat, and provide the greatest leverage to the state. The Land Trust will seek donated easements in these areas whenever possible but also may purchase easements that help complete key complexes as necessary.

The development and disturbance of the state's remaining sensitive shoreland habitat continues to be a threat identified in many of

the State's resource protection plans. Science conducted by the DNR and others indicate that the shoreland zone is one of the most biologically diverse and important habitat types for a variety of wildlife species. It is also one of Minnesota's most threatened resources due to the intensity of shoreline development and non-compatible management. Fortunately, there is an opportunity to address this threat. Outreach conducted under Phases 1-3 of this program has generated significant landowner interest; Phase 4 will provide the resources to meet this demand.

Conservation easements secured under this program will be perpetual and drafted to further prevent the fragmentation and destruction of existing habitat. These easements will ensure that the sensitive shoreline habitat will remain ecologically viable and productive for fish, game and wildlife by prohibiting land uses that negatively impacts the important habitat values and requiring habitat management plans to maximize the benefits of the shoreland and associated forested uplands.

Outcomes from this project include: 1) healthy populations of trout and other fish species, waterfowl, and other species in greatest conservation need; 2) maintaining water quality of aquatic resources; 3) increased participation of private landowners in habitat projects; and 4) enhancement of prior state and local investments made in shoreland and forest conservation in the region. The Land Trust will strategically target complexes of protect lands in which these outcomes are maximized.

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

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

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare

Describe how your program will advance the indicators identified in the plans selected:

Once secured, conservation easements will protect in perpetuity the important shorelines and associated upland habitats adjacent to some of Minnesota's premier aquatic resources. Habitat management plans will be developed to enhance and maintain the site's important habitat. Protection of these critical habitats advances a primary goal identified by the Statewide Wildlife Action Plan through stabilization of Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Protection and stewardship of private forest lands, wetlands, and grasslands will promote conservation of natural lands, fisheries, and wildlife as a priority statewide action identified in the DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Northern Forest:

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:

Nearly all fish, game and wildlife in Minnesota depend on habitat found on private lands at some point in their life cycle. With more than 76% of Minnesota's lands in private hands, the protection of key habitat types requires the protection of private lands. Minnesota's numerous habitat plans such as the Prairie Plan, Forest for the Future Plan or the Aquatic Management Area Plan, call for the use of conservation easements to meet their goals of increasing Minnesota's fish, game and wildlife populations.

This proposal reflects this urgent call for the strategic protection of important wildlife habitats throughout northeast Minnesota. This program will secure permanent conservation easements on priority lands with high quality habitats that also serve to build complexes of protected habitat. This will enhance the State's prior investments in habitat protection and leave a larger, lasting legacy thanks to the permanency of the easements and the much-needed participation of Minnesota's landowners in our State's conservation efforts.

The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally accredited land trust with a successful track record of monitoring, managing and enforcing more than 500 easements throughout the state. This organization commitment and credibility will help maintain the State's investment and ensure positive outcomes for fish, game and wildlife for decades to come.

Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

All lands protected by Phase 4 have been identified as part of high priority shoreland projects through planning processes by public and private entities, including the Minnesota Land Trust, the Minnesota DNR, and others.

How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species:

The natural shoreline around Minnesota’s celebrated lakes and rivers comprises one of the most biologically important systems in the state for fish, game and wildlife and is also one of its most threatened. Phase 4 of this program will preserve critical shoreland habitats in northeast Minnesota - an important component of the state's natural heritage - essential to maintaining healthy populations of the region's fish and wildlife populations (trout and other fish, waterfowl, and other species in greatest conservation need) and maintaining water quality of aquatic resources. The protection of these habitats has been identified in numerous plans as a conservation priority for Minnesota, including the Minnesota Biological Survey, the DNR’s Aquatic Management Area program, the State Conservation and Preservation Plan, Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda, and the Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework. The central goal of this program is to protect high quality critical shoreland habitat by securing permanent conservation easements in strategic locations along priority lakes and rivers, leaving a lasting legacy of protected habitat complexes.

Identify indicator species and associated quantities this habitat will typically support:

DNR staff, in consultation with a variety of experts in NGOs and other agencies, have compiled a select group of indicator species and associated quantities to be used to answer the question above. The metrics are derived from existing data sources and/or scientific literature, but are necessarily gross averages; they are not accurate at a site-specific scale. Therefore, they are not intended to be used to score or rank requests, but represent the best information we have for immediate support to the Council's objective.

1. Forests

Two species have been identified to represent various forest habitats:

Ovenbird: Are found in relatively mature forest but can also be found in younger forests. While territories vary in size and may overlap, an average of 16 pairs for every 40 acres may be expected.

