

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Laws of Minnesota 2018 Accomplishment Plan



**Date:** October 23, 2017

**Program or Project Title:** Protect and Restore MN IBAs within the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands, Phase 2

**Funds Recommended:** \$ 829,000

**Manager's Name:** Kristin Hall  
**Organization:** Audubon Minnesota  
**Address:** 1 Water Street West  
**Address 2:** Suite 200  
**City:** Saint Paul, MN 55107  
**Office Number:** 651-739-9332  
**Email:** khall@audubon.org

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

**Appropriation Language:**

**County Locations:** Not Listed

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

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

**Activity types:**

- Enhance
- Protect in Easement

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Forest
- Habitat
- Prairie
- Wetlands

### Abstract:

Audubon Minnesota and Minnesota Land Trust are requesting funds to protect 560 acres through conservation easement and to enhance 500 acres of significant wildlife habitat on protected private and public lands. Our project and parcel prioritization criteria places an emphasis on Important Bird Areas and priority areas identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, prioritizing the 6 northwestern Minnesota counties associated with the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands region.

### Design and scope of work:

Audubon Minnesota and the Minnesota Land Trust will continue with the second phase of our Important Bird Area Protection and Restoration Program in the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands region of Minnesota. This program will further advance the Outdoor Heritage Funds legacy of habitat protection and enhancement of habitat for wildlife in Minnesota. With these funds we will: 1) Obtain conservation easements on 560 acres of private lands, and 2) enhance 500 acres of habitat within the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands region of Minnesota.

Our program places an emphasis on Minnesota's Important Bird Areas (IBAs) as they are essential to maintaining healthy and diverse bird populations in the state. Our aim is to protect and restore/enhance working grasslands, remnant prairies and threatened wetlands

within the program area. Important Bird Areas not only provide a critical tool for targeting and maximizing conservation resources but they also provide an additional and compelling motive to private landowners considering putting their lands into a conservation easement. The Tallgrass Aspen Parklands (TAP) Region of Minnesota supports over 289 birds species (143 regular breeding species, 22 permanent residents, and over 114 migrants or winter residents) including geese, sandhill cranes, a variety of waterfowl, and numerous other grassland and wetland species. Gray wolves, moose, elk, and white-tailed deer are among the other wildlife found in the region.

While protecting existing high quality habitats within IBAs and the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan priority areas is the ultimate goal of this program, we also recognize that some of the greatest conservation opportunities exist within the agricultural matrix of western Minnesota due to the loss of grassland and wetland habitats in recent years. It is in these areas that our complete toolbox of protection through easements coupled with enhancement activities may deliver their greatest impact. The Tallgrass Aspen Parklands Region, a transition area between the prairie and forest, was once dominated by wetlands, prairie grasslands and open woodlands. Today, approximately 64% of the landscape has been converted to row crops.

In phase 2 of this program, we will expand our habitat focus to include the areas within the 6 northwestern counties that compose the TAP region and emphasize conservation management on working lands to improve water quality and provide better bird habitat. In these areas we will prioritize native plantings, promote participation in the MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, and recommend bird-friendly conservation grazing and haying practices.

Audubon Minnesota will conduct programmatic outreach and engagement with private landowners, assist with habitat identification and prioritization, develop Habitat Management Plans for participating landowners and manage the restoration of 500 acres of lands. The Minnesota Land Trust will procure conservation easements from willing landowners through a competitive landowner-bid process that delivers a cost-effective means of securing the protection of high quality, ecologically-significant land. To date, MLT has protected nearly 9,000 acres through 240 conservation easements in Important Bird Areas throughout Minnesota, demonstrating a longstanding commitment to protecting habitat for birds.

