

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Fiscal Year 2018 / ML 2017 Request for Funding



**Date:** June 21, 2016

**Program or Project Title:** Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - Phase III (HA04)

**Funds Requested:** \$6,974,000

**Manager's Name:** Lindsey Ketchel

**Title:** Executive Director

**Organization:** Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation

**Address:** P.O. Box 455

**City:** Hackensack, MN 56452

**Office Number:** 218-675-5773

**Mobile Number:** 907-209-5414

**Email:** lindseyk@leechlakewatershed.org

**County Locations:** Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, and Hubbard.

**Regions in which work will take place:**

- Northern Forest

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Habitat

### Abstract:

The Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation in partnership with the Minnesota Land Trust will protect high priority critical fish habitat and the surrounding watersheds on 38 tullibee "refuge" lakes by securing conservation easements and fee title acquisitions. We will permanently protect approximately 1,343 acres. If a lake's watershed has less than 25% land disturbance the lake has a high probability to maintain clean water and healthy lake ecosystem. State of Minnesota reports indicate this region could see 64% population growth by 2030. Protecting key parcels will help sustain both recreational and sport fisheries in North Central Minnesota.

### Design and scope of work:

Sustaining a strong angling heritage revolves largely around protecting fisheries habitat. Resurging shoreland development pressures and looming climate changes are a direct threat to our lakes ecology. This project will focus on fisheries habitat protection on lakes that have the best biological integrity for a sustained sport fishery. Our protection efforts are focused on Tullibee (aka cisco) a preferred forage fish of walleye, northern pike, muskellunge and lake trout. They require cold, well oxygenated waters, a condition most common in lakes with deep water and healthy watersheds. Minnesota DNR Fisheries researchers studied tullibee lakes and designated 68 lakes in Minnesota as the primary "refuge lakes" for tullibee that need protection. We are targeting thirty-eight (38) of these lakes located in Hubbard, Crow-Wing, Cass and Aitkin counties. Many are Minnesota's premier recreational lakes.

Fisheries research has shown that healthy watersheds with intact forest are fundamental to good fish habitat. Conservation Easements will move 3 Tullibee refuge lakes to protected class and 6 lakes close to the protection threshold. We analyzed our targeted lakes and prioritized landowner parcels based on program criteria which include sensitive shoreland, type of wetlands, and proximity to an inlet or outlet. Due to the level of interest in the program, we are applying for a Phase III of this effort. To ensure the best conservation return on the state's investment, landowner willingness to donate a portion of the easement value will be a key component of the parcels evaluation. The conservation easement partners will include County Soil & Water Districts, MNDNR Fisheries, Minnesota Land Trust and LLAWF. LLAWF is going through Land Trust Alliance accreditation, which could result in expansion of our current role as grant

administrator, landowner outreach and technical support to include holding conservation easements. LLAWF & MLT will work to ensure appropriate staffing levels to execute the grant.

Per the MNDNR Fish Habitat Plan 2013, the quality of nearshore fish habitat in lakes is determined largely by shoreland disturbance, impacting water quality, oxygen levels, and nutrient content. Lakeshore development decreases a lake's ability to function as a healthy ecosystem.

In 2016 MNDNR finalized their Fisheries Management Plan for Leech Lake. Using nearshore habitat inventory and muskellunge spawning habitat assessment, area fisheries biologists and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe have identified Two Points in Portage Bay (mesotrophic) as a key acquisition to protect spawning areas for walleye and muskellunge. We seek funds to strategically acquire 45.27 acres which include 2 islands of high quality aquatic habitat, wildlife habitat and approximately 0.7 mile of shoreland that would protect the third largest lake in Minnesota. MNDNR internal score on the proposed AMA is extremely high at 36. The Leech Lake Association's Lake Management Plan supports protecting these types of lands. The land would be managed like a MNDNR Aquatic Management Area and held in title by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. The parcel will be open to the public for hunting and recreation.

### **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:**

- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Long Range Plan for Muskellunge and Large Northern Pike Management Through 2020

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

Protection of critical near shore parcels, riparian areas and key forested parcels will be tracked by analyzing the land surface of the watershed. If the tullibee "refuge" lake is less than 25% disturbed by development or intensive land use and 75% of the land area of the watershed is permanently protected, these lakes can generally be assured to maintain high water quality that will support tullibee and resiliency against climate change. Our fee title acquisition on Leech Lake will help implement the long range plan for muskellunge which states native waters or stocked waters with documented natural reproduction will receive the highest priority for protection. The goal is to maintain critical habitat so that natural or introduced muskellunge populations are preserved and this acquisition meets those goals. Additionally the MN DNR AMA Plan identifies north central lakes as the priority focus for AMA's.

### **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:**

Our Clean Water Critical Habitat program is focused on protecting some of the most important recreational and sport fisheries lakes in Minnesota and helps preserve this State's proud angler heritage. When many residents endorsed the Legacy act they indicated a strong interest in seeing lakes protected. With over 5,400 recreational fishing lakes it is extremely difficult to prioritize which lakes to protect. By focusing on Tullibee "refuge" lakes our efforts are targeted and achievable. Over the next fifteen years our program will move 38 targeted cold water lakes into a protective class by protecting 75% of the watershed from development. In partnerships with SWCD, BWSR, MNDNR and WRAPS and County water plans, we will increase the number of acres enrolled in forest management plans, conservation easements, SFIA lands and fee title acquisitions. These efforts will protect some of the most important recreational lakes in Minnesota from degradation.