Golden-winged Warbler: Often associated with shrubland habitat and regenerating forests, a variety of forest habitats are required (a matrix of shrubby wetlands and uplands, regenerating forests, and mature forests). While territories vary in size, roughly 6 pairs for every 40 acres may be expected.

2. Aquatic Species

The information below is based on general averages for potential aquatic indicator species in Minnesota, and does not capture the variability inherent in populations of fish and mussels. Natural populations, including healthy populations with good habitat, vary among locations, and also rise and fall within lakes and rivers.

Trout: 40 lbs per acre.

Lakes: Walleye (2 adults/acre); Muskie (0.2 adults/acre); Northern Pike (10 adults/acre).

Outcomes:

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation *This program will permanently protect 1000 acres of strategic northern forest region habitats and approximately 3 miles of undeveloped shoreline. Measure: Acres protected.*

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

The land protected through conservation easements will be sustained through the best standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship. The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited and insured land trust with a very successful stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring, effective records management, addressing inquiries and interpretations, tracking changes in ownership, investigating potential violations and defending the easement in case of a true violation. Funding for these easement stewardship activities is included in the project budget.

Explain the things you will do in the future to maintain project outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2021 (and in perpetuity)	MLT Stewardship & Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of property in perpetuity	Enforcement as needed	

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

Outreach conducted under Phases 1-3 of this program has generated significant landowner interest. Additionally, the recent lull in the real-estate market has given many landowners an opportunity to reflect on the future of their lands, providing a narrow window of time to invest in these shoreland protection projects. With that lull subsiding and the real estate market again growing, added development pressure is once again being placed on these resources.

How does this proposal include leverage in funds or other effort to supplement any OHF appropriation:

The Land Trust encourages private landowners to fully or partially donate the appraised value of their conservation easement, thereby receiving less than the appraised value might otherwise allow. This donated value is shown as leveraged funds in the proposal. The Land Trust has a long track record in incentivizing landowners to participate in this fashion.

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2009	Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund	210,000
2011	Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund	450,000

Activity Details

Requirements:

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

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection - **Yes**

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **No**

Land Use:

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **No**

Will the eased land be open for public use - **No**

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list - **Yes**

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:

Most conservation easements are established on private lands, many of which have driveways, field roads and trails located on them. Often, these established trails and roads are permitted in the terms of the easement and can be maintained for personal use if their use does not significantly impact the conservation values of the property. Creation of new roads/trails or expansion of existing ones is not allowed.

Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition - **Yes**

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

Existing trails and roads are identified in the project baseline report and will be monitored annually as part of the Land Trust's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads/trails will be the responsibility of the landowner.

Will new trails or roads be developed as a result of the OHF acquisition - **No**

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Acquire conservation easements: 1) identify landowners; 2) negotiate, draft and complete easements; 3) dedicate funds for stewardship	June 30, 2020

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$5,226,500

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$202,500	\$0		\$202,500
Contracts	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$4,500,000	\$700,000	Private	\$5,200,000
Easement Stewardship	\$200,000	\$0		\$200,000
Travel	\$15,000	\$0		\$15,000
Professional Services	\$196,000	\$0		\$196,000
Direct Support Services	\$48,000	\$48,000	MLT	\$96,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$5,226,500	\$748,000		\$5,974,500

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Conservation Staff	0.75	3.00	\$202,500	\$0		\$202,500
Total	0.75	3.00	\$202,500	\$0		\$202,500

Amount of Request: \$5,226,500
 Amount of Leverage: \$748,000
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 14.31%
 DSS + Personnel: \$250,500
 As a % of the total request: 4.79%
 Easement Stewardship: \$200,000
 As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 4.44%

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

Like all conservation entities, the Minnesota Land Trust has direct support expenses which are essential to complete a conservation project, which include such costs as administrative support staff, office space, printing and office supplies. This proposal accounts for these critical expenses which are consistent with the Land Trust's current application for a federal indirect expense rate. However, we included only 50% of these direct support costs in this proposal, with the other 50% coming as leverage and paid for through the Land Trust's fundraising.

Does the amount in the contract line include R/E work?

No.

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental? - Yes

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging:

Land Trust staff often rents automobiles for longer distance trips as opposed to driving personal vehicles. Car rental for longer distances is a much more cost-efficient option. Car rental is a traditional travel cost.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The Land Trust encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements to ensure the perpetual

protection of these important lands and waters. The leverage portion of the easement acquisition line item is a conservative estimate of value we expect to see donated to the Land Trust.

