

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2019 / ML 2018 Request for Funding



Date: May 31, 2017

Program or Project Title: Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - Phase 3

Funds Requested: \$5,283,900

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County Locations: Big Stone, Big Stone/Swift, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, and Swift.

Regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Restore
- Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Abstract:

Phase 3 of the Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program, will result in the protection of 2,300 acres of high priority wetland habitat complexes in Minnesota's Prairie and Forest-Prairie Transition areas by securing permanent conservation easements within scientifically prioritized habitat complexes. The Minnesota Land Trust will use its innovative landowner bid model to maximize conservation benefit and financial leverage in protection project selection. In addition, an expanding partnership between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Land Trust will restore/enhance 1,682 acres of wetlands and associated prairies to benefit important waterfowl and SGCN populations.

Design and scope of work:

Wetlands and shallow lakes provide the essential backbone for the survival of waterfowl and other important wildlife species. In fact, more than 50% of Minnesota's Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) use wetlands during their life cycle. Most of the plans developed to protect Minnesota's wildlife—including Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, the Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, and the Long Range Duck Recovery Plan—cite the protection and restoration of the state's remaining wetlands as one of the top priorities to achieve the State's conservation goals. Moreover, these plans cite the use of conservation easements on private lands as one of the primary strategies to protect important wetland and shallow lake habitat.

Minnesota Land Trust's Wetlands Habitat Protection Program area extends from Meeker northwest to Becker County, located along a vast glacial moraine system at the edge of the of western Minnesota. This prairie pothole country is the core of Minnesota's "duck factory" and is central to one of North America's most important flyways for migratory waterfowl. Through Phases 1 and 2 of this program, the Land Trust has procured 10 conservation easements protecting nearly 1,800 acres of habitat and 70,000 feet of shoreline,

with more on the way.

Phase 3 will build on these accomplishments by broadening the Program's focus to include – along with wetland protection – habitat restoration and enhancement. Through a partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the Land Trust will restore/enhance 1,680 acres of important prairie and wetland habitat on private lands already protected within the Program area. In addition, the Land Trust will protect 2,300 acres of new priority wetland and associated upland habitat through conservation easements. The Program will be closely coordinated with other public agencies, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders to ensure this Program meets multi-agency conservation goals.

The Land Trust will continue to implement a criteria-based ranking system and market approach for purchasing conservation easements. The Program will continue to target projects that help complete gaps in existing public ownership, are of the highest ecological value, and provide the greatest leverage to the state. The Land Trust will seek donated easements in these areas whenever possible but also may purchase easements that help complete key complexes as necessary.

To focus our easement protection work, we used the Prairie Plan and other data sets and plans to shape our Wetlands Program plan and identify important wetland complexes in this landscape based on the intersection of high-quality habitat, existing protected areas and restorable agricultural lands. These complexes include a mosaic of wetland, prairie/grassland, and forest habitats, as well as agricultural land. Outcomes from this project include: 1) healthy wetland habitat complexes and associated populations of waterfowl, upland birds, and SGCN; 2) improved water quality; 3) increased participation of private landowners in habitat conservation projects; and 3) enhancement of prior public investment in wetland and upland habitat protection.

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

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

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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

Once secured, conservation easements will protect in perpetuity the important shoreland and associated upland habitats adjacent to some of Minnesota's premier wetland and prairie resources. Habitat management plans will be developed and provided to the landowners for use in enhancing and maintaining each parcel's important habitat. Restoration and enhancement of prairie and wetland habitats on USFWS easements will provide for enhanced habitat quality that will benefit a slate of Species in Greatest Conservation Need along with waterfowl, pheasants, and other wildlife. Protection of these critical habitats advances a primary goal identified by Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan through stabilization of SGCN, the state's waterfowl population through the Duck Plan, and the full slate of prairie species through the Prairie Plan.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

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

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

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:

The Minnesota Land Trust and US Fish & Wildlife Service will focus their protection, restoration and enhancement work on key wetland, prairie and other habitats within Minnesota's Prairie Pothole area, guided by the Minnesota Prairie Plan, Duck Plan and State Wildlife Action plan. High quality lands are protected through acquisition of perpetual conservation easements; native habitats are restored and enhanced on existing eased lands. We work in partnership with local, state and federal agency and non-profit conservation partners to ensure our activities are complementary to those undertaken by others working in the program area. By doing this, we are building complexes of high quality protected habitat, reducing fragmentation concerns and providing for connectivity between core

habitat areas that will enable species to move over time.

