

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2019 / ML 2018 Request for Funding



Date: May 31, 2017

Program or Project Title: Metro Wildlife Management Areas

Funds Requested: \$2,502,000

Manager's Name: Emilee Nelson

Organization: The Conservation Fund

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County Locations: Anoka, Hennepin, and Isanti.

Regions in which work will take place:

- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Habitat

Abstract:

Using the best science and biological data available, this project will protect sites that the DNR and has identified as high priority habitat acquisitions that are vital to support specific wildlife targets in the Metro Section Planning region. The Conservation Fund (TCF) will proactively contact and negotiate land protection with willing landowners in these complexes in coordination with DNR and local conservation groups and local communities to maximize wildlife populations of statewide and local importance.

Design and scope of work:

Problem to be Addressed

Throughout Minnesota, the MN DNR Division of Wildlife has identified wildlife habitat complexes, however many are only partially completed and not able to sustain viable populations of targeted species. Regional and state wildlife acquisition staff identified high priority DNR acquisitions, but have not yet been able, for a variety of reasons, to protect these sites.

Scope of Work

The priorities have been ranked by DNR wildlife management personnel and then vetted through statewide acquisition meetings held by DNR and attended by conservation partners. The parcels listed in this proposal comprise high priorities for DNR and our conservation partners. Although these priorities have been identified on a biologically important basis, it is our intention to also communicate long-term visions for wildlife habitat with local communities to establish a shared vision for conservation outcomes that will positively impact local economic vitality.

Current Trends

Fluctuations in real estate markets have opened an opportunity to work with these willing sellers in to potentially protect wildlife habitat for a better value than has been seen in the recent past. This can create a mutually beneficial strategy - to protect ecologically important sites while also allowing willing sellers to liquidate marginal land. Selling non-productive lands benefits wildlife, benefits the

local tax-base, and benefits the landowner.

Another timely opportunity exists to improve stakeholder communication between wildlife professionals and communities toward a comprehensive vision for how wildlife habitat can be integrated with existing and future local community goals in these areas.

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

- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- The Campaign for Conservation: A Fifty-Year Vision: Conservation for Minnesota's Future

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

DNR priority acquisitions were coordinated and discussed with local DNR wildlife managers as well as game and non-game biologists to verify habitat needs and species justifications for acquisition of these properties. The indicator species in the WMA Acquisition Plan include pheasants and ducks.

The Campaign for Conservation: A Fifty-Year Vision's Regional Vision for the Twin Cities/Metro area identifies that Wildlife Management Area habitat protection and restoration work should focus on key habitats such as non-forest wetlands, prairie, and grasslands (pg. 133). The projects in this proposal would advance all of these indicators, as well as provide recreational areas to Minnesota's growing urban population, allowing everyone additional opportunities to connect to the natural world and easing the strain on the limited number of WMA's in the Metro.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Metro / Urban:

- Protect, enhance, and restore riparian and littoral habitats on lakes to benefit game and nongame fish species

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:

DNR wildlife managers have vetted each acquisition identified in this program and have outlined clear protection goals for sustaining the given target population. TCF has consulted with local wildlife managers and non-game experts on the importance of these sites in providing lasting conservation outcomes. We are looking holistically at each proposed acquisition to ensure that the parcel adds to the conservation goals for the site and to determine what additional land may be needed to protect our initial investment.

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:

TCF has worked with DNR ecologists and Minnesota County Biological Survey staff to identify sites of importance for Species of Greatest Conservation Need to target the essential boundaries required for a species to persist in perpetuity in each of the priority areas. Once the areas are identified, the estimated carrying capacity the area can hold was then factored into the projected cost to protect those properties. By building on existing habitat complexes and focusing on marginal agricultural lands, the return on investment is far greater so that we can focus protection where costs of protection and restoration are low relative to the gain in conservation benefits.

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:

This project will provide habitat value to grassland and migratory birds, as well as aquatic habitat for the Blanding's turtle, identified as a Threatened status in Minnesota. As stated, the MN DNR have identified these sites as the highest ecological priority to protect critical habitat for the documented species.

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

Pheasant

By looking at the ratios of CRP acres in Minnesota to pheasant harvest, we can estimate that every three acres of grassland habitat has

the potential to produce one harvested pheasant rooster.

