



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2018 Accomplishment Plan

Date: October 19, 2017

Program or Project Title: Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, Phase IX

Funds Recommended: \$ 1,893,000

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Legislative Citation: ML 2018, Ch. X, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd XX

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: Big Stone, Brown, Chippewa, Clay, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Norman, Pipestone, Pope, Renville, Rock, Wilkin, and Yellow Medicine.

Regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie

Abstract:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will cooperate to permanently protect native prairie and associated complexes of wetlands and native habitats in western and central Minnesota by purchasing approximately 540 acres of fee title properties and/or permanent habitat easements. Approximately 270 acres will be native prairie. Work will be focused in areas identified as having significant biodiversity by the Minnesota Biological Survey and located in priority areas in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (Prairie Plan).

Design and scope of work:

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) was established in 2000 to address the loss of America's grasslands and the decline of grassland wildlife. The Refuge was created to permanently preserve and restore a portion of our disappearing tallgrass prairie. The Refuge encompasses all or part of 85 counties in western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa.

A 2015 University of Wisconsin study confirms that conversion is still a very real risk. A drop in crop prices may have slowed this, but the threat isn't gone. It's vital that we protect our remaining native prairies before they are lost.

Progress towards the Refuge's goal has been limited by available acquisition funding. Since 2000, the Refuge has protected 5,101 acres in Minnesota with funding from non-OHF sources. The acquisition budget from these sources falls far short of the landowner interest

in working with the Refuge.

Funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) will allow The Nature Conservancy and US Fish and Wildlife Service, working in partnership, to significantly accelerate this progress. TNC and USFWS will cooperate on protecting approximately 540 acres of native prairie and associated habitat in the 49 Minnesota counties within the Refuge boundary. Of these, we expect to protect approximately 215 acres in fee title and approximately 325 acres with permanent habitat easements.

This program's work is targeted at protecting high-quality native habitat in areas with existing concentrations of native prairie, wetlands, and protected lands. The lands protected will consist of native prairie and associated habitats including wetlands, streams, and lakes.

Potential acquisitions are reviewed using the following criteria:

- 1) Is there native prairie on the tract? If not, is it adjacent to native prairie?
- 2) Is the property in a priority area identified in the Prairie Plan?
- 3) Is it adjacent to an existing complex of protected land?
- 4) Was it identified by Minnesota Biological Survey as having concentrations of threatened and endangered species and communities?
- 5) Is it suitable for public recreation?

Because of the nature of parcel ownership, some properties acquired through this program will likely include small areas of converted or degraded habitat needing restoration/enhancement. Restoration/enhancement will be completed where needed.

Previous OHF support has allowed the partners to make significant progress towards our shared goal of protecting and buffering the remaining native prairie. The first property was acquired in March, 2013. 4,320 acres have now been added to the Refuge. Of these, 2,820 acres are classified as native prairie. Additional habitat includes 460 acres of wetlands and 11 miles of stream and/or lakefront. Landowners have committed a further 530 acres. Negotiations are ongoing with a long list of interested landowners.

With additional support from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, this program will continue to make real and lasting progress towards protecting Minnesota's native prairies and the wildlife that depend on those lands.

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:

The NTP NWR program takes the approach that specific species are best protected by conserving high-quality habitat in the most critical prairie areas.

This focus on habitat quality has produced results. Of the 4,320 acres protected, most have been in areas surveyed by the Biological Survey and identified as having significant biodiversity. These high-quality lands provide habitat for a wide range of species, from game species to those that are endangered, threatened, or in greatest conservation need.

Biological Survey field work has identified populations of 26 rare species located wholly or partially on NTP NWR properties protected with OHF-funding. Benefited species include:

Birds – Baird's sparrow (endangered), Wilson's phalarope (threatened), greater prairie-chicken, marbled godwit, and yellow rail

Butterflies – Dakota skipper (endangered), arogos skipper, Pawnee skipper, and regal fritillary. NTP NWR acquisitions with this funding have protected almost 5% of the historical occurrences of poweshiek skipperlings (endangered) in Minnesota.

Fish - Topeka shiner (endangered). This program has protected 13,400' of frontage on streams and rivers identified as critical habitat for this species.