Additionally, during our landowner enrollment in the conservation easement program it became very apparent that many landowners are willing to donate easements, bequest their land to MNDNR or take modest compensation to protect this region. Our program is cultivating a high conservation ethic and developing effective tools for landowners to protect their land and waters. It is also creating a great shared responsibility essential to maximizing our investment to achieve our targeted protection goals.

### **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:**

Timothy Cross and Peter Jacobson "Landscape factors influencing lake phosphorus concentrations across Minnesota" white paper determined coldwater fish communities are especially vulnerable to eutrophication from increased phosphorus concentrations. Decreases in hypolimnetic oxygen concentrations have direct negative effects on fish that physiologically require (Tullibee) oxygenated cold water to survive, grow and reproduce. Protection is viewed as the most cost effective strategy when applied to watersheds where human activities have not already significantly elevated phosphorus levels.

Peter Jacobson and Mike Duval, "Protecting Watershed of Minnesota Lakes with Private Forest Conservation Easements: A Suggested Strategy", stated that protecting the forests in these watersheds from development is critical for maintaining water quality in these lakes. While large areas of land in forested portions are under public ownership, a considerable amount is also owned by private individuals in some of our most critical lake watersheds. These parcels are increasingly being "split up" and sold. Working forest easements allow sustainable timber harvest, but protect the land from further development. Modeling by MN DNR Fisheries research unit suggests that total phosphorus concentrations remain near natural background levels when less than 25% of the lakes watershed is disturbed. The tullibee "refuge" lakes have watersheds with less than 25% disturbed land uses and are good candidates for protection. The report referenced high priority lakes could include very deep lakes with exceptional water quality and support coldwater fish populations like tullibee.

Minnesota DNR Fisheries researchers studied tullibee lakes and designated 68 lakes in Minnesota as the primary "refuge lakes" for tullibee. We focused our protection efforts of the highest quality tullibee lakes that will require modest to moderate levels of land protection to achieve 75% protection levels. Protecting the habitats of tullibee "refuge" lakes along the shoreline and surrounding forest lands is essential to a sustained sport fishery.

One "Long Range Plan for Muskellunge 2020" objective is to maintain critical habitat so that natural and introduced muskellunge populations are preserved. Protecting muskellunge spawning and nursery habitats by purchasing aquatic management areas on native waters or stocked waters with documented natural reproduction would receive the highest priority.

## **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:**

Tullibee (aka cisco) is the preferred forage fish for walleye, northern pike, muskellunge and lake trout. They require cold, well oxygenated waters - a condition most common in lakes with deep water and healthy watersheds. Tullibee populations are the "canary in the coalmine" for three significant threats to Minnesota's sport fisheries: shoreland development, watershed health and climate warming. Deep, cold water lakes with high quality, well-oxygenated waters and natural, undisturbed land cover along the shorelines and within their watersheds will have the best chance to sustain tullibee populations in the face of these threats and will serve as a "refuge" for the tullibee if annual temperatures increase.

Minnesota DNR Fisheries research studied tullibee lakes and designated 68 lakes in Minnesota as primary "refuge lakes" for tullibee that need protection. Thirty eight (38) of these lakes representing 58% of the designated "refuge" lakes are located in Crow Wing, Aitkin, Cass and Hubbard counties. These lakes are premier recreational and sport fishery lakes. Fisheries research has shown that healthy watersheds with intact forest are fundamental to good fish habitat. MN DNR Fisheries Habitat Plan, states near shore fish habitat affected by shoreland disturbance can impact fisheries. Maintaining good water quality is critical to sustaining tullibees as determined by the waters oxygen level and nutrient content. Lakeshore development decreases a lakes ability to function as a healthy ecosystem for sport fish and their forage, due to increased runoff, but also through physical alternation by lakeshore owners.

Fisheries Management Plan for Leech Lake, 2016-2020 indicates protection of key spawning areas from development is important to supporting self-sustaining walleye and muskie populations. With the recent challenges at Mille Lacs Lake, Leech Lake has a diversity of shoreland and substrate, as well as its extensive littoral zone that, if protected, provides excellent spawning and nursery habitats for a number of species. Using limited near shore habitat inventory and muskellunge spawning habitat assessments, area fisheries staff has identified key spawning areas to protect. A Key area named "Two Points" is currently on the market and will be fully developed if conservation action does not preclude it.

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

The information below provides general averages for tullibee in Minnesota. These averages are generated from available data and published sources, and do not capture the variability inherent in populations of fish. Natural populations, including healthy populations with good habitat, vary among locations, and also rise and fall within lakes and rivers. Most fish surveys conducted by DNR produce an index of abundance (catch per unit effort) rather than a population estimate. As per MNDNR provided table here is the following detailed information - Aquatic system: Tullibee lakes: Indicator: Tullibee: Ave number or biomass NA; Other criteria: Sampling does not provide a reliable number of individuals, but assessment netting provides an indicator of tullibee presence, and the presence of multiple year classes provides evidence that tullibee are continuing to reproduce.

## **Outcomes:**

**Programs in the northern forest region:**

- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species *Private shoreline habitat and forested parcels totaling approximately 1300 acres will be permanently protected from development and fragmentation. 42 acres will protect sensitive shoreland and spawn area for muskellunge and walleye on Leech Lake and maintain high biological integrity. Riparian forest lands under easement will maintain healthy habitat complexes for upland and aquatic species; forest cover will enhance water quality habitat for tullibee lakes. Greater public access for wildlife and outdoors-related recreation will be attained through Fee-Title acquisition open to public for hunting and fishing. Conservation easement properties will protect fish habitat to insure high quality fishing opportunities.*

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

LLAWF and MLT are long standing conservation organizations that do not depend on Outdoor Heritage Funds to sustain or maintain our work. The majority of financial support for both LLAWF and MLT must be raised on an annual basis. The work in this proposal allows both organizations to enhance and accelerate ongoing conservation efforts in North Central Minnesota; these grant funds will not substitute for or supplant other funding sources.