Monarch Butterfly

Research from the University of Minnesota has shown that it takes approximately 30 milkweed result in one monarch butterfly contributing to the overwintering Mexican population. Grasslands can have between 100-250 milkweed stems per acre. An acre of restored or enhanced grassland could potentially contribute 3 to 8 monarchs to the population.

Mallards

A commonly used indicator species for numerous waterfowl plans due to (1) extensive research that has occurred with this species on many aspects of its life history, habitat requirement and response to management, and (2) the fact that it is representative of the “typical” upland nesting duck. Both Joint Venture waterfowl plans that cover Minnesota – the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture and the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture (UMRGLRJV) – use the mallard as a focal species. The biological model used in the UMRGLRJV to estimate habitat needs to support mallard population growth uses a simple but accepted rate of 1 mallard pair per hectare (1 mallard pair per 2.47 acres) of wetland habitat (noting that upland habitat for nesting is also obviously needed).

Outcomes:

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need *The sites in this proposal contain 8 rare and threatened species and plant communities which are monitored by the MN County Biological Survey staff.*

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

TCF will seek to acquire only those parcels that demonstrate the best yield of conservation outcomes relative to cost to the State. TCF This will help to increase the likelihood that the MN DNR will have sufficient resources to manage the acquired sites. Additionally, TCF, as a requirement of our organization and a byproduct of maintaining our accreditation, completes land management plans, including costs estimates for all land management needs.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2018	TCF	Conduct cost-benefit analysis with partner	Complete management plan per LTA accreditation standards	

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

As stated, the properties listed in this proposal have been analyzed and ranked by DNR and comprise the highest priorities for conservation protection in the Metro Region. Acquiring these lands now, at a time where undeveloped land value are just beginning to rise in the rural Metro, is prudent stewardship and expenditure of public funds.

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

The Conservation Fund will include \$6,000 of leverage, in part from a grant awarded to us by the McKnight Foundation.

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2016	McKnight Foundation	6000

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**

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 - **Yes**

Explain

Fee title lands that will be held and managed in perpetuity by the MN DNR are subject to DNR policies regarding the planting of corn or any crop, and we are unsure at this time what those policies will entail regarding the lands listed in this proposal.

Are any of the crop types planted GMO treated - **No**

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

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

No variation.

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
Discuss conservation goals with local decision makers and communities.	Fall 2018
Real estate due diligence.	Summer 2019-Summer 2020
Close on priority projects.	Summer 2019-Summer 2020
Convey to DNR	Upon closing

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$2,502,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$44,000	\$6,000	Private Source	\$50,000
Contracts	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$2,150,000	\$0		\$2,150,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$4,000	\$0		\$4,000
Professional Services	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
Direct Support Services	\$4,000	\$0		\$4,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$10,000	\$0		\$10,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$230,000	\$0		\$230,000
Total	\$2,502,000	\$6,000	-	\$2,508,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MN State Director	0.05	2.00	\$19,000	\$0		\$19,000
MN Conservation Acquisition Associate	0.10	2.00	\$25,000	\$6,000	Private Source	\$31,000
Total	0.15	4.00	\$44,000	\$6,000	-	\$50,000

Amount of Request: \$2,502,000
 Amount of Leverage: \$6,000
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.24%
 DSS + Personnel: \$48,000
 As a % of the total request: 1.92%
 Easement Stewardship: \$0
 As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -%

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

Our real estate support staff keeps hourly time sheets to track direct time spent on projects by grant source. We have used those past metrics to estimate the costs for this grant.

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

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

N/A

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Our real estate support staff keeps hourly time sheets to track direct time spent on projects by grant source. We have used those past metrics to estimate the costs for this grant.

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:

Acquisition of high priority areas would be reevaluated based on the available project budget. We would evaluate with partners the

ecological outcomes for the total cost. MN TCF office has only two employees, so we act in an efficient and lean manner to maximize conservation outcomes.