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable? - Yes

Tell us how this project would be scaled and how administrative costs are affected, describe the “economy of scale” and how outputs would change with reduced funding, if applicable:

Because this program endeavors to protect multiple parcels with this funding, it is scalable. Less funding will result in fewer protected acres. However, because we have numerous landowners ready to implement conservation easements, delaying funding for future years could result in landowners losing interest or ability in protecting their properties. Because of the aging population of landowners, we have a narrow window of time in which to work with many Minnesota landowners who still have a conservation ethic. In addition, some of the administrative and outreach costs are more fixed. As such, though minor, there is an economy of scale to working to do more projects under one appropriation.

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	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	1,000	1,000

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	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,226,500	\$5,226,500
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,226,500	\$5,226,500

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	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000

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	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,226,500	\$5,226,500
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,226,500	\$5,226,500

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	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,227
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	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,227
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

3

I have read and understand Section 15 of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Statute 97A.056, and the Call for Funding Request. I certify I am authorized to submit this proposal and to the best of my knowledge the information provided is true and accurate.

Parcel List

Explain the process used to select, rank and prioritize the parcels:

Backed by an array of conservation plans and relevant data (Minnesota Biological Survey, the DNR's Aquatic Management Area program, the State Conservation and Preservation Plan, Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda, and the Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework), MLT works with the MNDNR, Trout Unlimited, and other conservation partners to strategically identify and target easement acquisition that both protects priority shoreland resources and builds upon the existing framework of conserved lands.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Cook

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lake Superior 1	05805201	23	\$425,000	No	No	

Koochiching

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Rainy Lake	07122219	28	\$250,000	No	No	

Lake

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lake Superior 2	05309206	5	\$0	No	No	
Lake Superior 3	05211215	66	\$0	No	No	
Long Lake	05511232	400	\$600,000	No	No	
Silver Creek	05709208	2,000	\$2,000,000	No	No	
Skunk Creek	05409203	880	\$1,320,000	No	No	

St. Louis

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Burntside Lake	06413235	90	\$1,070,000	No	No	
Burntside River 1	06313230	205	\$410,000	No	No	
Burntside River 2	06313226	80	\$160,000	No	No	
Burntside River 3	06313232	39	\$0	No	No	
King Lake	05412210	230	\$575,000	No	No	
Lake Vermillion Pine Island	06215205	33	\$0	No	No	
Little Fork River	06321230	165	\$0	No	No	
Low Lake	06412235	125	\$1,000,000	No	No	
Pelican River	06419208	93	\$20,000	No	No	
Thompson Lake 1	05314212	45	\$0	No	No	
Thompson Lake 2	05314211	10	\$0	No	No	

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

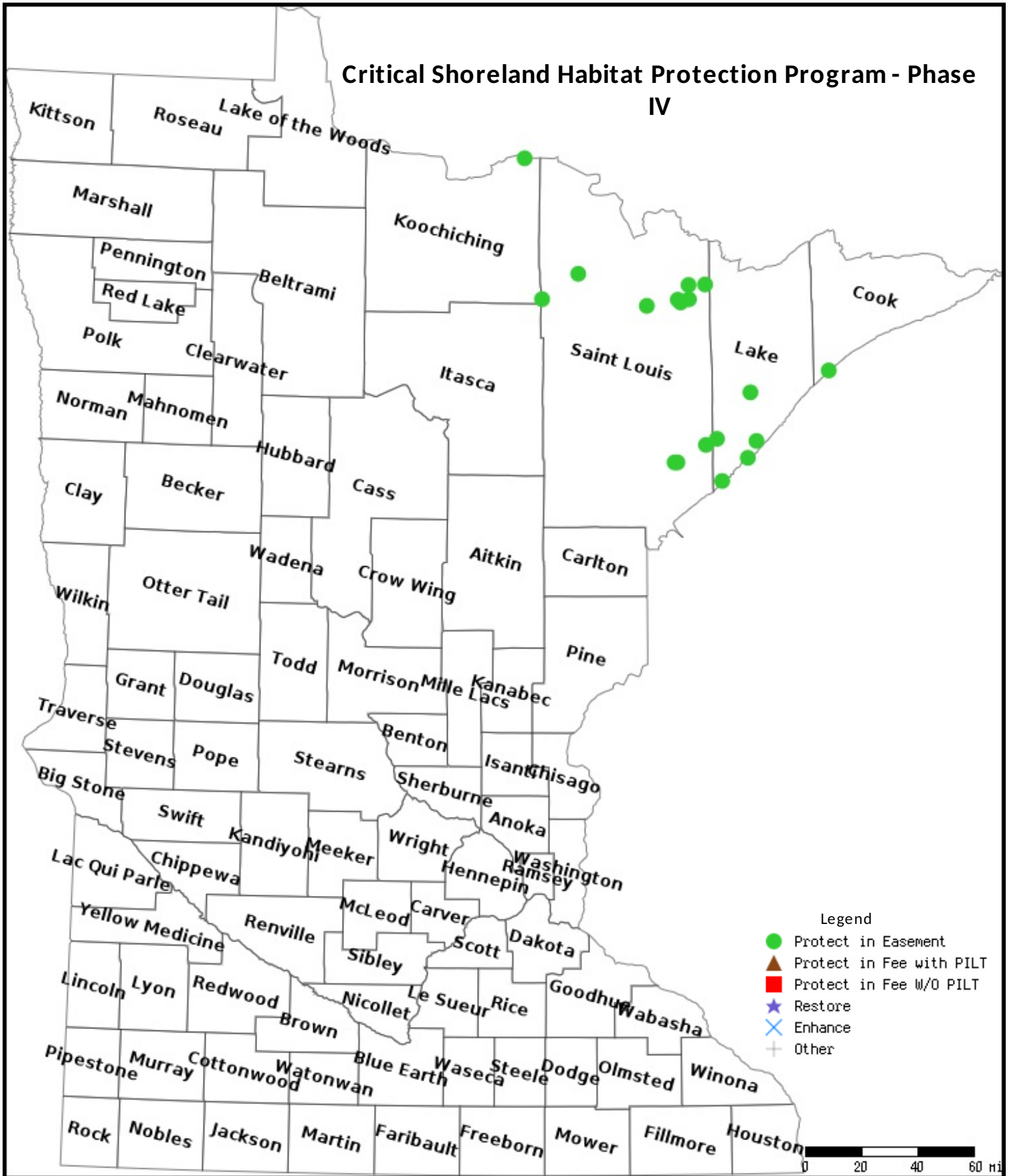
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Critical Shoreland Habitat Protection Program - Phase IV