The fee-title acquisition will be owned and managed by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. As such it will be permanently protected and maintained according to DNR AMA standards and procedures for public land. The Minnesota Land Trust or LLAWF will hold the conservation easements acquired. The land protected through these conservation easements will be sustained through the best standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship. The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited 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.

LLAWF will be applying for accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission following these same standards and practices in 2017

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2017 and beyond	other state and local funds	Leech Lake Band will maintain lands		
2017 and beyond	Outdoor Heritage Fund and LLAWF/MLT funds	secure easements and associated documents, include habitat management plans where appropriate	establish individual monitoring plans, annually monitor easements	Enforce easements through stewardship program as necessary

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

The next ten years are a critical window of opportunity to protect some of the "best of the best" sport fishery lakes in Minnesota. While recent economic slowed shoreland development, realtors now report a resurgence of shoreland property sales. Growth will be driven by baby boomers and technology that allows landowners to live, work and play from the same location. With land values rising in the region, now is the time to protect these tullibee "refugee" lakes and maximize the effectiveness of this fisheries habitat protection project. We are building considerable momentum and with our partnership with organizations like The Nature Conservancy and North Central Roundtable participants we believe these synergistic efforts will increase leveraging and maximize results.

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

Our LCCMR grant "Multi-benefit Watershed Scale Conservation on North Central Lakes" is a pilot program to evaluate the effectiveness of RIM Conservation Easements in a watershed protection context. RIM easements are formula based on bare land while our proposal easements are based on appraisal that includes entire parcels.

Lakes selected in the pilot overlap with our targeted lakes. These easements should result in an increase of protected lands on our targeted lakes and help move these lakes to a 75% protection level. Additionally landowner outreach overlaps with the tullibee "refugee" lakes. This allows us to increase the level of landowner engagement including developing targeted lake maps, mailings, workshops and lake association presentations. Through our landowner outreach efforts we have helped a number of landowners enroll in other conservation easement projects funded by OHF in North Central region this year.

Landowner donation of conservation values has resulted in considerable leverage of match and allowed us to maximize LSOHC funds.

In 2014 LLAWF and Roosevelt Lake Association conducted a community fundraiser for our Woods Bay fee title acquisition. We will continue this model of fundraising support with Ponto and Leech lakes.

### Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Contract with Cass County partnership with MPCA to draft Leech Lake River WRAP

### Describe the relationship of the funds:

In 2010 LLAWF helped implement an LCCMR grant titled “Protecting Sensitive Shorelands in Cass County”. The project was focused on identifying landowners along sensitive Shoreland and recruiting landowners to donate conservation easements. This grant developed effective tools to conduct targeted landowner outreach using lake maps and lake association contacts.

In 2015 we were awarded a second LCCMR grant titled “Multi-benefit Watershed Scale Conservation on North Central Lakes”. This pilot will evaluate the effectiveness of RIM conservation easements in a watershed protection context. Landowner interest in this project will help gauge whether BWSR should consider developing a statewide program aimed at shoreland and watershed protection. This program will help BWSR and its partners understand whether landowners are willing to accept less than the standard RIM rates set by the BWSR Board. All landowner outreach related to this pilot will complement and support our current and proposed Phase III OHF grant.

LLAWF has been contracted by Cass County to help implement a MPCA Clean Water Fund grant for the Leech Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Project (WRAP). When completed in 2016, this WRAP will be one of the first protection-oriented WRAPS in the state. The WRAP identified lakes and streams that are decreasing in water quality, demonstrate high sustainability to increases in phosphorus and engaged the residents on protective efforts to keep our water healthy.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
ML 2015	ENRTF	30,000
ML 2010	ENRTF	76,200

## Activity Details

### Requirements:

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 - **Yes**

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

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

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion - **Yes**

Fee Title acquisition will be managed under MNDNR AMA guidelines. The parcel will be open to fishing and hunting as per Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe ordinances that allow all non-tribal members to hunt on their land per MNDNR hunting regulations. No fee's will be charged to users.

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:

Currently there are informal walking paths and trails on the property. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe will maintain the trails for walking. No motorized vehicles will be permitted. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe will investigate if the township will support the decommissioning of the road. If successful the road will be converted to a walking path.

Landowners who place a conservation easements, which often have trails, roads and paths on them typically are allowed to use Motorized vehicles are typically allow landowners to use motorized vehicles on their property if use does not impact the conservation values of the property.

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe as owners will maintain all existing natural features, maintain natural shoreland that will prevent erosion from sending sediment into the water. Walking trail to lakeshore will be maintained by Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwa will work in consultation with local MNDNR fisheries staff to develop an aquatic management area management plan. Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation will monitor the lands and report to LSOHC.

Trails are included within the baseline report written for each easement, and subsequently monitored annually to ensure no expansion of the road/trail system, no erosion, etc. (i.e., compliance). We enforce violations if they occur.