Reptiles - Blanding's turtle (threatened)

Plants – sterile sedge (threatened), hair-like beak rush (threatened), blanket flower, buffalo grass, few-flowered spikerush, Hall's sedge, least moonwort, Missouri milk-vetch, mudwort, prairie mimosa, slender milk-vetch, small white lady's slipper, western white prairie clover

Future acquisition work will be guided by this same focus on high-quality, diverse habitat, benefiting a wide range of species.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

This program's goals are guided by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area plan. Individual properties are reviewed/approved by TNC and USFWS biologists using the parcel selection criteria described above, including: native prairie, location in prairie complexes, nearby protected lands, and Minnesota Biological Survey research.

Biological Survey data is a critical part of this review. Every proposed project is evaluated using Survey information on: 1) Native prairie sites, 2) Rare, threatened and endangered species locations, and 3) Areas of biodiversity significance.

The selection criteria also recognize the importance of building on existing complexes/corridors and reducing fragmentation. If a prairie is small or isolated, the animal and plant species that live there are at risk. The best approach is conserving larger areas, like the Prairie Plan's cores/complexes/corridors, that have the scale, species diversity, and connectivity to support functioning prairie systems over the long-term.

The numbers shared above demonstrate this program's success at identifying and protecting biologically significant lands located in areas with existing complexes of habitat and protected lands.

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

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

Which other plans are addressed in this program:

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area (HPA) Final Environmental Impact Statement

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program:

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

Prairie:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

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

This proposal includes \$260,000 in leverage. The USFWS has committed \$90,000 of in-kind staff support from USFWS field staff. A letter has been provided from the USFWS confirming these funds. This phase includes \$45,000 of support from TNC, covering half the cost of Direct Support Service (DSS) with private funds. Finally, this round includes \$125,000 in leverage from a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant approved by Congress on May 1, 2107 for NTP NWR fee acquisition in Minnesota. These funds will be used by the FWS for additional Refuge acquisition.

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Any state agency or organization requesting a direct appropriation from the OHF must inform the LSOHC at the time of the request for funding is made, whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose:

This project does not substitute or supplant previous funding. The work described in this accomplishment plan would not be funded or completed without this appropriation.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
ML 2010	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$308,000
ML 2015	TNC Private Contributions	\$30,800
ML 2010	TNC Private Contributions	\$37,700
ML 2011	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$144,000
ML 2011	TNC Private Contributions	\$23,200
ML 2012	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$139,400
ML 2012	TNC Private Contributions	\$36,100
ML 2014	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$67,000
ML 2014	TNC Private Contributions	\$35,700
ML 2015	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$52,200

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

Outdoor Heritage Funds will be used to purchase the land in fee title or to purchase perpetual habitat easements. The land and easements purchased will be transferred to the USFWS to become units of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. Long term costs for restoration, management, and wildlife/habitat/easement monitoring will be funded through annual USFWS operations funding.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Annually	USFWS - Annual Service Operating Funds	Monitoring and management by USFWS managers, biologists, field and realty staffs to ensure the long-term health of these habitats. Activities may include burning, mechanical, biological and sometimes chemical treatments.		

Activity Details:

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

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

Explain

No food plots will be established on OHF acquired properties. Short-term use of agricultural crops is an accepted Best Practice for preparing a site for prairie restoration. For example, short-term use of soybeans could be used for restorations in order to control weed seedbeds prior to prairie plantings. In some cases this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seedbank. Neonicotinoid treated seeds will not be used. We would not expect agricultural crop use to exceed 3 years on any given OHF acquired property.

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

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition - **No**

Local governments will be notified in writing of the intent to acquire and donate lands to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, including an offer to answer any questions.

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

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

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

Lands acquired by fee will be open to the public taking of fish and game during the open season according to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, United States Code, title 16, section 668dd, et seq.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

All fee title interests in land will be transferred to the USFWS to become units of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge.

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

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

Who will manage the easement?

The USFWS will be responsible for managing and monitoring these easements.

Who will be the easement holder?

All easement interests in land will be transferred to the USFWS to become units of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge.

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list - **No**

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

Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Purchase agreements/Options for the first 100 acres of fee and 150 acres of easement acquisition	December 31, 2019
Purchase agreements/Options for the remaining 115 acres of fee and 175 acres of easement acquisition	June 30, 2021
Grassland/wetland restoration and enhancement completed	June 30, 2023

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/1/2023

Federal Funding:

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

Are the funds confirmed - **Yes**

Documentation

What are the types of funds?

