

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2019 Accomplishment Plan



Date: October 15, 2018

Program or Project Title: RIM Grassland Reserve

Funds Recommended: \$ 2,276,000

Manager's Name: John Voz

Title: RIM Easement and Working Lands Specialist

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Legislative Citation: ML 2019, Ch. X, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. X(x)

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: Not Listed

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie

Abstract:

Using the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program, this project will address the potential loss of grassland habitats from conversion to cropland and accelerate grassland protection efforts not covered by other programs. Working in coordination with established Prairie Conservation Plan Local Technical Teams (LTTs), this proposal will enroll 500 RIM acres (approximately 6 easements), focusing on Minnesota Prairie Plan-identified landscapes.

Design and scope of work:

In 2018 alone over 200,000 acres of CRP will expire in Minnesota. Over the next three years 347,000 additional acres will expire - in geographical terms, 15 townships or 542.47 square miles. Minnesota was once a land of 18 million acres of prairie. Today less than two percent remains. The few acres of native remnant prairie that remain were once thought of as too rocky or wet for row crops but not anymore. If the current trajectory of grassland and prairie loss continues it will be devastating to grassland wildlife populations, including pollinator species.

This proposal, working in partnership with Prairie Conservation Plan Local Technical Teams (LTTs), focuses on protecting current grasslands and buffering native prairie that are within wildlife habitat complexes not covered by other conservation programs. There are programs for native prairie such as NPB and NTGP NWR and programs for cropland, but there are no programs for 'in between' grasslands. As Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and LTTs review these areas for possible enrollment, they may find additional tracts that are native prairie. With this project, some native prairie may be included to square up parcels. In cases where

larger tracts are identified, they will contact the DNR's Biological Survey and Native Prairie Bank staff for a more formal botanical survey of the site.

The loss of native prairie and grassland habitat is arguably the greatest conservation challenge facing northwest, western and southern Minnesota. This appropriation aims to protect 500 acres of prairie and grassland habitat by coordinating and accelerating the enrollment of Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) through private land easements. This level of acceleration is needed to address today's rapid loss of grassland habitat and meet the goals set forth in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan.

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:

Minnesota grasslands provide important habitat for a wide range of species of greatest conservation need. Consistent with guidance in The Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan and Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, strategic site selection will be conducted as well as efforts to minimize landscape stressors and plan for plant diversity and long-term resiliency of project sites. More than 150 Species of Greatest Conservation Need use grasslands for breeding, migration, and/or foraging.

Species that will be targeted include: Greater prairie chicken, Eastern meadowlark, Western meadowlark, Grasshopper sparrow, Northern pintail, Northern black duck, Burrowing owl, Chestnut collared longspur, Bobolink, Wilson's phalarope, Sedge wren, Plains hog-nosed snake, American badger, Prairie vole, Plains pocket mouse, Eastern spotted skunk, Dakota skipper, Monarch butterfly, Power sheik skipper, Regal fritillary, Rusty patched bumble bee.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

Native prairies are often part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and wetlands. These complexes will be the top priority for this project using the MN Prairie Plan framework. A preference will be given to protecting expiring CRP with enrollment of adjacent remnant prairie as identified in the MN County Biological Survey. This focus on expiring CRP will fill a niche that cannot otherwise be filled by the Native Prairie Bank program. LTT's will help guide restoration strategies such as prescribed burning, conservation grazing and woody tree removal to be used to restore the conditions of moderate quality prairies. In addition, the LTTs will identify remnant prairie sites that are not listed on the MN County Biological Survey and update the survey accordingly. By utilizing the LTT's, parcels will be targeted for protection and resulting acres will be tracked and reportable.

Recent genetic diversity research was conducted on Greater Prairie Chickens by the MNDNR to help us understand how birds move through the landscape using a new approach called landscape genetics. It found that prairie chickens in the northern part of the sampled area, near Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge, are not very connected to prairie chickens in Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties to the south. Connecting these areas with high quality habitat would allow more genetic mixing, potentially reduce stress and mortality and eliminate the need for birds to travel long distances to find suitable habitat. This "follow the chicken" approach has worked remarkably well in identifying, targeting and protecting areas that have positive impacts on a wide range of species of greatest conservation need.

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's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program:

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

Prairie:

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

Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund

Describe the relationship of the funds:

The Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP) with BWSR, DNR, PF, NRCS, MASWCD, and SWCDs as primary partners, provides funding to SWCDs to utilize technicians to promote the conservation provisions of the Federal Farm Bill and other conservation program opportunities to private landowners. The Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) via LCCMR recommendations provided \$1.0M in FY10-11, \$625,000 in FY12-13, \$3.0M in FY 14-15 and \$1.0M in FY 16-17.