### **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:**

Through the development of our Blueprint for Bird Conservation, Audubon Minnesota has identified a group of breeding bird species known as priority species. This group highlights species that have experienced significant declines in the TAP region, are dependent on vulnerable habitat, and have been recognized as priorities by various resource agencies. The purpose of identifying priority species is to be strategic about identifying a small number of species that should be the focus of conservation efforts in the short term. Based on our priority species for the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands Region, there are 32 Species of Greatest Conservation Need that would benefit from this program's grassland and wetland habitat protection, restoration and enhancement such as the Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, Green-winged Teal and Black Tern. In addition, there are 11 bird species that are MN State Listed Species including the: Horned Grebe, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Baird's Sparrow, Yellow Rail, Wilson's Phalarope, Franklin's Gull, Short-eared Owl, Greater Prairie Chicken, Nelson's Sparrow, Marbled Godwit and Trumpeter Swan.

### **Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:**

In an effort to protect some of the most unique wildlife habitat in MN, our proposal focuses on Important Bird Areas within the Prairie Conservation Plan and prioritizes the six counties within the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands (TAP) region. Audubon Minnesota and a wide variety of partners have identified 57 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Minnesota through a Technical Committee, comprised of bird experts and conservationists from across the state. Important Bird Areas have been identified in over 170 countries to provide essential habitat for one or more breeding, wintering, and/or migrating bird species. It is a proactive, voluntary, science-based program and works to identify, monitor and conserve the most essential habitats for birds. In short, these IBAs are the most important areas in which to preserve Minnesota's game and non-game avian legacy. Audubon Minnesota and the Minnesota Land Trust see tremendous opportunity for directing conservation resources to protecting habitats within IBAs and surrounding areas. We are also using additional plans and analyses, like the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and the MN Biological Survey biodiversity significance status, to further refine the geographic scope of our efforts to yield the highest conservation return on investment.

In addition to the rigorous process used to designate IBAs, Audubon Minnesota has also developed the Blueprint for Bird Conservation, which is a comprehensive compilation of national, regional and state bird and habitat conservation plans that address Minnesota bird species and Minnesota landscapes. A particular emphasis was placed on bird conservation documents developed by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). This Blueprint builds upon existing efforts by identifying the highest priorities in each ecological region and using select conservation focal species; synthesizing the best proven conservation practices for each species; establishing measurable goals for species' population targets; and identifying key sites for conservation work.

### **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
- Minnesota Blueprint for Bird Conservation

### Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program:

#### Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

#### Prairie:

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

### 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:

The Minnesota 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.

### 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:

Neither Minnesota Land Trust nor Audubon Minnesota are supplanting or substituting any previous funding not from a legacy fund for the same purpose.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
none	none	none

### 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.

In addition, Audubon Minnesota and Minnesota Land Trust prepare a Habitat Management Plan for each landowner, providing ecological management recommendations for the property over time.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2019 and beyond	MLT: Outdoor Heritage and MLT funds	Secure easement and begin to monitor, manage and enforce the easement through MLTs stewardship process		
2019 and beyond	Audubon: Outdoor Heritage Funds	Develop easement Habitat Management Plans (2019-2024)	Monitor and manage enhancement activities accordingly (2019-2029)	

## 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

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 weeds prior to prairie planting. In some (but certainly not all) cases this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seedbank.

The purpose of these conservation easements is to protect existing high quality natural habitat and to preserve opportunities for future restoration. As such, we restrict any agricultural lands and use on the properties. In cases in which there are agricultural lands associated with the larger property, we will either carve the agricultural area out of the conservation easement, or in some limited cases, we may include a small percentage of agricultural lands if it is not feasible to carve those areas out. In such cases, however, we will not use OHF funds to pay the landowners for that portion of the conservation easement

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

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?

Minnesota Land Trust

Who will be the easement holder?

Minnesota Land Trust

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.

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

All existing trails and roads (walking paths, driveways, field roads) that do not significantly impact the conservation values of the property would continue to be used and maintained by the land owner.