Cash Match - \$125000

In-Kind Match - \$90000

Other -

Outcomes:

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands *This program's work is primarily focused on the Prairie region. A small portion of the Refuge, however, falls in the Forest-Prairie Transition region. If work is done in this region, the following outcomes will be measured and reported: 1) Total acres protected, 2) Acres of native prairie, 3) Acres of wetland, 4) Feet of stream- and lake-front, 5) Acres within Prairie Plan priorities, 6) # of endangered/threatened/species in greatest conservation need (SGCN) on protected properties.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands *The program's top priority is protecting native prairie. The majority of lands acquired will be native prairie and associated habitats including wetlands, streams and lakes. The parcel selection criteria also favor building onto existing complexes of prairie/grassland/wetland and protected land. The following outcomes will be measured and reported for acquisition in this region: 1) Total acres protected, 2) Acres of native prairie, 3) Acres of wetland, 4) Feet of stream- and lake-front, 5) Acres within Prairie Plan priorities, 6) # of endangered/threatened/SGCN on protected properties.*

Budget Spreadsheet

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount

The Budget and Accomplishments were reduced roughly in proportion to the difference between the original request and recommendation. The recommendation was 30.6% of the request. The proposed accomplishments were reduced to 29.3% of the original. This small reduction is due to economies of scale in a larger program.

Total Amount of Request: \$ 1893000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$202,000	\$90,000	USFWS	\$292,000
Contracts	\$68,000	\$0		\$68,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$653,400	\$125,000	USFWS NAWCA	\$778,400
Easement Acquisition	\$808,800	\$0		\$808,800
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Professional Services	\$83,100	\$0		\$83,100
Direct Support Services	\$45,000	\$45,000	TNC	\$90,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$21,700	\$0		\$21,700
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$1,893,000	\$260,000		\$2,153,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Protection Staff	0.53	3.00	\$137,300	\$0		\$137,300
Project Manager	0.15	3.00	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Grant Administration	0.07	3.00	\$19,200	\$0		\$19,200
Science/Stewardship Staff	0.01	3.00	\$500	\$0		\$500
USFWS In-Kind Staff Support	0.00	0.00	\$0	\$90,000	USFWS	\$90,000
Total	0.76	12.00	\$202,000	\$90,000		\$292,000

Amount of Request: \$1,893,000

Amount of Leverage: \$260,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 13.73%

DSS + Personnel: \$247,000

As a % of the total request: 13.05%

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

DSS is based on The Nature Conservancy's Federally Negotiated rate as proposed and subsequently approved by the US Dept. of Interior on an annual basis. The portion requested from the grant represents 50% of this rate, with the remaining 50% contributed as leverage.

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

These funds are all for restoration/enhancement work. This program targets lands that are already in good condition. The acquired properties may, however, need some work to get them into a condition where they can be sustained into the future using standard prairie management techniques. The most typical activity is tree or woody vegetation removal, with reseeding of the affected areas. The requested amount is based on our experience in earlier rounds of this program.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The Personnel line item includes USFWS In-Kind support. Fee Acquisition w/o PILT includes leverage from a NAWCA fee acquisition grant. The leverage offered on the DSS line reflects one-half of the Conservancy's federally approved indirect rate. These funds are privately raised.

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	215	0	0	215
Protect in Easement	0	325	0	0	325
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	540	0	0	540

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

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	65
Protect in Easement	205
Enhance	0
Total	270

Table 2. Total 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	\$845,900	\$0	\$0	\$845,900
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$1,047,100	\$0	\$0	\$1,047,100
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$1,893,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,893,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N 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	10	0	205	0	215
Protect in Easement	0	15	0	310	0	325
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	25	0	515	0	540

Table 4. Total Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N 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	\$42,300	\$0	\$803,600	\$0	\$845,900
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$52,400	\$0	\$994,700	\$0	\$1,047,100
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$94,700	\$0	\$1,798,300	\$0	\$1,893,000

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	\$3934	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$3222	\$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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$4230	\$0	\$3920	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$3493	\$0	\$3209	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

Parcel List

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Big Stone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Big Stone #6	12044205	138	\$332,000	No	No	No
Big Stone #7	12044211	69	\$0	No	No	No

Brown

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Brown #1	10835229	110	\$0	No	No	No

Chippewa

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Chippewa #1	11942218	78	\$146,000	No	No	No

Clay

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Clay #5	13846210	40	\$0	No	Full	Full
Clay #6	14245234	304	\$547,000	No	Full	Full