In purchasing conservation easements, we work with willing, conservation-minded landowners. Our landowner bid process will be targeted toward specific areas with our Wetlands program area identified through the plans listed above. Opportunities within the program area are identified and prioritized based on the potential to contribute to build a permanent conservation legacy that includes outcomes for wildlife and the public. Prairie and wetland habitats on lands already protected through conservation easement by the USFWS are targeted for restoration and enhancement in order to elevate their inherent value for wildlife. Both the Land Trust and USFWS are deeply committed to maintaining these investments over time.

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:

This program is focused on procuring easements and restoring prairie and wetland habitats on easement lands within priority complexes of wetlands and associated upland habitats, as guided by the State Wildlife Action Plan, Duck Plan and Prairie Plan. Specific parcels available for acquisition of easements are further reviewed relative to each other to identify priorities among the pool of applicants. This relative ranking is based on three primary ecological factors (amount of habitat on the parcel (size) and abundance of SGCN; the quality or condition of habitat; and the parcel's context relative to other natural habitats and protected areas) and cost. As such, the program serves to build upon past conservation investments in the program area, expanding the footprint of existing protected areas (WMAs, WPAs, etc.), facilitating the protection of habitat corridors and reducing the potential for fragmentation of existing habitats. In addition, our partnership with USFWS will enable us to further reduce effects of fragmentation through restoration of prairie, wetlands and other habitats. Minnesota Biological Survey data is a cornerstone to our assessment of potential conservation easement acquisitions; we also conduct field visits to further identify and assess condition of habitats prior to easement acquisition, as many private lands were not formally assessed through MBS.

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:

Minnesota's wetlands are essential to our wildlife health and diversity. This project directly benefits Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and other important game and non-game wildlife species by minimizing the potential threats to their habitat brought about by detrimental agricultural practices, residential or commercial development or imprudent land management. The wetland habitat complexes that will be targeted through the ranking system will include a mosaic of wetlands, grasslands and woodlands. Priority projects will include high or outstanding habitat as identified in Minnesota Biological Survey data. They will also be located near other protected lands so as to help build larger habitat complexes which will be comprised of both public and private lands. In fact, with the vast majority of this landscape in private ownership, working with private owners on land protection strategies is key to successful conservation in this region. Finally, we will work closely with partners in the region to identify those habitat complexes where private land protection can make a significant contribution to existing conservation investments.

This program addresses LSOHC priorities by protecting shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for Minnesota's wildlife, especially its migratory waterfowl and associated species.

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

DNR staff, in consultation with a variety of experts in NGOs and other agencies, have compiled a select group of indicator species and associated quantities to be used to answer the question above. The metrics are derived from existing data sources and/or scientific literature, but are necessarily gross averages; they are not accurate at a site-specific scale. Therefore, they are not intended to be used to score or rank requests, but represent the best information we have for immediate support to the Council's objective.

1. Prairies and Grasslands

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. 100 acres of habitat could potentially hold approximately 60 and 48 pairs of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows, respectively.

Ring-necked 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.

2. Wetlands and Shallow Lakes

Mallard: The biological model used in the UMRGLRJV 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 nesting habitat is also needed).

Trumpeter swan: Though reported territories can range in size from 1.5 - >100 hectares, a reasonable expectation is that 1 trumpeter

swan pair would be supported by each 150 acres of wetland protected, restored or enhanced.