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

## Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Fee Title acquisition of 43 acres on Leech Lake, convey to Leech Lake Band	3/1/2018
Manage, monitor and enforce conservation easements	ongoing in perpetuity
Landowner outreach, consultation, technical assistance and easement preparation	ongoing through June 2019
Protect 1300 acres on targeted riparian parcels and forested watershed parcels	June 30, 2019

# Budget Spreadsheet

**Total Amount of Request: \$6,974,000**

## Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$260,000	\$0		\$260,000
Contracts	\$99,000	\$0		\$99,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$1,375,000	\$200,000	Landowner and community supporters	\$1,575,000
Easement Acquisition	\$4,750,000	\$950,000	landowner easement valuation donation	\$5,700,000
Easement Stewardship	\$180,000	\$0		\$180,000
Travel	\$15,000	\$0		\$15,000
Professional Services	\$207,000	\$0		\$207,000
Direct Support Services	\$78,000	\$78,000	in-kind administrative overhead	\$156,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,974,000</b>	<b>\$1,228,000</b>		<b>\$8,202,000</b>

## Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
LLAWF - Fee Title	0.10	2.00	\$9,000	\$0		\$9,000
LLAWF Admin and Program Oversight / Landowner	0.05	3.00	\$17,000	\$0		\$17,000
MLT Legal and Conservation Personnel	0.66	3.00	\$135,000	\$0		\$135,000
LLAWF Conservation Personnel	0.33	3.00	\$99,000	\$0		\$99,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>11.00</b>	<b>\$260,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$260,000</b>

Amount of Request: \$6,974,000

Amount of Leverage: \$1,228,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 17.61%

DSS + Personnel: \$338,000

As a % of the total request: 4.85%

Easement Stewardship: \$180,000

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 3.79%

### 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 & Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation have 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 Minnesota Land Trust's fundraising. LLAWF calculated using similar methodology and will be matching our indirect through fundraising.

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

\$54,000 will be used to produce Habitat Management Plans on lands we will protect via conservation easements and \$45,000 will be used to hire John Sumption as an outside consultant who acts as LLAWF's Conservation Director.

### Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental? - No

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

### Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Source of leverage includes Value of donations for seller (\$150,000) on Fee Title acquisition, Lake Association contribution (\$20,000) , Community Fundraising ( \$5,000) and value of Donated Conservation Easements (\$ 700,000).

**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:**

The Conservation Easement portion of the proposal could be reduced and the budget modified to reflect changes to adjusted outputs. There is a certain level of fixed cost associated with landowner outreach, technical review of applications and site visits of landowner finalist making it challenging to scale below 50% reduction.



## 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	43	43
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	1,300	1,300
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	1,343	1,343

**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	\$1,400	\$1,400
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,564,000	\$5,564,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,565,400	\$5,565,400

**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	43	43
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	1,300	1,300
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	1,343	1,343

**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	\$1,410,000	\$1,410,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,564,000	\$5,564,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,974,000	\$6,974,000

**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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$33
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,280
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	\$32,791
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,280
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles**

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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:

This list includes targeted lakes where we will solicit landowners to participate in a competitive application process. Landowner applications will be ranked based on the tract's habitat value. Current application criteria include: feet of sensitive shoreland, percent of wetlands, types of wetlands, percentage of forest proximity to protected lands, does parcel have an inlet or outlet and potential for development. The parcel list includes two potential large conservation easements and both of these landowners will need to apply and have their projects evaluated against all the applications. These two project are very unique in the fact that they will result in two lakes designated in a protective class. The Leech Lake "Two Point" parcel was reviewed to determine its ranking for an AMA acquisition and ranked 36 out of 40. Do to the properties history with the Leech Lake Band we determined they were the best long term stewards for the property. Additionally MNDNR fully supports this acquisition.

### Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

### Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

#### Aitkin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Cedar Lake	04727231	0	\$0	no	no	No
Cedar Lake	04727231	0	\$0	No	No	No
Hill Lake	05226212	0	\$0	no	no	no
Long Lake	04625210	0	\$0	no	no	no
Round Lake	04923225	0	\$0	no	no	No

#### Cass

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Bass Lake	14026227	0	\$0	no	no	No
Cooper	14028211	0	\$0	No	No	No
Deep Portage	13929207	0	\$0	no	no	No
Girl Lake	14128233	0	\$0	no	no	No
Hattie Lake	13929231	0	\$0	no	no	No
Leech Lake Two Points	14329205	42	\$1,400,000	No	Full	Full
Little Boy Lake	14028210	1,200	\$3,500,000	no	no	No
Long Lake	14128223	0	\$0	no	no	No
Long Lake	14231233	0	\$0	no	no	No
Mann Lake	14029204	0	\$0	no	no	No
Pleasant Lake	14030221	0	\$0	no	no	No
Thunder Lake	14026209	0	\$0	no	no	No
Washburn Lake	13926209	0	\$0	no	no	No
Women Lake	14028206	0	\$0	no	no	No

#### Crow Wing

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Big Trout	13728223	0	\$0	no	no	No
Borden Lake	04428215	0	\$0	no	no	No
Crooked Lake	04528216	0	\$0	no	no	No
Kenny Lake	04428202	0	\$0	no	no	No
Lower Hay Lake	13729225	0	\$0	no	no	No
Ossawinamakee Lake	13628204	0	\$0	no	no	No
Pelican Lake	13628227	0	\$0	no	no	No
Roosevelt Lake	13826208	0	\$0	no	no	No
Star Lake	13728225	441	\$1,000,000	no	no	No
Whitefish Lake	13728207	0	\$0	no	no	No

## Hubbard

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Big Mantrap Lake	14233232	0	\$0	no	no	No
Big Sand Lake	14138228	0	\$0	no	no	No
Eleventh Crow Wing Lake	14132215	0	\$0	no	no	No
Kabekona Lake	14332230	0	\$0	no	no	No
Ninth Crow Wing Lake	14032206	0	\$0	no	no	No
Spearhead Lake	15434223	0	\$0	no	no	No

### Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

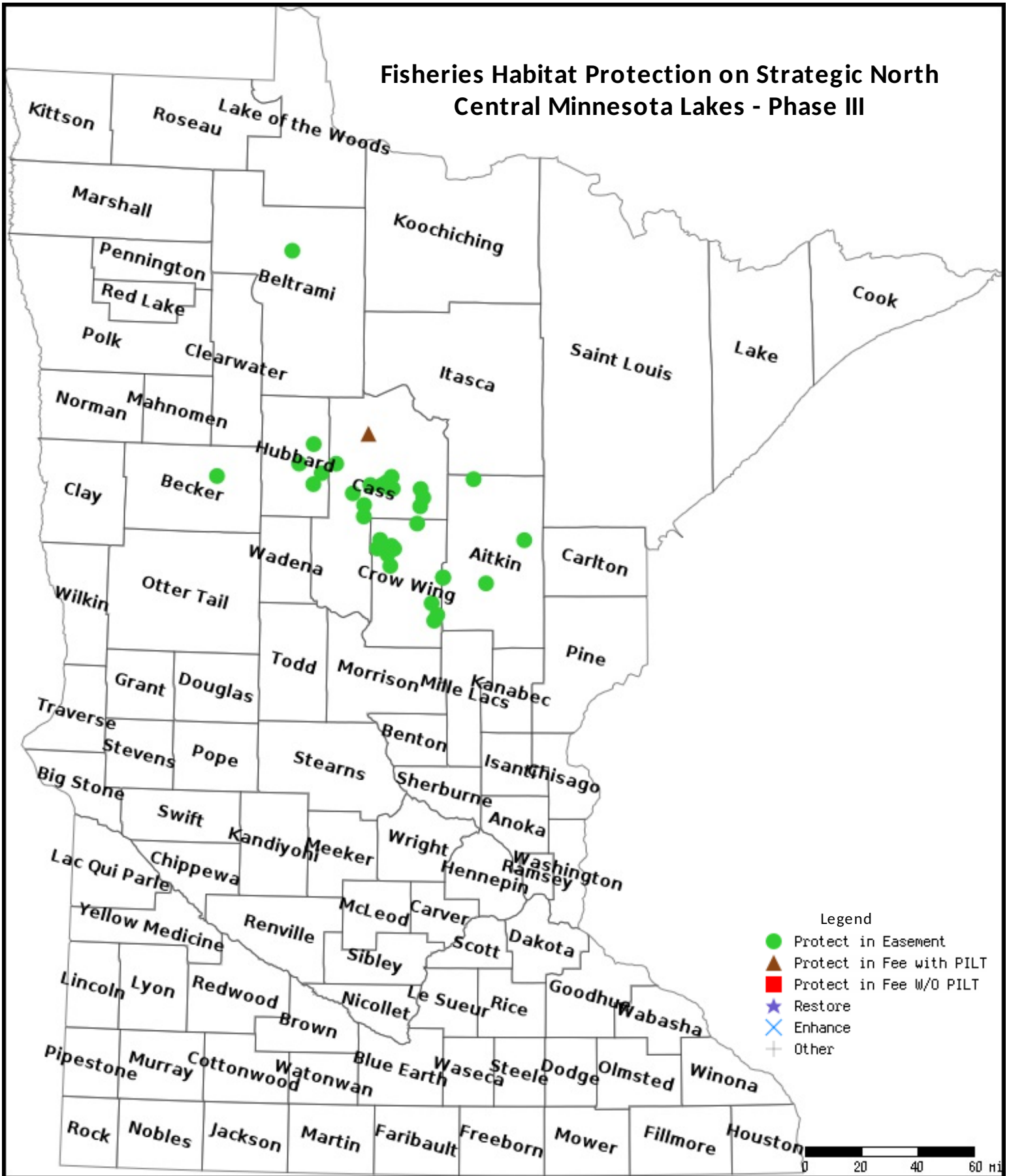
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

### Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

# Parcel Map

## Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - Phase III



Data Generated From Parcel List

# leech lake area WATERSHED FOUNDATION

*Protecting Waters, Woods, and Wildlife for Future Generations to Enjoy*

## CLEAN WATER & CRITICAL HABITAT PROTECTION PROGRAM

### WHAT IS THE PROGRAM?

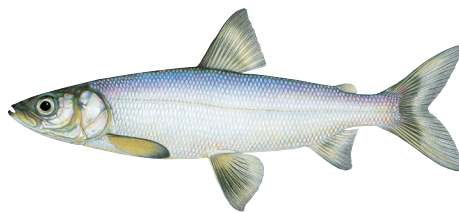
The Clean Water and Critical Habitat Protection Program is focused on protecting high priority critical fish habitat and the surrounding watersheds in Minnesota's North Central Lakes region by securing permanent conservation easements. We will work with landowners to permanently protect approximately 400 acres through a ranking system that guides our selection process for purchasing conservation easements. Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.



Fisheries research has shown that healthy watersheds with intact forests are fundamental to good fish habitat. If a lake's watershed has less than 25% land disturbance and 75% or more of its landscape remains forested and permanently protected, the lake has a high probability of sustaining clean water and healthy lake ecosystem to support fish. Projects that can simultaneously reduce shoreline development and watershed disturbances can yield the greatest conservation return.