Lac qui Parle

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lac qui Parle #1	11742201	47	\$54,000	No	No	No
Lac qui Parle #2	11746213	219	\$432,000	No	No	No
Lac qui Parle #3	11943215	126	\$0	No	No	No
Lac qui Parle #4	11943226	149	\$0	No	No	No
Lac qui Parle #5	11943226	39	\$0	No	No	No

Lincoln

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lincoln #5	10945216	75	\$0	No	No	No

Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lyon #5	11042206	50	\$173,000	No	No	No

Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Murray #6	10643232	80	\$229,000	No	No	No

Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Norman #5	14445228	145	\$196,000	No	Full	Full

Pipestone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pipestone #1	10546223	174	\$0	No	No	No
Pipestone #3	10846201	84	\$155,000	No	No	No
Pipestone #4	10846211	76	\$150,000	No	No	No

Pope

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pope #10	12339234	65	\$208,000	No	Full	Full
Pope #11	12337226	18	\$23,000	No	No	No
Pope #12	12339235	80	\$239,000	No	Full	Full
Pope #8	12439215	103	\$113,000	No	No	No

Renville

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Renville #1	11335207	257	\$0	No	Full	Full

Rock

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Rock #1	10545218	77	\$0	No	Full	Full
Rock #10	10345205	111	\$180,000	No	No	No
Rock #2	10345218	5	\$53,000	No	Full	Full
Rock #4	10346213	12	\$0	No	Full	Full
Rock #7	10446207	90	\$251,000	No	No	No
Rock #8	10446207	42	\$104,000	No	No	No
Rock #9	10446220	58	\$241,000	No	Full	Full

Wilkin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Wilkin #1	13646204	27	\$61,000	No	No	No

Yellow Medicine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Yellow Medicine #2	11546231	87	\$0	No	No	No

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

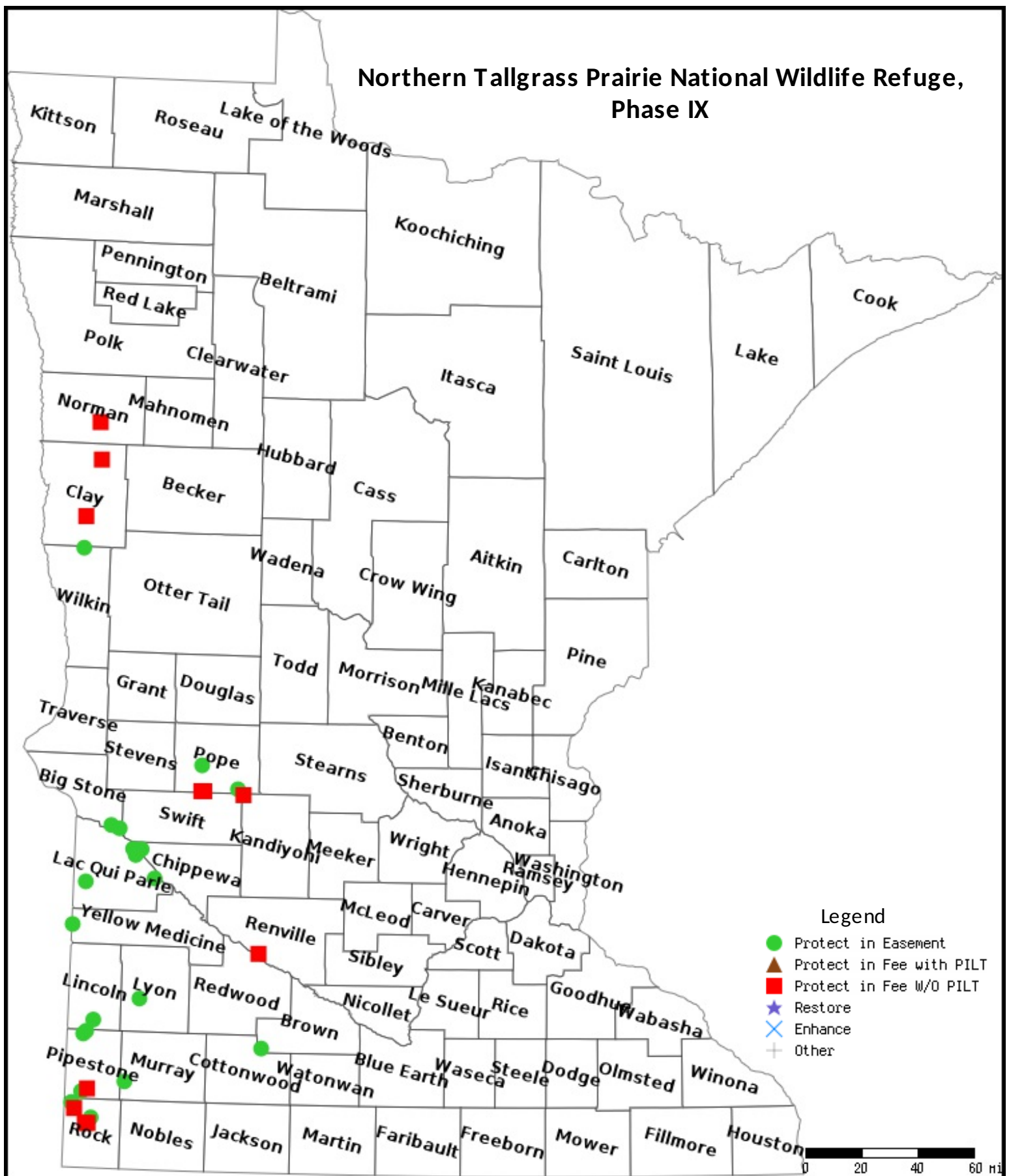
Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	# Bldgs?	Bldg Improve Desc	Value of Bldg	Disposition of Improvements
Kandiyohi #5	12236206	149	\$0	4	House, Barn, 2 other outbuildings, all in tear-down condition.	\$0	