Outcomes:

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Wetland and upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands, and restored shallow lakes and wetlands *This program will permanently protect 1,150 acres of wetland and upland habitat complexes and restore/enhance 1,682 acres of wetlands and prairies in the forest-prairie transition region. Measure: Acres protected; acres restored; acres enhanced.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species *This program will permanently protect 1,150 acres of wetland and upland habitat complexes and restore/enhance 1,682 acres of wetlands and prairies in the prairie region. Measure: Acres protected; acres restored; acres enhanced.*

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 state-of-the-art standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship. The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited land trust with a very successful stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring, effective records management, addressing inquiries and interpretations, tracking changes in ownership, investigating potential violations and defending the easement in case of a true violation. Funding for these easement stewardship activities is included in the project budget.

In addition, MLT will assist landowners in the development of comprehensive habitat management plans to help ensure that the land will be managed for its wildlife and water quality benefits. USFWS and MLT (as easement holders on respective properties) will work with landowners in an ongoing basis to provide habitat restoration plans, resources and technical expertise to undertake restoration, enhancement and ongoing management of these properties.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2022 and in perpetuity	MLT Long-Term Stewardship and Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of conservation easements in perpetuity	Enforcement as necessary	
Every 4-6 years	USFWS, Landowner, MLT	Prescribed fire, tree control, invasive species control		

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

Although the Land Trust and USFWS have been active in this landscape for more than 15 years, we now have a unique window of time to deepen our commitment and conservation impact to protect important wetland complexes. With an aging landowner population and organizational momentum, the time is now to implement a robust wetland protection and restoration program for this region. To focus our work, we have completed an initial analysis to identify important wetland complexes in this landscape based on the intersection of high-quality habitat, existing protected areas and restorable agricultural lands. These complexes include a mosaic of wetland, prairie/grassland, and forest habitats, as well as agricultural land.

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

The Minnesota Land Trust and USFWS are collaborating in the delivery of this program. The Land Trust will lead all facets of easement acquisition in the Program. Restoration and enhancement activities on easement properties will be coordinated by the Land Trust, which includes design review, subcontracting, and project management; USFWS will provide project planning, restoration design and project oversight assistance for these activities. The USFWS is not a direct recipient of funding through this proposal; their time committed to the Program is an in-kind contribution (leverage) estimated at \$26,400.

The 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. In Phase 1 of this program alone, \$1,183,400 in easement value was donated to the program as leverage against the \$1,629,000 grant. We expect a significant landowner contribution to continue in phase 3, with our conservative estimate of leverage being \$810,000.

Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund

Describe the relationship of the funds:

The Minnesota Land Trust was a partner in the Habitat Conservation Partnership (HCP), which received grants from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), from 2001--2011. This proposed OHF grant accelerates the Land Trust's work protecting critical wetland and associated upland habitat within the program area and does not supplant any existing funding sources.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2001-2011	ENRTF	2,000,000
2014-2017	McKnight Foundation	240,000

Activity Details

Requirements:

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

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

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

Easement Acquisition:

The purpose of the Minnesota Land Trust's 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.

Restoration/Enhancement:

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 planting. In some cases this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seedbank.

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

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

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list - **Yes**

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:

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. Creation of new roads/trails or expansion of existing ones is typically not allowed.

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

Existing trails and roads are identified in the project baseline report and will be monitored annually as part of the Land Trust's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads/trails in line with the terms of the easement will be the responsibility of the landowner.

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

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Conservation easements completed or options secured.	June 30, 2021
Restoration and enhancement projects completed	June 30, 2023

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$5,283,900

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$405,000	\$26,400	USFWS	\$431,400
Contracts	\$1,102,000	\$0		\$1,102,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$2,700,000	\$810,000	Private Landowners	\$3,510,000
Easement Stewardship	\$552,000	\$0		\$552,000
Travel	\$35,000	\$0		\$35,000
Professional Services	\$374,500	\$0		\$374,500
Direct Support Services	\$109,400	\$0		\$109,400
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$5,283,900	\$836,400		\$6,120,300

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Protection Staff	1.00	3.00	\$270,000	\$0		\$270,000
MLT Restoration Program Staff	0.50	3.00	\$135,000	\$26,400	USFWS	\$161,400
Total	1.50	6.00	\$405,000	\$26,400		\$431,400

Amount of Request: \$5,283,900
 Amount of Leverage: \$836,400
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 15.83%
 DSS + Personnel: \$514,400
 As a % of the total request: 9.74%
 Easement Stewardship: \$552,000
 As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 20.44%

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 our 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 will apply this DNR-approved rate only to personnel expenses to determine the total amount of direct support services.

