Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Fiscal Year 2019 / ML 2018 Request for Funding

Date: May 31, 2017

Program or Project Title: Enhanced Public Land – Grasslands - Phase III

Funds Requested: $4,983,700

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County Locations: Not Listed

Regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Restore
- Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Abstract:

We propose to enhance 15,000 acres of grassland and wetland habitat to increase the productivity of game species and other wildlife on Minnesota lands open to public hunting including Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA), and National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). We will accomplish this by working with our partners to follow best practices to conduct wetland restorations, conservation grazing, invasive tree removal, prescribed fire, and diversity seeding in the prairie, forest/prairie transition, and metro regions.

Design and scope of work:

Greater than 95% of Minnesota's prairies have been lost to the plow and development. Many of the remaining acres of native and restored grasslands have been degraded from lack of fire and spread of invasive trees. Many wetlands are now in need of repair while others can be enhanced or restored. This project aims to address the loss of productivity on WPAs, WMAs, and NWRs that are open to hunting so they can reach their full potential for wildlife production.
Research has shown that trees are detrimental to prairie/grassland wildlife and will be removed with this proposal. Common species that degrade this habitat include but are not limited to Siberian Elm, Box Elder, and Eastern Red Cedar. The trees provide perches for avian predators red-tailed hawks, great-horned owls, and crows, and dens for red fox, raccoon, and skunk. Predators like these are highly effective at predating both nests and nesting birds, especially in fragmented habitat. Wetlands will be restored/enhanced by removing drain tile, and constructing/repairing earthen dams and/or water control structures. Wetlands targeted for enhancement are vital to providing food, cover, and space required for breeding waterfowl and are essential to water quality and aquifer recharge.
Research has shown that a diverse mixture of native grasses and forbs is ideal for nesting and brood rearing of upland nesting birds along with being essential for pollinator species. Many WMAs, WPAs, or NWRs were purchased in sub-optimal habitat condition (e.g. monotype of brome grass) or were restored using low diversity seed mixes that are less productive for wildlife. We will use a site-

specific combination of techniques (e.g. cultivation, tree removal, herbicide, and prescribed fire) to bring back productivity to these public lands. In close collaboration with the land managers, we will seed a diverse mix of native grasses and forbs that are well adapted to site conditions. Mowing will be used as needed to manage annual weed pressure to ensure establishment.
Conservation grazing is an important enhancement tool for sites that are difficult to conduct prescribed fires or need to target specific enhancement needs (e.g. cool season grass suppression, tree invasion, etc.). Permanent infrastructure with a lifespan of 30+ years will be installed to conduct conservation grazing plans written to benefit wildlife.
Prescribed burning is the primary management tool for managing grassland habitat for waterfowl, game birds, and songbirds. It increases vigor, sets back invasive woody species, and removes built up residue.
Our goal is to make every acre of public land as productive as possible. By adding capacity to enhance habitat on WPAs, NWRs and WMAs, we will strive to help our collective public land management entities so that they no longer need mechanical or chemical treatments and high-quality habitat can be sustained with prescribed fire only.
An RFP and ranking process has been developed in previous phases that allow us to identify, rank and deliver the projects that have the most impact for grassland and wetland wildlife.

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:

- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (MPCP) - This proposal fulfills many goals of the MPCP. It increases the rate of restoration and enhancement on public lands that directly contributes to the goals of public land enhancement in cores, corridors, and agriculture matrix.

Long Range Plan For the Ring-necked Pheasant in MN -This proposal increases the productivity of WMAs, WPAs, and NWRs open to hunting which will contribute to achieving an average ring-necked pheasant harvest of 750,000 birds by 2025.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

- Restore or enhance habitat on public lands

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

Metro / Urban:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity

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:

This proposal significantly increases the quality of habitat for game birds and other wildlife on public lands in the prairie, forest/prairie transition, and metro regions. These efforts provide increased opportunities for the public and improve the quality of the experience on our public lands for all users.