We will focus our protection strategy on 38 Tullibee Refuge Lake and their watersheds. Tullibee are the proverbial "canary in the coal mine" fish species due to their sensitivity to even slight changes in water temperature and oxygen levels. A decrease in tullibee population can signal deterioration of the lake's water quality. Protecting lakes from excess nutrients such as phosphorus

is critical to maintaining sufficient oxygen levels. Forestland plays a key role in ensuring quality habitat, acting like a sponge to absorb and hold rainfall and reduce runoff to the surface waters of lakes and streams. Tullibee is an important food source for lake trout, northern pike, muskie and walleye. This program will also benefit habitat for many wildlife and water fowl species.



The conservation easement program will focus on critical shoreland and forested parcels. The 38 refuge Tullibee lakes in North Central Minnesota all have less than 25% land disturbance in their watersheds and already have some degree of watershed protection. With strategic effort, it is feasible to reach permanent 75% watershed protection for many of these lakes. Additionally, we will develop conservation complexes that can act as corridors, connecting existing protected land and expanding their impact.

### PROJECT PARTNERS



Cass, Crow-Wing, Hubbard and Aitkin Soil and Water Conservation Districts

### HOW WILL PROJECTS BE CHOSEN FOR THIS PROGRAM?

The Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation and the Minnesota Land Trust are opening a competitive application process to select conservation easements for funding on private lands within Minnesota's North Central lake region which includes Cass, Crow Wing, Hubbard and Aitkin Counties. Using a multi-faceted approach to prioritizing easements, a technical committee comprised of County and State agencies and project partners will weigh the overall habitat benefits of the property against the costs of acquiring the easement.



Funding will be focused on lands within the Tullibee Refuge Lake watersheds although special project applications outside the focus area will also be accepted and evaluated for their potential to protect critical fish habitat. A complete list of current lakes is at the end of this application. A second round of applications will be considered in 2016 using a similar application process.

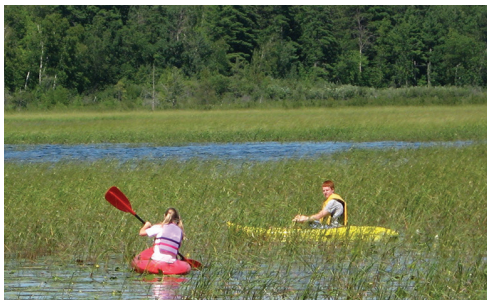
Initial applications are non-binding. Landowners and project partners are not legally bound to a conservation easement until both parties agree to and sign final conservation easement documents.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Each landowner will have their land scored based on a set of established habitat value factors. This habitat value score takes into account the size of the parcel, ecological features, amount of shoreline, protection of water quality, location in relation to other protected lands, etc.



To ensure we maximize our ecological impact, we are asking landowners to consider taking less than full compensation. This will allow us to increase the total number of acres protected and help create a competitive process. A landowner's willingness to take less than full appraised value of the easement will be taken into consideration when applications are reviewed, but will not be the sole determining factor. You may choose to be fully compensated, partially compensated, or to donate the easement.



The applications will then be ranked based on the tract's habitat value. Examples of criteria include; feet of sensitive shoreland, percentage of wetland, percentage in forest, and proximity to public or other protected lands. Existence of forest management plans and the number of additional homesites the applicant would like to retain will also be factored and rated. After all the applications have been received, a compilation of scores with rankings will be assembled and used to guide the selection process.

Easements will be funded in order of highest project value rating to lowest. After the highest rated project is selected, the application with the next highest rating will be selected in order until all available funds have been assigned to selected projects. If for any reason a conservation easement does not move forward or the application is withdrawn, the next highest rated project may be selected.



## WHAT IS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

Conservation easements are individually tailored agreements through which landowners limit the use and development of their property to permanently preserve its natural or scenic features. These features – called conservation values – might include significant wildlife and plant habitat, lake or river shoreline, wetlands or important scenic or cultural lands which benefit the public. Conservation easements targeted at sensitive shoreland and private forest within Tullibee Refuge Lake watersheds are an effective approach to protecting water quality.

In order to protect these conservation values, certain restrictions regarding use of the property and the reserved rights of the landowner are detailed in a conservation easement, which is conveyed to a non-profit conservation organization or government agency qualified to hold and enforce easements. In this program the Minnesota Land Trust will be holding acquired easements. Once the easement is signed by the landowner and the easement holder, the document is filed with the local county land records.



Most conservation easements, including all of those by the Minnesota Land Trust, are perpetual. They apply to the current and all future landowners, permanently protecting the property. Each conservation easement is unique and is individually crafted to reflect the special characteristics of the land and the particular situation of the landowner.