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

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program - **Yes**

Is the activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 - **Yes**  
(Private Land, Public lands as appropriate)

## Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Conduct landowner outreach (ongoing). Secure conservation easements	June 2021
Conduct habitat enhancement of both public and protected private lands.	June 2023

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 8/31/2023

## Federal Funding:

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

## Outcomes:

### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced aspen parklands and riparian areas *Protection, restoration and enhancement can be measured by the number of acres/projects we protect in permanent conservation easements and by the total acreage we restore/enhance. The quality of work and level of success will be monitored through the MLT stewardship audits as well as by restoration monitoring as outlined in the Habitat Management Plan or specific restoration prescription developed for each project.*

### Programs in prairie region:

- Increased participation of private landowners in habitat projects *This outcome will be evaluated not only by the number of conservation easements we achieve but also by the number of landowners we connect with. We will track the number of community members we: host at working-lands habitat enhancement workshops, conduct site visits with, and interact with at education and outreach events. Outreach is a large component of community engagement and we intend act as a valuable conservation resource, providing conservation management recommendations such as haying restrictions to increase nesting bird success, native plantings for buffers and rotational grazing practices, which benefit wildlife and improve habitat quality on private lands.*

# 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**

Our program is scalable; we reduced the number and cost/acre of easement parcels from 9 to 3, reserved stewardship funds for 5 potential parcels, cut personnel funding as much as while possible keeping local expertise in place, and removed the restoration portion, shifting focus to protection and enhancement.

**Total Amount of Request: \$ 829000**

## Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$154,800	\$30,000	Audubon MN	\$184,800
Contracts	\$114,200	\$0		\$114,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$360,000	\$60,100	MLT	\$420,100
Easement Stewardship	\$120,000	\$0		\$120,000
Travel	\$12,000	\$0		\$12,000
Professional Services	\$52,500	\$0		\$52,500
Direct Support Services	\$13,500	\$0		\$13,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$2,000	\$0		\$2,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$829,000	\$90,100		\$919,100

## Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Minnesota Land Trust Protection Staff	0.19	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Conservation management and support staff	0.38	5.00	\$104,800	\$30,000	Audubon MN	\$134,800
Total	0.57	8.00	\$154,800	\$30,000		\$184,800

## Budget and Cash Leverage by Partnership

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Minnesota Land Trust	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Contracts	Minnesota Land Trust	\$18,000	\$0		\$18,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	Minnesota Land Trust	\$360,000	\$60,100	MLT	\$420,100
Easement Stewardship	Minnesota Land Trust	\$120,000	\$0		\$120,000
Travel	Minnesota Land Trust	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Professional Services	Minnesota Land Trust	\$52,500	\$0		\$52,500
Direct Support Services	Minnesota Land Trust	\$13,500	\$0		\$13,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$620,000	\$60,100		\$680,100

## Personnel - Minnesota Land Trust

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Minnesota Land Trust Protection Staff	0.19	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Total	0.19	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Audubon Minnesota	\$104,800	\$30,000	Audubon MN	\$134,800
Contracts	Audubon Minnesota	\$96,200	\$0		\$96,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	Audubon Minnesota	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Professional Services	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	Audubon Minnesota	\$2,000	\$0		\$2,000
DNR IDP	Audubon Minnesota	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$209,000	\$30,000		\$239,000

## Personnel - Audubon Minnesota

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Conservation management and support staff	0.38	5.00	\$104,800	\$30,000	Audubon MN	\$134,800
Total	0.38	5.00	\$104,800	\$30,000		\$134,800

Amount of Request: \$829,000

Amount of Leverage: \$90,100

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 10.87%

DSS + Personnel: \$168,300

As a % of the total request: 20.30%

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

In a process that was approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, Minnesota Land Trust determined their direct support services rate to include all of the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget, which is similar to the Land Trust's proposed federal indirect rate. We applied this DNR-approved rate only to Minnesota Land Trust personnel expenses to determine the total amount of direct support services.