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

Restoration and enhancement accounts for \$900,000 of the contract line amount. Additional funds in the contract line are for the writing of habitat management plans via qualified vendors and engaging respective County Soil and Water Conservation Districts for landowner outreach purposes to facilitate communication of the program to targeted priority landowners.

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:

Land Trust staff regularly rent vehicles for grant-related purposes, which is a significant cost savings over use of personal vehicles.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The Land Trust encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements to ensure the perpetual protection of these important lands and waters. The leverage portion of the easement acquisition line item is a conservative estimate of value we expect to see donated to the Land Trust.

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:

Because this program endeavors to protect multiple parcels with this funding, it is scalable. Less funding will result in fewer protected acres and lost opportunities. In addition, some of the administrative and outreach costs are more fixed. As such, there is an economy of scale to working within one appropriation.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	58	65	0	840	963
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	2,300	2,300
Enhance	50	50	0	619	719
Total	108	115	0	3,759	3,982

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	360
Total	360

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$77,200	\$27,200	\$0	\$754,200	\$858,600
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	\$4,197,400	\$4,197,400
Enhance	\$31,000	\$21,600	\$0	\$175,300	\$227,900
Total	\$108,200	\$48,800	\$0	\$5,126,900	\$5,283,900

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	525	0	438	0	963
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	1,150	0	1,150	0	2,300
Enhance	0	90	0	629	0	719
Total	0	1,765	0	2,217	0	3,982

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$485,300	\$0	\$373,300	\$0	\$858,600
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	\$2,098,700	\$0	\$2,098,700	\$0	\$4,197,400
Enhance	\$0	\$43,300	\$0	\$184,600	\$0	\$227,900
Total	\$0	\$2,627,300	\$0	\$2,656,600	\$0	\$5,283,900

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$1,331	\$418	\$0	\$898
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	\$1,825
Enhance	\$620	\$432	\$0	\$283

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$924	\$0	\$852	\$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	\$1,825	\$0	\$1,825	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$481	\$0	\$293	\$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:

Restoration and enhancement work will take place on private lands over which the USFWS has conservation easements to protect wetlands and associated upland habitats. The projects included in the parcel list were identified as priorities for restoration/enhancement by USFWS staff in their Morris and Fergus Falls offices. Parcels selected for protection will be determined through the sign-up criteria posted with this proposal.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

Big Stone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
HD/R	12244225	69	\$10,455	Yes
HFarms et al	12245227	136	\$42,890	Yes

Big Stone/Swift

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Cvac	12044213	65	\$22,000	Yes

Douglas

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
GLil	13040203	40	\$10,000	Yes
KHln	12939229	100	\$75,000	Yes
LCar	13040217	50	\$25,000	Yes
MOIs	13040213	80	\$50,000	Yes

Grant

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
JLue	12842210	100	\$100,000	Yes

Otter Tail

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
BStef	13743217	160	\$100,000	Yes
CGru	13242217	10	\$7,500	Yes
CSha	13644213	80	\$50,000	Yes
DHes	13243212	10	\$10,000	Yes
Dhin	13242227	25	\$25,000	Yes
Dklu	13642213	5	\$7,500	Yes
JOle	13239235	10	\$7,500	Yes
LEva	13140213	140	\$80,000	Yes
MMou	13242216	20	\$40,000	Yes
OSor	13140234	80	\$75,000	Yes
PVuk	13242216	5	\$7,500	Yes
WVal	13242228	80	\$40,000	Yes
WVal #2	13242228	3	\$5,000	Yes