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Not Listed

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

This funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

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

Not Listed

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

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement into perpetuity. The BWSR partners with local SWCDs carry-out oversight, monitoring and inspection of its conservation easements. Easements are inspected for the first five consecutive years beginning in the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and partners' staff document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at \$6,500 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship cover costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and any enforcement necessary.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2019-Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspection first 5 years; then every 3rd year	Corrective actions on any violations	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General office
2019-Ongoing	Landowner Responsibility	Maintain compliance with easement terms		

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

In certain circumstances food plots for wildlife are an allowable use on RIM easements and must be part of an approved Conservation Plan. Under this proposal no food plots would be allowed on remnant prairies which have never been cultivated (only areas that buffer remnant prairies). Food plots on narrow buffers, steep slopes and wet areas are not allowed but may be offered on any potential surrounding grass buffer on prior cultivated lands. RIM policy limits food plots to 10% of the total easement area or 5 acres whichever is smaller. There is no cost share for establishment of food plots and upon termination and/or abandonment the landowners must reestablish the vegetation as prescribed in the Conservation Plan at their own expense. Food plots are a rarely

selected option by landowners, to date only 2.2% of RIM easements have food plots.

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?

BWSR will be the responsible party for monitoring and enforcing easements.

Who will be the easement holder?

BWSR will be the easement holder.

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?

Approximately 6 easements are planned to be acquired.

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:

Though uncommon, there could be a potential for new minimal use trails, if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g. firebreaks, berm maintenance, etc). Unauthorized trails identified during the monitoring process are in violation of the easement.

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5 years and then every 3rd year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), implement a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms. Under the terms of the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Easement Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost shared from a variety of sources.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition - **Yes**

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

Though uncommon, there could be a potential for new minimal use trails, if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g. firebreaks, berm maintenance, etc). Unauthorized trails identified during the monitoring process are in violation of the easement.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5 years and then every 3rd year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), implement a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms. Under the terms of the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Easement Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost shared from a variety of sources.

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation? - **Yes**

Vegetative restoration is planned to occur and these restoration costs are included within the Easement Acquisition amount.

Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Enrollment of 500 acres of Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) private land easements	June 30, 2024
Final Report Submitted	November 1, 2024

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 nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed during the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat availability within a certain region is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife within that region. This would have a positive impact on both game and nongame species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these complexes are restored.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed during the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat availability within a certain region is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife within that region. This would have a positive impact on both game and nongame species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these complexes are restored.*

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

A reduction in funding has reduced outputs proportionally. Program management costs are the exception, due to program management & oversight remaining consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Total Amount of Request: \$ 2276000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$163,800	\$0		\$163,800
Contracts	\$12,600	\$0		\$12,600
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$2,034,800	\$0		\$2,034,800
Easement Stewardship	\$39,000	\$0		\$39,000
Travel	\$4,000	\$0		\$4,000
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$14,400	\$0		\$14,400
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,700	\$0		\$5,700
Supplies/Materials	\$1,700	\$0		\$1,700
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$2,276,000	\$0		\$2,276,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.25	5.00	\$137,500	\$0		\$137,500
Easement Processing	0.08	3.00	\$16,200	\$0		\$16,200
Engineering/Eco Services	0.03	3.00	\$10,100	\$0		\$10,100
Total	0.36	11.00	\$163,800	\$0		\$163,800

Amount of Request: \$2,276,000

Amount of Leverage: \$0

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.00%

DSS + Personnel: \$178,200

As a % of the total request: 7.83%

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

BWSR calculates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

What is included in the contacts line?

The contract line amount will be used for payments to SWCD staff for easement implementation.

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:

The travel line will typically be used for traditional travel costs with the addition of vehicle lease costs that are directly attributable to work completed with this appropriation. It is estimated that lease costs may amount to approximately 40% of travel costs for this appropriation.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

None

What is the cost per easement for stewardship and explain how that amount is calculated?

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at \$6,500 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship cover costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and any enforcement necessary.

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	500	0	0	500
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	500	0	0	500

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	0
Total	0

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	\$2,276,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,276,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$2,276,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,276,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	100	0	400	0	500
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	100	0	400	0	500

Table 4. Total Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$455,200	\$0	\$1,820,800	\$0	\$2,276,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$455,200	\$0	\$1,820,800	\$0	\$2,276,000

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	\$4552	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$4552	\$0	\$4552	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

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.