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List

Parcel Selection Criteria used by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Land Acquisition Program

The purpose of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Protection National Wildlife Refuge Program is to accelerate progress towards the US Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) goal of permanently protecting and enhancing 77,000 acres of prairie remnants across the broad area originally covered by the Northern Tallgrass Prairie. The Land Acquisition Program supports the acquisition of fee title or conservation easements in the 49 western Minnesota counties included in the refuge boundary. The USFWS and The Nature Conservancy (Conservancy) are partners in this Program.

Parcels are reviewed by both the USFWS and Conservancy to ensure that they meet the priorities of both partners. They are then submitted to LSOHC staff for final review/approval. This review is based on the following criteria:

1. **Native prairie on all or most of tract, or adjacency to existing native prairie.** The emphasis of this Program is protecting and enhancing native prairie, as identified by DNR Biological Survey or site inspection by trained biologist. Protecting native prairie includes the need to buffer and connect native remnants via restoration of non-native lands. The partners will identify and work with private landowners to acquire tracts that further our shared goal of native prairie conservation, and in particular, those that meet the other criteria listed below.
2. **Within core area boundary or in critical corridors between core areas.** This Program will assist with building "functioning landscapes" by focusing in areas with concentrations of existing native prairie. The 2010 Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan identified 35 prairie cores and corridors within the Refuge. The partners will give priority to those parcels that are within these core areas or that help form critical corridors to maintain landscape function.
3. **Near existing protected lands.** Building larger protected complexes is preferred to simplify and reduce overall management costs and travel time. In general, larger protected blocks are more effective at conserving the full array of wildlife species and biological diversity. The partners will strategically identify properties that are in areas where the USFWS already has a presence and prioritize these higher than those that are isolated.
4. **Greater habitat and species diversity, or host to unique species.** Parcels that host a rare habitat or a continuum of habitats, such as interconnected upland, wetland, riparian, and stream features, will be recognized as having added ecological value and given greater priority. Tracts with underrepresented, small-scale features (e.g. threatened species), will also be prioritized.
5. **Suitability for public recreation.** Constitutional language requires that the lands purchased in fee title be open to the public taking of fish and game. Fee title lands purchased with this grant will be opened. Lands especially suited to these uses will be given a higher priority. Conservation easements purchased with Outdoor Heritage Fund support will be open to hunting only with landowner permission.

6. **Willing Seller.** We will only work with willing sellers, and those that can abide by the statutory process laid out for use of public funds. We work with landowners to ensure that they are comfortable with the Program and how it will affect their property.
7. **Avoid buildings.** Existing buildings pose a challenge because they may not be eligible for Outdoor Heritage Fund use and they require additional effort to demolish or sell. Properties with structures are carefully reviewed to ensure that they do not place an undue burden on the USFWS or Conservancy.