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:

The science and strategy of habitat enhancement in this part of Minnesota is to build functional complexes of habitat where it once existed. The quantity and spatial arrangement of habitat is important. Another important aspect relates to the quality of habitat found there. By enhancing and restoring grasslands and wetlands in key landscapes, we aim to make every acre as productive as possible to provide the most benefit to wildlife and the people of Minnesota. To maximize efficiency and effectiveness, projects will be developed

in conjunction with MNDNR and USFWS land managers.

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 directly addresses the loss of wildlife production on reconstructed and native prairies through restoration and enhancement best practices. By increasing the quality of existing remnant prairie habitat (largely through fire and invasive tree removal) we can benefit numerous species that are of special concern, threatened, or endangered. This proposal targets grassland species, including but not limited to greater prairie chicken, ring-necked pheasants, monarch butterflies, honey bees and Dakota skippers.

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.

Prairie Chickens: According to the research literature and personal observations in Minnesota, prairie chickens require a minimum of 320 acres of high quality grasslands with no areas hostile to grassland wildlife (woodlots, farmsteads, etc) near these grasslands. For every 320 acre patch of high quality grassland in the prairie chicken range in the northwest part of the state, we can expect there to be a lek, or booming ground. The average size of booming grounds in Minnesota is roughly 11 males.

Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrow: The breeding territory size of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows is 1.7 and 2.1 acres respectively in high quality habitat in Wisconsin. If all of the habitat was occupied, a 100 acres of habitat could potentially hold approximately 60 and 48 pairs of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows respectively.

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.

Outcomes:

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Increased waterfowl and upland bird migratory and breeding success *Outcomes will be measured by resource professionals and evaluated by using the best science available to land managers.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- Improved condition of habitat on public lands. Outcomes will be measured by resource professionals and evaluated by using the best science available to land managers.

Programs in prairie region:

- Improved condition of habitat on public lands *Outcomes will be measured by resource professionals and evaluated by using the best science available to land managers.*

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

The portions of enhancement work that will be completed by this proposal will generally allow the unit to be managed more effectively by the resource manager, whether that be the USFWS or the MNDNR. However, with limited funds and constant pressure to our public land grasslands/wetlands from volunteer invasive trees, water quality decline, aging grasslands, etc., we also expect continued opportunity to supplement local agency efforts. While it's difficult for a third party like us to provide an analysis of future costs on existing public land, according to the Long-Range Budget Analysis of Land Management Needs, the cost of long-term management ranges from $11-16/acre annually. We expect that average need to be the same for the parcels we worked on.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Post Project Completion - WMA	MN DNR - Game and Fish Funds	Monitoring	Maintenance	
Post Project Completion - WPA	USFWS - Federal	Monitoring	Maintenance	
Post Project Completion - NWR	USFWS-Federal	Monitoring	Maintenance	

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

Grasslands naturally degrade over time. The longer grasslands are allowed to degrade the more expensive and difficult they are to correct. This project aims to enhance public lands to produce at maximum capacity for the benefit of the public and as such is worthy and necessary for public money.

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

This proposal is the third phase of an effort to enhance public lands for the benefit of wildlife and public recreation. All funding has been spent in the first phase and the second phase has been contracted and work is being completed as weather allows. Although we have accomplished a significant amount of quality work in the first and second phase, it was evident there is a significant amount of work remaining and an interest from agency managers to better our public lands. Pheasants Forever, USFWS, MN DNR and other partners are focused on managing grassland habitat for game birds, waterfowl, and all other species of grassland wildlife. Leverage is expected from multiple sources including but not limited to federal sources, contractor donations and PF.

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
2002-2010	Heritage Enhancement Grants	$145,000 HE / $14,500 PF
2015-2017	NAWCA	$150,000 HE

Activity Details

Requirements:

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

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 (WMA, WPA, Refuge Lands)**

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

Are the funds confirmed - **No**

What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds - **07/01/2018**

Land Use:

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

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Distribute Project Request for Proposals to Area Land Managers	Fall 2018
Review Project RFPs with project selection committee	Winter 2018-19
Select Projects for completion and hire contractors to complete habitat work	Winter 2018-19
Enhancement / Restoration work begins	Spring 2019
Re-evaluate project status/budget and solicit additional projects as needed	Winter 2020
Enhancement / Restoration work completed	Summer 2023