## PROGRAM FUNDED BY



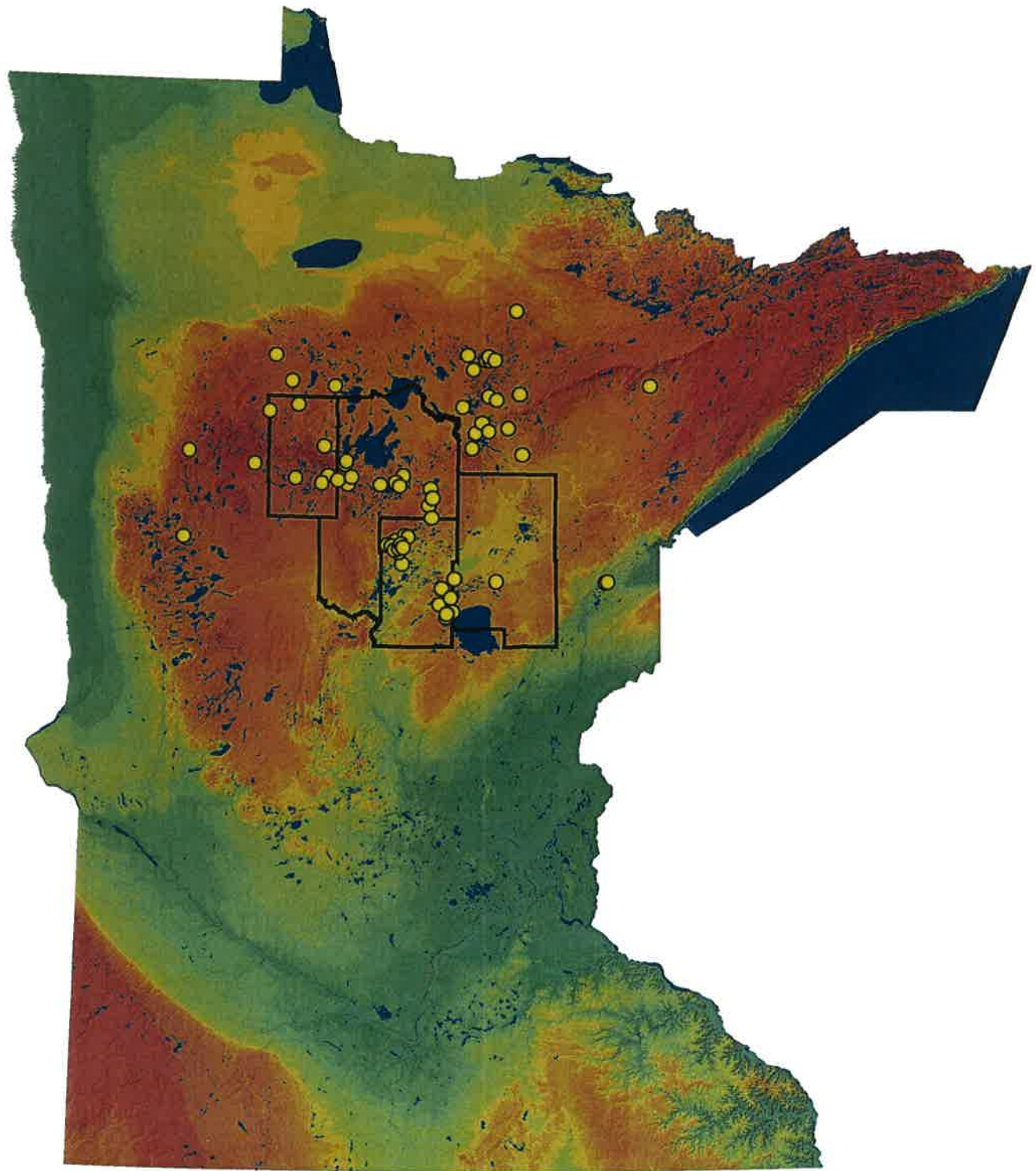
## For More Information Contact:

Leech Lake Area Watershed

218-675-5773

[info@leechlakewatershed.org](mailto:info@leechlakewatershed.org)

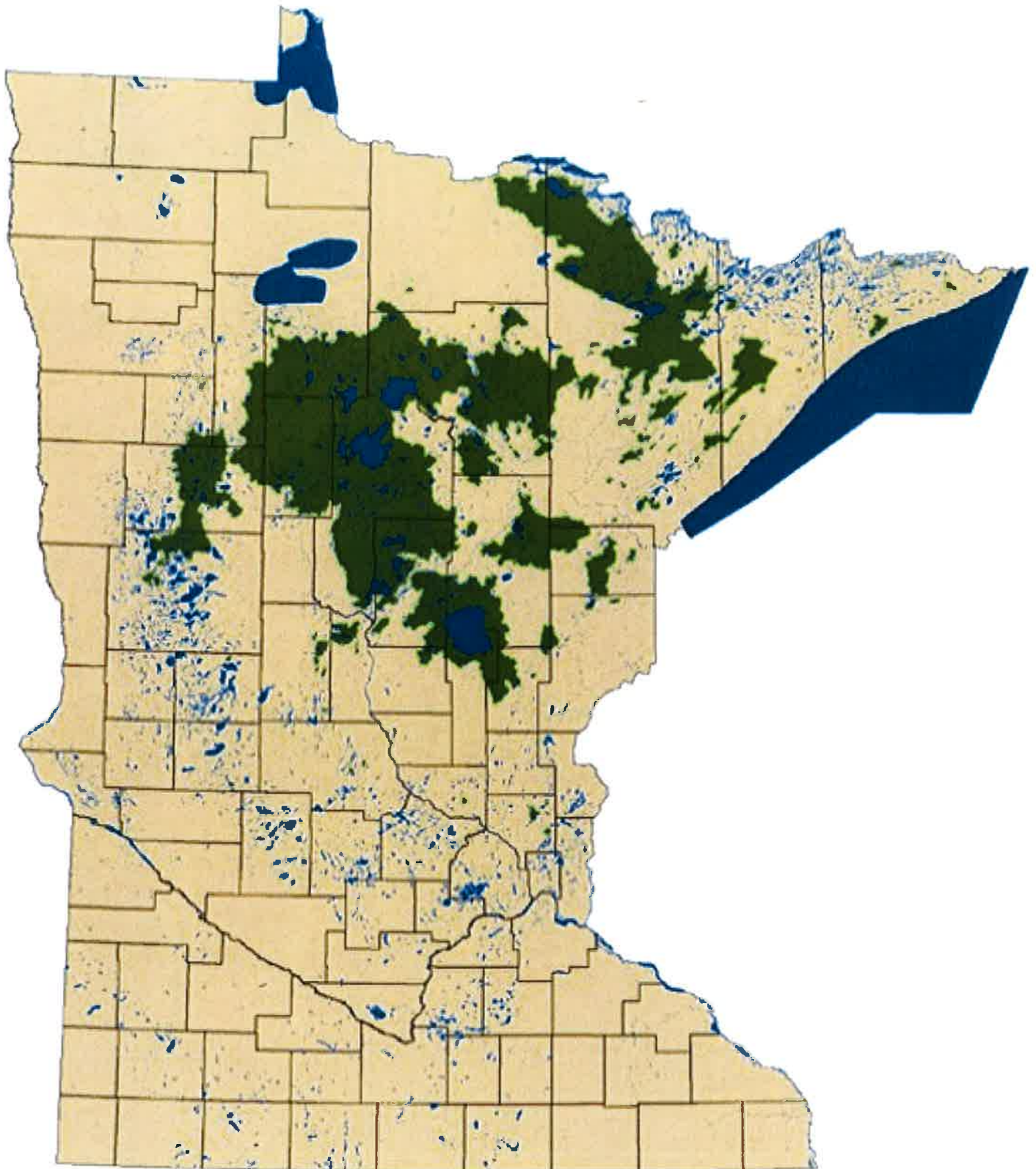
## High Quality Tullibee Lakes Targeted for Protection