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

The contracted line is about \$96,200 for enhancement and \$18,000 for protection. The protection portion is for developing the Habitat Management Plans required with each easement, the rest is for implementing the HMPs and conducting enhancement on public lands.

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

Leverage from MLT on the acquisition is from donative easement value from private landowners. Leverage from Audubon MN is for personnel.

## 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	560	560
Enhance	0	0	0	640	640
Total	0	0	0	1,200	1,200

**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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$620,200	\$620,200
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$208,800	\$208,800
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$829,000	\$829,000

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SEForest	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	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	560	0	0	0	560
Enhance	0	640	0	0	0	640
Total	0	1,200	0	0	0	1,200

**Table 4. Total Funding within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SEForest	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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$620,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$620,200
Enhance	\$0	\$208,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$208,800
Total	\$0	\$829,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$829,000

**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	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1108
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$326



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	\$1108	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$326	\$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

No parcels with an activity type protect.

### Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

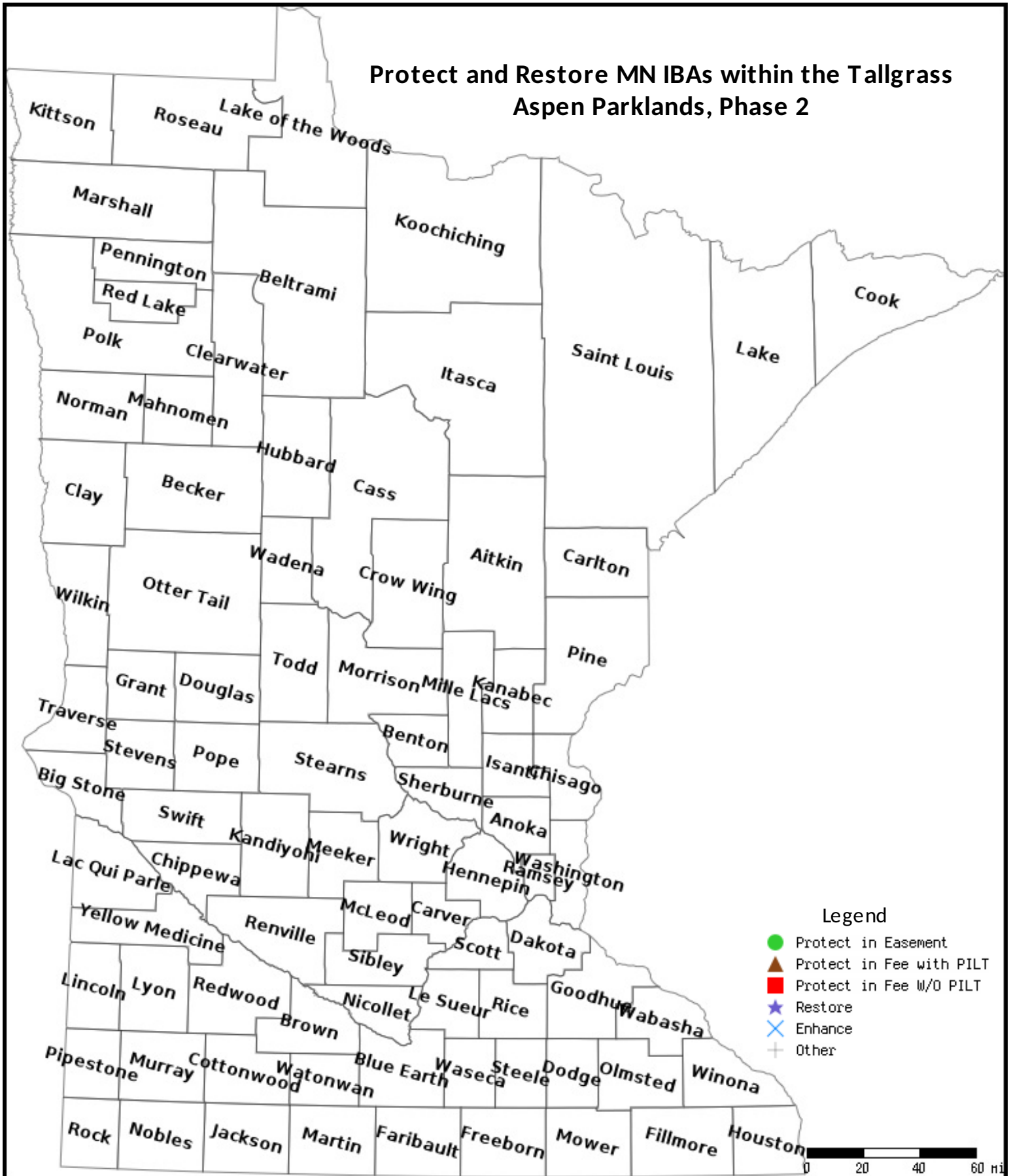
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

### Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

## Parcel Map

### Protect and Restore MN IBAs within the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands, Phase 2



Data Generated From Parcel List



# Protecting and Restoring Minnesota's Prairie Based Important Bird Areas

## -Conservation Easement Sign-Up Criteria-



The Protecting and Restoring Minnesota's Prairie Based Important Bird Areas Program is a collaboration between Audubon Minnesota and the Minnesota Land Trust (Program Partners) that protects Minnesota's rich array of wildlife habitat within the Prairie and Forest/Prairie Transition zones of Minnesota. Funded through Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Program employs perpetual conservation easements in collaboration with private landowners to protect important prairie and grassland habitat and associated wetlands, forests and open water. These easements are held by the Minnesota Land Trust.

Through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, interested landowners within targeted priority areas submit an application for participation in the Program. Submitted projects are initially scored and ranked relative to each other based on two primary factors: 1) ecological value and 2) cost.

**Ecological Value** is determined through an analysis of three subfactors:

- Quantity – the size of habitat and/or native plant communities associated with a parcel, and abundance of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and Threatened & Endangered (T&E) species;
- Quality – the condition of associated habitat and populations of SGCN and T&E species;
- Landscape Context – the extent and condition of natural habitat and amount of protected land surrounding the parcel.

**Cost** is determined in large part by the bid amount proposed by the landowner, and ultimately substantiated through an appraisal process. Landowners are given additional credit through whole or partial donation of appraised easement value.

Subsequent discussions with each landowner participating in the RFP allow the Program Partners to gain a better sense of the landowner's desires for and expected uses of the property, and to ground-truth the parcel's ecological value. These post-proposal evaluations may result in proposed parcels moving up or down on the prioritization list. This additional evaluation allows for the Program partners to most effectively target priority lands for protection.

The Program Partners have set certain minimum criteria for inclusion into the program:

- Land must be located within the Program area.
- Easements must be at least 80 acres in size or contain remnant native prairie.
- Easements must contain high quality examples of native plant communities (prairies, woodlands, etc.) or land which will be restored to native habitat.
- Agricultural land consisting of row crops, tree farms, wildlife food plots, etc. may not amount to more than 10% of the property; consideration to exceed this cap may be warranted if the easement is donated or if agricultural land is slated for restoration. Agricultural land included within an easement is not eligible for payment unless restored to natural vegetation. Feedlots are not allowed.
- Acres previously enrolled in permanent conservation programs (e.g., RIM) are ineligible.

Additional requirements are stipulated within the body of each conservation easement, as pertinent to the special characteristics of the land and the particular situation of the landowner.

The Land Trust's ranking and selection system is informed by prioritization modules used by the Minnesota DNR, The Nature Conservancy, and nationally by the Natural Heritage Data Center Network. This system enables the Land Trust to secure conservation easements that effectively and efficiently protect Minnesota's natural resources.