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: $4,983,700

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$200,000	$0		$200,000
Contracts	$4,700,000	$100,000	Federal, Private, PF	$4,800,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$0	$0		$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$0	$0		$0
Easement Acquisition	$0	$0		$0
Easement Stewardship	$0	$0		$0
Travel	$10,000	$0		$10,000
Professional Services	$0	$0		$0
Direct Support Services	$73,700	$0		$73,700
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$0	$0		$0
Capital Equipment	$0	$0		$0
Other Equipment/Tools	$0	$0		$0
Supplies/Materials	$0	$0		$0
DNR IDP	$0	$0		$0
Total	$4,983,700	$100,000	-	$5,083,700

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
PF Grants Staff	0.28	3.00	$60,000	$0		$60,000
State Coordinator - MN	0.05	3.00	$15,000	$0		$15,000
PF Field Staff	0.58	3.00	$125,000	$0		$125,000
Total	0.91	9.00	$200,000	$0	-	$200,000

Amount of Request:	$4,983,700
Amount of Leverage:	$100,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request:	2.01%
DSS + Personnel:	$273,700
As a % of the total request:	5.49%
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:

PF utilizes the Total Modified Direct Cost method. This methodology is annually approved by the U.S. Department of Interior's National Business Center as the basis for the organization's Indirect Cost Rate agreement. PF's allowable direct support services cost is 4.12%. In this proposal, PF has discounted its rate to 1.5% of the sum of personnel, contracts, and travel. We are donating the difference in-kind.

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

We anticipate that all of the contract funding will be used for restoration and enhancement activities.

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:

n/a

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Leverage is expected from multiple sources including but not limited to federal sources, land value donations, contractor donations and PF. Not every source is 100% confirmed at this point. However, PF has an exemplary track record of delivery and over-achievement

of match commitments that further stretch OHF funding.

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:

If scaled back, this proposal would be reduced proportionately across all categories of the budget and output tables.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	50	100	0	0	150
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	50	14,800	0	0	14,850
Total	100	14,900	0	0	15,000

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	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	50
Total	50

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	$16,600	$33,200	$0	$0	$49,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Protect in Easement	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Enhance	$16,600	$4,917,300	$0	$0	$4,933,900
Total	$33,200	$4,950,500	$0	$0	$4,983,700

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	35	35	0	80	0	150
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	250	3,000	0	11,600	0	14,850
Total	285	3,035	0	11,680	0	15,000

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	$11,600	$11,600	$0	$26,600	$0	$49,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Protect in Easement	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Enhance	$83,100	$996,700	$0	$3,854,100	$0	$4,933,900
Total	$94,700	$1,008,300	$0	$3,880,700	$0	$4,983,700

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	$332	$332	$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	$0
Enhance	$332	$332	$0	$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	$331	$331	$0	$333	$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Protect in Easement	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Enhance	$332	$332	$0	$332	$0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

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:

A request for proposals will be sent to all land managers within the prairie, prairie/forest transition, and metro regions. Submitted projects will be reviewed for eligibility, and ranked by a selection committee that will consist of staff from USFWS, MN DNR, and PF.

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.