Lakes identified by DNR Fisheries that are good candidates for protecting important populations of cisco (tullibee) through watershed protection efforts in the proposed project geography of Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, and Hubbard counties.



# Undisturbed Watersheds with Inadequate Ownership Protection



Friday, May 20, 2016

FROM: John Eaton

6428 Kabekona Beach Road  
Walker, MN 56484

TO: Mr. Mark Johnson, Executive Director  
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Bldg., Room 95  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re. Letter of Support – Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes:  
Phase III

Dear Mr. Johnson

The Leech Lake Association is pleased to have been given the opportunity to contribute to the review of this proposal to purchase lakeshores that are critical to protecting aquatic ecosystems in north central Minnesota. The Association has a long history of working with various local, state and federal agencies to promote lake stewardship, protect fisheries resources, and combat unwise land use practices both around and within the lake. It's our vision that the lake and shorelands retain the characteristics of largely undisturbed ecosystems in spite of increasing human pressures. In this regard, the Association has worked closely with the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation on several lakeshore protection projects and contributed \$500 yearly to their working budget. For example, the LLA and LLAWF jointly worked with the MNDNR on acquiring Aquatic Management Areas on both Allen's Bay and Miller's Bay of Leech Lake, and on purchase of the Five Mile Point shoreline which is an important walleye spawning area. The latter purchase earned a Governor's Habitat Conservation Award for contributions in protecting critical fish and wildlife habitat. The Two Points shoreline included in this proposal is an important walleye and muskie spawning site, and an area of unusual natural and cultural significance. Funerary remains and other artifacts suggest Two Points is the original village site of Ojibwe peoples when they first came into this region.

Therefore, as indicated by our closely related interests, I would like to express the full support of the Leech Lake Association (300 members) for the LLAWF project titled "Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic Lakes in North Central Minnesota". We consider the desire and ability to preserve lakeshore areas like the Two Points property to be vital to the continuing health and appreciation of the Leech Lake ecosystem.

Sincerely,



John Eaton

John Eaton

Leech Lake Association Board of Directors, Healthy Lakes Dept.

U.S. EPA Fisheries Research Biologist, retired



**LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE  
DIVISION OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
190 6<sup>th</sup> Sall Star Dr. NW, Cass Lake, MN 56633**

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5/25/2016

Mr. Mark Johnson, Executive Director  
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 95  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**Re: Letter of Support – Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic Lakes in North Central Minnesota**

Dear Mr. Mark Johnson:

On behalf of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, I would like to express our full support for the “Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic Lakes in North Central Minnesota” project. We hope the we are all successful in the preservation of our waters for future generations.

Sincerely,

Richard Robinson Jr., Director  
Division of Resource Management  
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

-1-



*Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation*

PO Box 455  
Hackensack, MN 56452  
218-675-5773  
[www.leechlakewatershed.org](http://www.leechlakewatershed.org)

Tax ID # 41-1887906

Dear Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Members,

I am writing to explain why our grant application Partnership budget is currently presented as a combination of both Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundations (LLAWF) work and the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT). It is our intent to have a detailed partnership budget available if selected for a presentation and/or selected for funding via an accomplishment plan. This will clearly delineate both organizations work.

In 2016, the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation Board of Directors directed staff to begin the process of achieving accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The accreditation process can take up to two years, but once completed, will allow Leech lake Area Watershed Foundation to Hold Conservation Easements and assure these easements are giving the highest level of stewardship. Over the next 3 months LLAWF will be performing an organizational audit that will help us determine the length of time it will take to achieve accreditation.

MLT is very supportive of our efforts to achieve Accreditation and is open to us expanding our historic roles in regards to previous grant awards including Phase I and II of Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes, in addition to our closed LSOHC grant Protecting Sensitive Shorelands in North Central Minnesota. Some of the potential new roles could help accelerate our accreditation process.

It is our understanding that LLAWF would need to achieve Accreditation to meet Minnesota State requirements to begin the legislative approval process to Holding and providing stewardship to Conservation Easements.

LLAWF and MLT have an excellent track record of working in partnership and we are asking for time this summer and early fall to work though the details regarding our partnership budget.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Lindsey Ketchel  
Executive Director