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	220	0	0	293	513
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	220	0	0	293	513

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	\$900,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,602,000	\$2,502,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$900,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,602,000	\$2,502,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	513	0	0	0	0	513
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	513	0	0	0	0	513

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	\$2,502,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,502,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$2,502,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,502,000

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	\$4,091	\$0	\$0	\$5,468
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$4,877	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

1600 feet

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:

The MN DNR, along with other conservation partners, met and identified the top ecological priorities for each region of the state. Projects are ranked first regionally by the MN DNR Wildlife staff, then discussed on a statewide level with DNR and conservation partners.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Anoka

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Carlos Avery WMA	03322211	80	\$84,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Hennepin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Robina WMA	11824208	40	\$620,000	No	Full	Full

Isanti

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Crown WMA	03425224	393	\$1,658,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

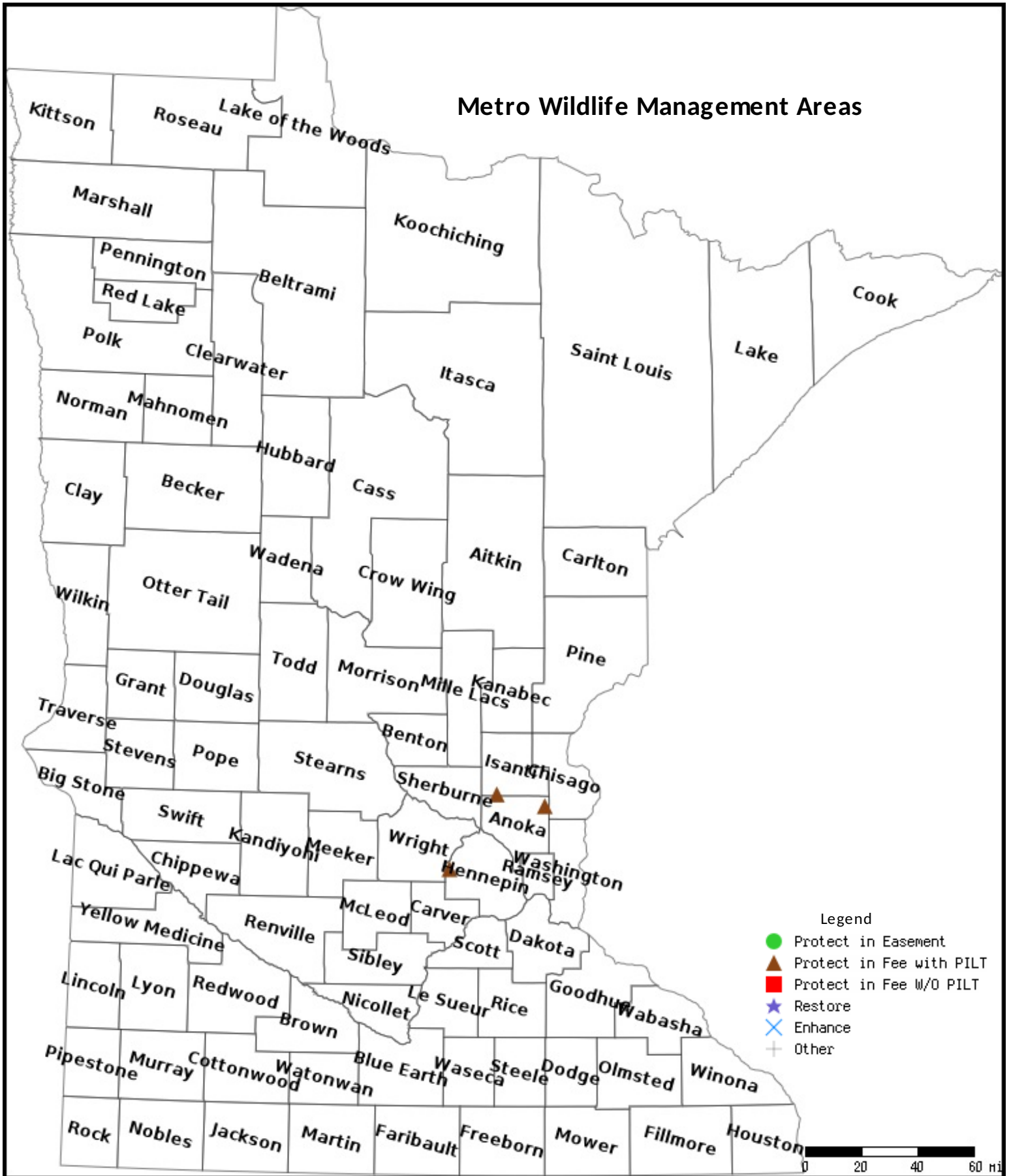
Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List



This program will protect sites that the DNR and has identified as high priority habitat acquisitions that are vital to support wildlife targets in the Metro LSOHC Planning Section.