# A Framework for Evaluating Landowner Submissions via RFP

Initial Ranking of Applications										
Scoring Framework for Prioritizing Applications Received Through an RFP Process										
Existing Ecological Significance	Score	Factors								
	1. Size/Abundance of Habitat Protected by Easement (Maximum 100 pts)									
	0	Total acres of native plant community or extent of target feature within proposed easement								
	2. Diversity/Quality of Natural Resources to be Protected by the Easement (Maximum 100 pts)									
	0	Average quality of existing native plant communities								
	0	Number and quality of rare species populations on parcel; rarity of the species								
	3. Landscape Context (Maximum 100 pts)									
	0	Location of parcel relative to biodiversity "hotspots" or priority areas delineated in conservation plans								
	0	Location of parcel relative to other conservation lands								
	0	Location of parcel relative to existing moderate-high quality native plant communities; degree of habitat fragmentation								
	Total Score (Maximum 300 pts)									
Cost	Score	Factors								
	4. Cost									
	0	Bid amount (\$)/acre								
	0	Estimated donative value (\$)/acre								
Revised Scoring of Applications Following Discussions with Landowner										
Potential Impacts by Landowner	Score Adjustments (+/-)	Enhancement or downgrade of existing biodiversity significance scores based on easement rights retained by the landowner, easement actions required of the landowner, and their potential impact on existing biodiversity.								
	5. Size/Abundance of Habitat Protected by Easement									
	0	Total acres of native plant community or extent of target feature impacted by retained rights or proposed actions if exercised.								
	6. Diversity/Quality of Natural Resources to be Protected by the Easement									
	0	Estimated potential impact on diversity/quality of native plant community or extent of target feature by retained rights or proposed actions if exercised.								
	0	Estimated potential impact on number/quality of rare species resulting from retained rights or proposed actions if exercised.								
0	REVISED BIODIVERSITY SIGNIFICANCE SCORE									

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Comparison Report

**Program Title:** 2018 - Protect and Restore MN IBAs within the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands, Phase 2

**Organization:** Audubon Minnesota

**Manager:** Kristin Hall

## Budget

Requested Amount: \$4,065,000

Appropriated Amount: \$829,000

Percentage: 20.39%

Budget Item	Total Requested		Total Appropriated		Percentage of Request	
	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Appropriated Amount	Anticipated Leverage	Percentage of Request	Percentage of Leverage
Personnel	\$356,000	\$38,000	\$154,800	\$30,000	43.48%	78.95%
Contracts	\$475,000	\$0	\$114,200	\$0	24.04%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$2,800,000	\$560,000	\$360,000	\$60,100	12.86%	10.73%
Easement Stewardship	\$216,000	\$0	\$120,000	\$0	55.56%	-
Travel	\$25,000	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	48.00%	-
Professional Services	\$147,000	\$0	\$52,500	\$0	35.71%	-
Direct Support Services	\$36,000	\$0	\$13,500	\$0	37.50%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	-
Supplies/Materials	\$5,000	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	40.00%	-
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Total	\$4,065,000	\$598,000	\$829,000	\$90,100	20.39%	15.07%

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

Our program is scalable; we reduced the number and cost/acre of easement parcels from 9 to 3, reserved stewardship funds for 5 potential parcels, cut personnel funding as much as while possible keeping local expertise in place, and removed the restoration portion, shifting focus to protection and enhancement.

## Output

**Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type**

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	500	0	0.00%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Easement	1,300	560	43.08%
Enhance	1,000	640	64.00%

**Table 2. Total Funding by Resource Type**

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	385,000	0	0.00%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Easement	3,497,000	620,200	17.74%
Enhance	183,000	208,800	114.10%

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	500	0	0.00%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Easement	1,300	560	43.08%
Enhance	1,000	640	64.00%

**Table 4. Total Funding within each Ecological Section**

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	385,000	0	0.00%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Easement	3,497,000	620,200	17.74%
Enhance	183,000	208,800	114.10%