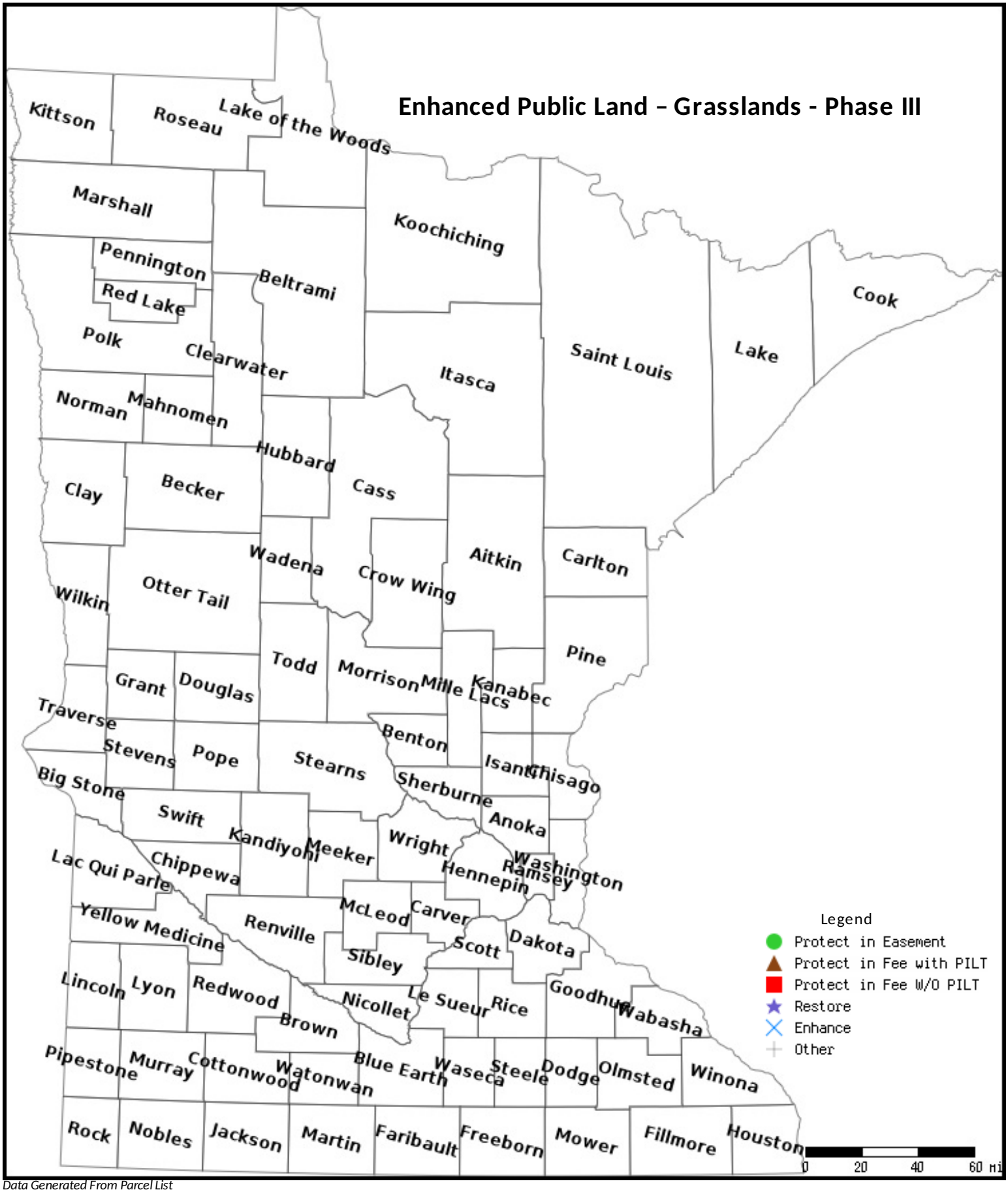
Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List