Regional and state wildlife acquisition staff identified high priority DNR acquisitions, but have not yet been able to protect these sites.

The MN DNR, along with other conservation partners, met and identified the top ecological priorities for each DNR region. Projects are first ranked on the local level by the MN DNR Wildlife staff, then coordinated at the statewide level with conservation partners.

The Conservation Fund has consulted with the local wildlife managers and non-game experts on the importance of these sites in providing lasting conservation outcomes. We are looking holistically at each proposed acquisition to ensure that the parcel adds to the conservation goals for the site and to determine what additional land may be needed to protect our initial investment.

TCF will proactively contact and negotiate land protection with willing landowners in these complexes in coordination with DNR, local conservation groups, and local communities to maximize wildlife populations of statewide and local importance.

Partners

The Conservation Fund
MN DNR

OHF Funding Requested

\$2.5 million

Protection Type

Fee Title Acquisition with PILT

Program Outcomes

- More than 500 acres of publicly accessible habitat near Minnesota's growing urban population
- 200+ acres of restorable wetlands
- 1,600 + feet of additional lakeshore protection that builds on existing WMAs

About The Conservation Fund

We make conservation work for America. By creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, we are re-defining conservation to demonstrate its essential role in our future prosperity. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, we have worked in all 50 states since 1985 to protect more than 7.5 million acres of land.

By building on existing habitat complexes and focusing on marginal agricultural lands, the return on investment is far greater so that we can focus where costs of protection and restoration are low, relative to the gain in conservation benefits.



Photo Credit: Anoka County Parks & Recreation

The Conservation Fund works with DNR wildlife staff, ecologists and Minnesota County Biological Survey to identify sites of importance for Species of Greatest Conservation Need to target the essential boundaries required for a species to persist in perpetuity in each of the priority areas.

As the metro area continues to grow, hunting opportunities created by this program will be utilized by Minnesotan's who would like to hunt closer to home. This program will provide even more hunting opportunities on two existing WMAs, and an additional 390+acre WMA within an hour's drive of the Twin Cities. Many youth are enjoying high school trap leagues, and additional hunting opportunities closer to home allows Minnesota's outdoor heritage to flourish.



Credit: MN DNR

Sites in this proposal provide lasting habitat value to grassland and migratory birds, as well as aquatic habitat for the Blanding's turtle, identified as Threatened status in Minnesota.

		Conservation Complex 1		Conservation Complex 2	
Category	Sub-category	Acres	Estimated \$ (10 yrs)	Acres	Estimated \$ (10 yrs)
Permanent Protection	<i>Fee title (productive cropland) / acre</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Fee title (marginal cropland) / acre</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Easement / acre (productive cropland)</i>				
	<i>Easement / acre (marginal cropland)</i>		\$0		\$0
Totals		-	\$0	-	\$0
Temporary Protection	<i>CRP per acre / year</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Private Lands Agreements / acre</i>		\$0		\$0
Totals		-	\$0	-	\$0
Restoration	<i>Wetland / acre</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Upland tile / acre</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Grassland / acre</i>	-	\$0		\$0
	<i>Stream / mile</i>		\$0		\$0
Totals		-	\$0	-	\$0
Enhancement	<i>Prescribed fire / acre * 2 (every 5 yrs)</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Conservation grazing / mile</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Haying / acre * 2 (every 5 yrs)</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Woody removal (grove) / acre</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Woody removal (volunteer) / acre * 2 (every 5 yrs)</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Herbicide / acre (intensely infested site)</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Herbicide / acre (lightly infested site)</i>		\$0		\$0
Totals		-	\$0	-	\$0
Stewardship	<i>Personel hours / year</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Travel / mile (IRS rate) / year</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>Build structures/parking areas</i>		\$0		\$0
	<i>PILT/acre/yr</i>	-	\$0	-	\$0
Totals		-	\$0	-	\$0
TOTAL CONSERVATION COMPLEX COST			\$0		\$0
COST PER ACRE			\$0.00		\$0.00
Total Conservation Complex Acres					
Total Unprotected Acres					
Total Protected Acres					
Total Cost of Conservation Complex per Conservation Indicator*					

* Using accepted models created by USFWS and others, we can estimate the number of duck breeding pairs, nesting grassland birds, etc, whatever model is applicable to the conservation complex. These metrics are indicators of success for the goal(s) set for each conservation complex.