Data Generated From Parcel List

Critical Shoreland Habitat Protection Program Phase 4

The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited conservation organization with a twenty-year history of protecting Minnesota's most unique wildlife habitats around the state.

For more information, please contact Wayne Ostlie, Director of Land Protection, at 651-917-6292



WHAT IS THE CRITICAL SHORELAND HABITAT PROTECTION PROGRAM?

The goal of the Critical Shoreland Habitat Protection Program is to protect critical shoreland and high-quality wildlife habitats in Minnesota's Northeast region by securing permanent conservation easements in strategic locations along priority lakes and rivers, leaving a lasting legacy of protected habitat complexes. In this fourth phase we aim to protect 1,000 acres and 2.5 miles of shoreline.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM SUPPORT STATE GOALS?

Our work supports a number of goals outlined in the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, DNR's Aquatic Management Area Program, and the DNR's Strategic Conservation Agenda. Specifically, we aim to address these goals by:

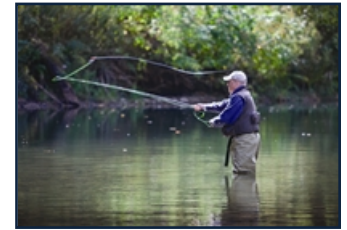
❖ **Protecting critical shoreland of streams and lakes**



❖ **Protecting forestland through acquisition or easement**

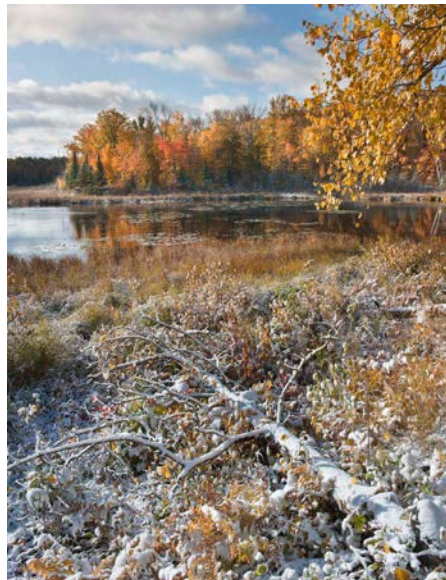


❖ **Targeting unique landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife**



WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM?

- Healthy populations of trout and other fish, waterfowl, and other species in greatest conservation need
- Maintaining water quality of aquatic resources
- Forestlands protected from development and fragmentation
- Increased participation of private landowners in habitat projects
- Enhancement of prior public investment in shoreland and forest conservation



WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN PHASES 1-3 OF THE PROGRAM?

- **Phase I:** Completed 7 conservation easement projects, protecting 1,330 acres of habitat and nearly 30,700 feet of critical shoreline (nearly six miles)
- **Phase II:** Completed 7 easement projects, protecting 912 acres and 28,496 feet of shoreline (over 5 miles)
- **Phase III:** Completed 3 easement projects, protecting 605 acres and 19,513 feet of shoreline; 3 other projects to be completed this year will add 473 acres and 26,738 feet of shoreline

MINNESOTA LAND TRUST

Critical Shoreline Habitat Protection Program