The Nature Conservancy's Direct Support Service Methodology

Background

Through the course of implementing grants awarded by the Legacy and Environmental Trust Fund (ENTRF) processes there are numerous costs which are directly related to and necessary for program implementation but which, for practical reasons, cannot be assigned to specific projects. For example, all projects involve the Payroll Department, but because of the size and complexity of the Conservancy's accounting systems it is not possible to determine how much of each payroll administrator's salary should be charged to specific projects.

To account for these and similar costs the Nature Conservancy has developed a methodology for documenting them on an annual basis. This methodology is based on actual costs of Direct Support Services from the previous year and is essentially a ratio of unassignable costs to those which are easily assigned. The ratio is annually adjusted based on real costs. Further, the methodology and costs are annually audited and accepted as our official "Indirect Cost Rate" by all federal funding agencies.

Costs included in this category are deemed internally as General and Administrative or Facilities and are represented as the sum in Column X in the table below. General and Administrative costs include: payroll and accounting, general legal services, human resources, grants administration, information systems, and executive management. Specifically excluded from this category are: Fundraising, Lobbying, Government Relations, Membership Development, and costs directly assigned to projects.

The Nature Conservancy Statement of Total Costs by Program Operating and Land Funds July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011											
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
Elements of Costs	Total Costs for ICR	Conservation	Membership Development	Fundraising	Lobbying	Government Relations	Land Fund	(O)+(P)+(Q)+(R)+(S)+(T) Total Direct Costs	Indirect Costs	Facilities	Total Indirect
Salaries	188,252,493	107,171,712	1,413,799	31,063,301	1,524,236	4,866,810	0	146,039,859	42,212,634		42,212,634
Fringe Benefits	81,164,511	46,206,242	602,953	13,294,927	640,926	2,122,490	0	62,867,538	18,296,973		18,296,973
Fees and charges	123,019,361	84,092,866	2,835,357	4,901,214	3,852,422	541,458	16,114,142	112,337,459	7,057,317	3,624,585	10,681,902
Supplies and communications	33,510,127	14,944,395	11,552,986	2,359,259	56,972	240,693	284,768	29,439,074	4,071,053		4,071,053
Travel	18,278,067	12,304,999	40,573	2,479,549	155,797	563,214	246,294	15,790,427	2,487,640		2,487,640
Occupancy	28,963,791	7,666,782	0	501,639	2,241	40,855	9,658,196	17,869,713	0	11,094,078	11,094,078
Equipment	6,706,276	5,044,065	0	210,406	2,090	13,877	174,352	5,444,789	1,261,487		1,261,487
Unallowables	54,513,986	22,750,087	743,309	1,941,114	576,903	74,275	20,814,167	46,899,855	7,614,130		7,614,130
Exclusions	332,331,508	146,925	0	15,753	0	500	332,163,871	332,327,049	4,459		4,459
Total Costs for ICR calculation	866,740,119	300,328,073	17,188,978	56,767,161	6,811,589	8,464,173	379,455,790	769,015,763	83,005,693	14,718,663	97,724,356

	Expenditures before Exclusions	Exclusions	Indirect unallowable charges	Fringe Benefits charges in non-benefit centers	Expenditures after Exclusions				G&A	Facilities	Total
Reconciliation:											
Direct Base	769,015,763	-332,327,049	0	642,754	437,331,468		Indirect Cost Pool		75,387,104	14,718,663	90,105,767
Indirect Cost Pool	97,724,356	-4,459	-7,614,130	0	90,105,767		Direct Base		437,331,468	437,331,468	437,331,468
Total Expenditures	866,740,119	-332,331,508	-7,614,130	642,754	527,437,235		Indirect Cost Rate		17.24%	3.37%	20.60%

Methodology and Implementation

The Conservancy uses the methodology and subsequent ratios that have been developed for our Federal approved and audited rate as the basis for calculating Direct Support Services for Legacy and ENTRF projects and programs. A budget amount will be determined as part of the allocation process with the governing body and reflected on each Accomplishment Plan or Work Program as a specific line-item. Direct Support Service reimbursement requests will not be applied to categories that unnecessarily inflate the overall rate. Excluded line items include Land and Easement Acquisition, Capital Equipment purchases over \$50,000 and DNR IDP and Land Acquisition Costs. For this project, TNC requests reimbursement of 50% of eligible DSS costs with the remaining 50% to be contributed as leverage by TNC.