Pope

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
JGan	12328211	113	\$28,539	Yes
JGer	12437332	122	\$31,560	Yes

Swift

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
GStr	12238224	100	\$13,290	Yes
THen	12137211	76	\$15,000	Yes

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

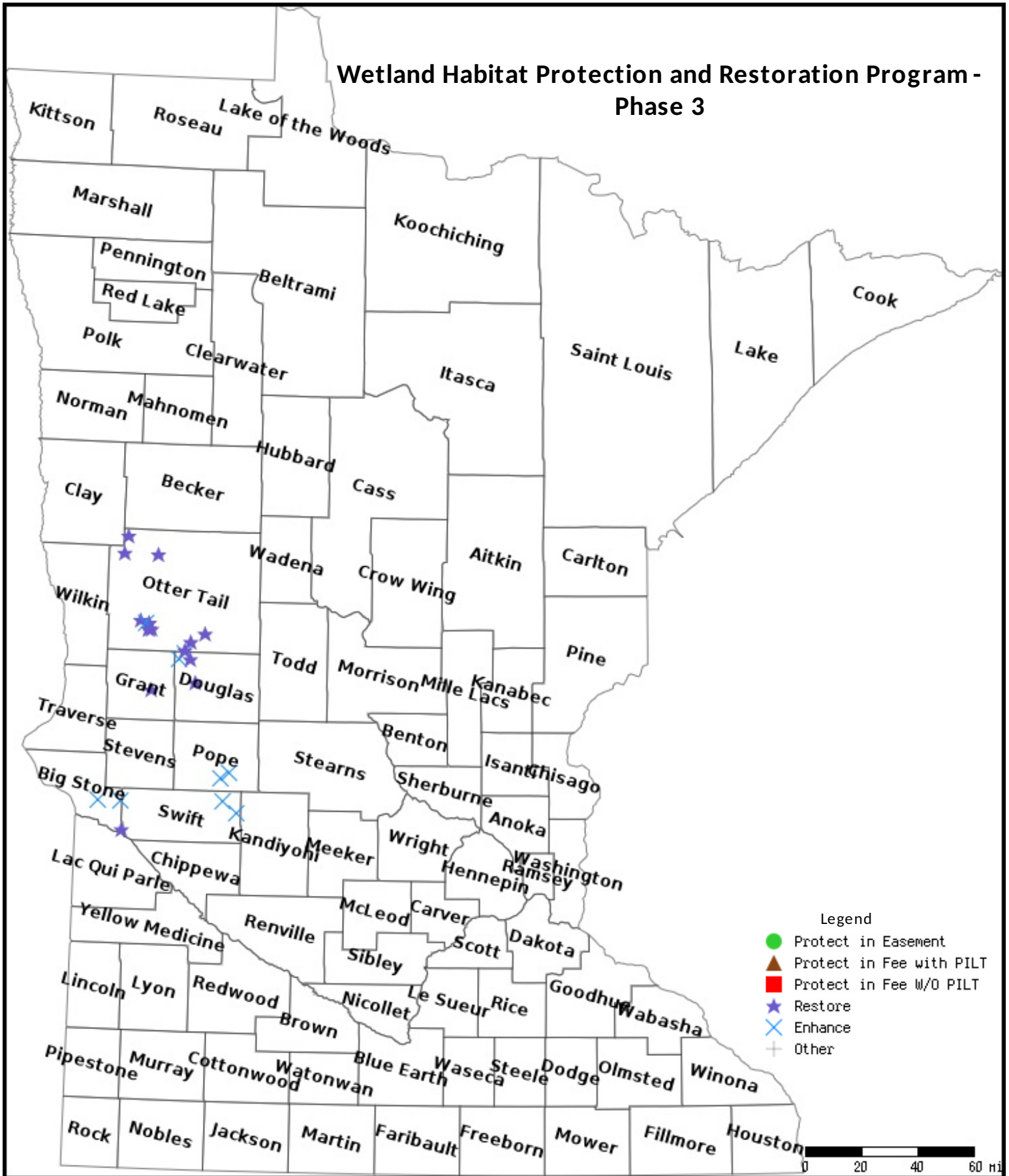
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - Phase 3



Data Generated From Parcel List



Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program

Phase 3

The Minnesota Land Trust is requesting \$5,283,900 for the third phase of the Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program.