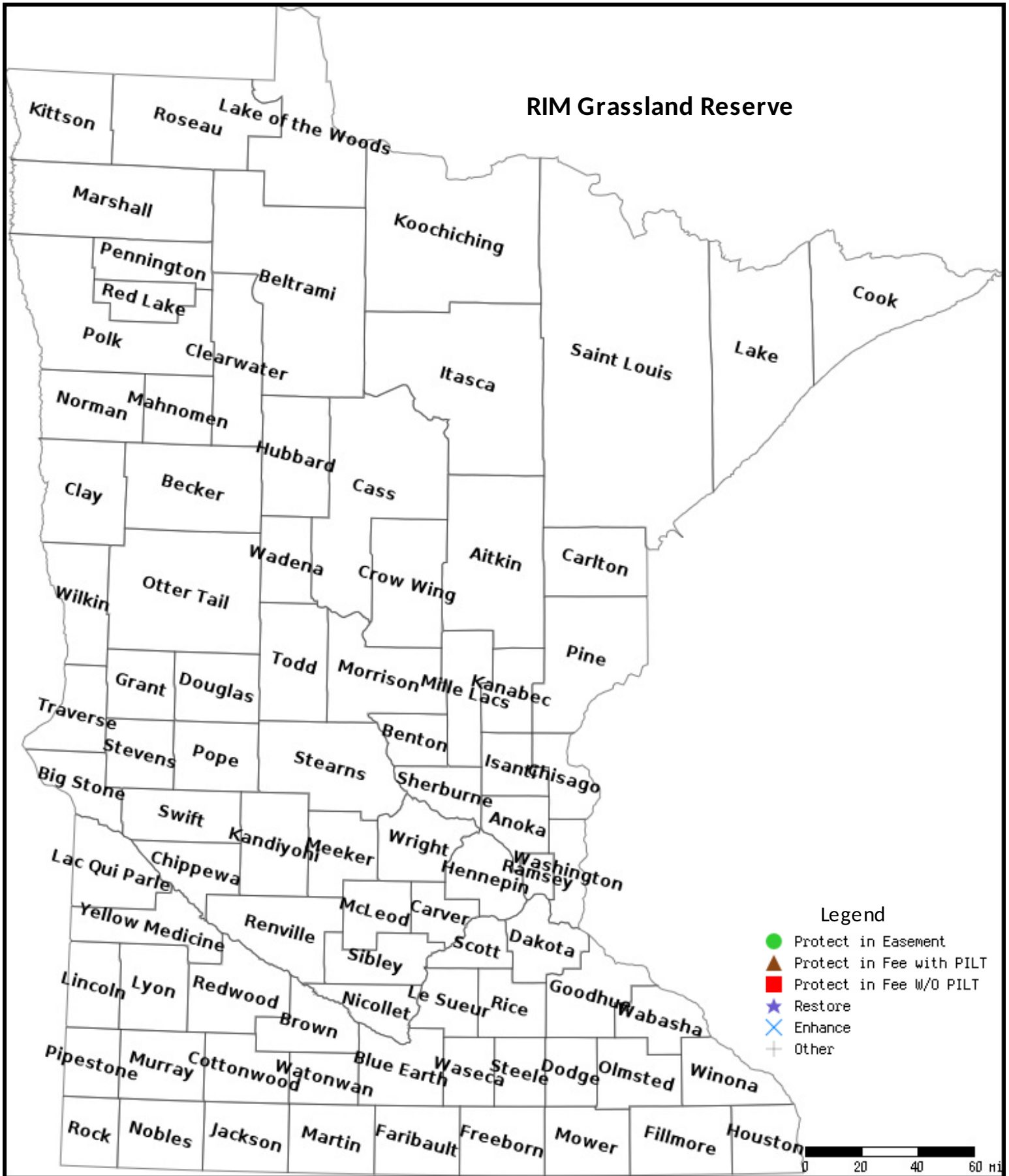
Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Comparison Report

Program Title: 2019 - RIM Grassland Reserve

Organization: BWSR

Manager: John Voz

Budget

Requested Amount: \$4,370,000

Appropriated Amount: \$2,276,000

Percentage: 52.08%

Budget Item	Total Requested		Total Appropriated		Percentage of Request	
	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Appropriated Amount	Anticipated Leverage	Percentage of Request	Percentage of Leverage
Personnel	\$192,500	\$0	\$163,800	\$0	85.09%	-
Contracts	\$27,300	\$0	\$12,600	\$0	46.15%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$4,024,500	\$0	\$2,034,800	\$0	50.56%	-
Easement Stewardship	\$84,500	\$0	\$39,000	\$0	46.15%	-
Travel	\$7,600	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	52.63%	-
Professional Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$19,400	\$0	\$14,400	\$0	74.23%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$10,900	\$0	\$5,700	\$0	52.29%	-
Supplies/Materials	\$3,300	\$0	\$1,700	\$0	51.52%	-
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Total	\$4,370,000	\$0	\$2,276,000	\$0	52.08%	-

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

A reduction in funding has reduced outputs proportionally. Program management costs are the exception, due to program management & oversight remaining consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Output

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	0	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Easement	1,000	500	50.00%
Enhance	0	0	-

Table 2. Total Funding by Resource Type

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	0	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Easement	4,370,000	2,276,000	52.08%
Enhance	0	0	-

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	0	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Easement	1,000	500	50.00%
Enhance	0	0	-

Table 4. Total Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	0	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Easement	4,370,000	2,276,000	52.08%
Enhance	0	0	-