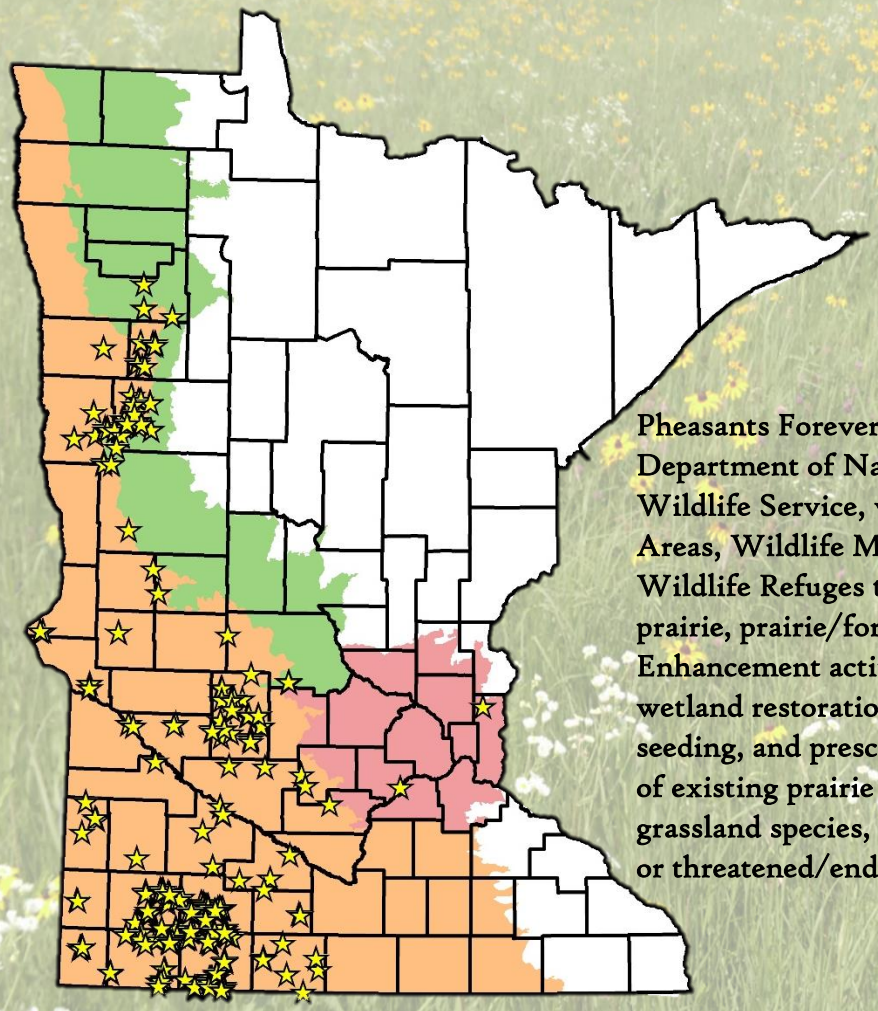
Enhanced Public Land – Grasslands – Phase III

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

PHEASANTS forever The Habitat Organization

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Past Enhanced Public Lands Projects



EPL Projects
Prairie
Forest/ Prairie Transition
Metropolitan Urbanizing Area

Pheasants Forever, partnering with the MN Department of Natural Resources and US Fish and Wildlife Service, will enhance Waterfowl Production Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, and National Wildlife Refuges that are open to public hunting in the prairie, prairie/forest transition, and metro regions. Enhancement activities include invasive tree removal, wetland restoration, conservation grazing, diversity seeding, and prescribed fire. By increasing the quality of existing prairie habitat we can benefit numerous grassland species, some of which are of special concern or threatened/endangered.

Activities

Before ***After***

Tree removal

Prescribed Fire

Wetland Restoration

Diversity Seeding

Conservation Grazing

DRAFT-Enhanced Public Grasslands Scoring Sheet-DRAFT

Updated 5/31/2017

WMA/WPA/NWR Project Name	County	Township/Range/Section	Date:

Project Type

☐ Tree Removal ☐ Prescribed Fire ☐ Diversity Seeding ☐ Conservation Grazing ☐ Wetland Restoration

Must meet all these requirements to be eligible

1	☐	Project is located in an eligible priority region (Prairie, Forest/Prairie Transition, Metro)
2	☐	Project will occur on existing WMA,NWR, or WPA
3	☐	Project is approved by appropriate public land manager
4	☐	Project is open to public hunting
5	☐	Without these funds, project would not be completed
6	☐	Project can be completed by private contractor

Are you Eligible	NO

Factors			Possible Points	Score
1	☐	**Will project affect increase wildlife productivity of upland and wetland habitat**	5 pts	0
2	☐	**Will project benefit any T&E or SGCN species?**	10 pts	0
3		**How large is existing contiguous public lands habitat complex?**		0
	☐	>240 acres	25 pts	
	☐	81 - 240 acres	15 pts	
	☐	< 80 acres	5 pts	
4	☐	**Will project help reduce future management costs?**	10 pts	0
6		**Vegetative Diversity**		0
	☐	>20 native species exist or planted	15 pts	
	☐	11-19 native species exist or planted	10 pts	
	☐	<10 native species exist or planted	0 pts	
7		**Other Factors**		0
	☐	Prairie Conservation Plan core area	15 pts	
	☐	Prairie Conservation Plan corridor or complex area	10 pts	
	☐	Pheasant Plan Complex	15 pts	
	☐	Site contains native prairie	10 pts	

TOTAL	0