The Land Trust will secure 2,300 acres of permanent conservation easements that target high priority wetland habitat complexes within Minnesota's Prairie and Forest/Prairie Transition sections. Using our innovative landowner bid model, the program will maximize conservation benefit and leverage \$810,000 in private easement value.

In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the Land Trust will also restore/enhance 1,680 acres of important wetland and prairie habitat on private lands protected through conservation easement.

How Does the Program Support State Goals?

This program will target high-priority wetlands and associated upland habitat. This advances a primary goal identified by the Statewide Wildlife Action Plan through stabilization of Species in Greatest Conservation Need. Protection and restoration of wetlands and grasslands are primary strategies identified in Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan, the Long Range Duck Recovery Plan, and the Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in Minnesota.



Rebecca Field

Outdoor Heritage Fund Request:

\$5,283,900 to protect **2,300** acres and restore/enhance **1,680** acres.

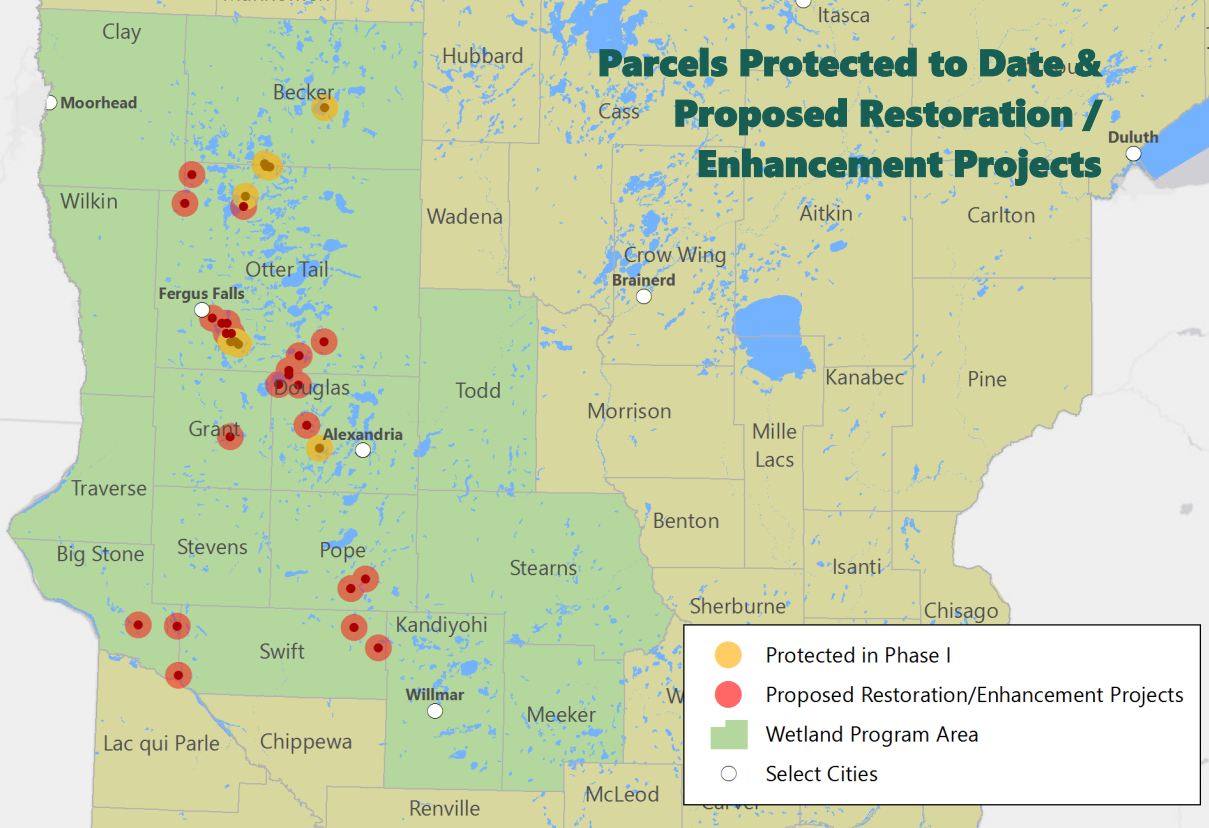
The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited conservation organization with a twenty-five year history of protecting Minnesota's most unique wildlife habitats around the state.

For more information about this proposal, please contact Wayne Ostlie, Director of Land Protection, at 651-917-6292 or wostlie@mnland.org.

What Are the Outcomes of the Program?

- Healthy wetland habitat complexes and associated populations of waterfowl, upland birds, and species in greatest conservation need.
- Improved water quality.
- Increased participation of private landowners in habitat projects.
- Enhancement of prior public investment in wetland protection and restoration.

Parcels Protected to Date & Proposed Restoration / Enhancement Projects



MINNESOTA LAND TRUST

What has Been Accomplished to Date in the Program?

Phase I (in progress):

Completed 12 conservation easements, protecting 1,962 acres of habitat and 72,634 feet of shoreline (~14 miles).

Phase II (in progress):

Seven conservation easements have been prioritized in phase II. The first is scheduled to close soon and will protect 164 acres of habitat and 6,726 feet of shoreline.



Tom Nord

The Wetland Habitat Protection Program has generated considerable interest among landowners in protecting these places. **Collectively these landowners have contributed nearly \$1.2 million in easement value as leverage to the nearly \$2 million investment from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.**

Mission

The Minnesota Land Trust protects and restores Minnesota's most vital natural lands in order to provide wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor experiences, and scenic beauty for generations to come.

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Wetland Habitat Protection Program

-Minnesota Land Trust Easement Sign-Up Criteria-



The Wetland Habitat Protection Program 3 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 Minnesota Land Trust (Land Trust) employs perpetual conservation easements in collaboration with private landowners to protect important wetland habitat and associated forests, grasslands and open water.

Through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, landowners within targeted priority areas submit an application for participation in the Wetland Habitat Protection program. Submitted projects are initially scored 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 length of shoreline 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.

These two factors generate a score that is used to initially rank a proposed parcel relative to others. Subsequent discussions with each landowner participating in the RFP allow the Land Trust 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 condition. These post-proposal evaluations may result in proposed parcels moving up or down on the prioritization list. This additional evaluation allows for the Land Trust to most effectively target priority lands for protection.

The Land Trust has set certain minimum criteria for inclusion into the program:

- Land must be located within the Wetlands Habitat Protection Program area.
- Easements must be at least 40 acres in size.
- Easements must contain high quality examples of native plant communities (forest, prairies, etc.) and have at least 10 acres of wetland habitat or contain an undeveloped shoreline.
- Agricultural land consisting of row crops, tree farms, 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. However, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's conservation easements may be eligible, depending on the level of protection of that particular program.

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									
<i>Existing Ecological Significance</i>	<i>Units Affected</i>	<i>Scoring framework for prioritizing conservation value among applicants through an RFP process.</i>							
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							
	0	Feet of shoreline to be protected by an 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 on parcel; rarity of the species							
	0	Minnesota Biological Ranking							
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									
	<i>Score</i>								
4. Cost									
	0	Bid amount (\$)/acre							
	0	Estimated Donative value (\$)/acre							
Revised Scoring of Applications Following Discussion with Landowner									
<i>Potential Impacts by Landowner</i>	<i>Score Adjustments (+/-)</i>	<i>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.</i>							
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								