

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Fiscal Year 2020 / ML 2019 Request for Funding



**Date:** May 31, 2018

**Program or Project Title:** Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - Phase V

**Funds Requested:** \$6,788,000

**Manager's Name:** Wayne Ostlie  
**Title:** Director of Land Protection  
**Organization:** Minnesota Land Trust  
**Address:** 2356 University Ave W  
**Address 2:** Suite 240  
**City:** St. Paul, MN 55114  
**Office Number:** 6519176292  
**Mobile Number:** 6518943870  
**Email:** wostlie@mnland.org  
**Website:** www.mnland.org

**County Locations:** Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, and Hubbard.

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

- Northern Forest

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Easement
- Restore
- Enhance
- Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Habitat

### Abstract:

The Minnesota Land Trust and the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation will protect 1505 acres of high priority critical fish habitat and 1 mile of shoreline on 16 priority tullibee "refuge" lakes and their associated watersheds through conservation easements and fee title acquisitions. We will restore 140 acres of associated habitat. A lake's ecosystem and water quality have a high probability of being maintained if less than 25% of its watershed is disturbed. State reports indicate this region could experience significant water quality and fisheries degradation in the coming decades without direct conservation.

### Design and scope of work:

Sustaining a strong angling heritage revolves largely around protecting fisheries habitat. Resurging shoreland development pressures and looming climate change are direct threats to the ecology of Minnesota's lakes. This project will focus on fisheries habitat protection on lakes that have the best biological integrity for a sustained sport fishery. Our protection efforts are focused on tullibee (aka cisco), a preferred forage fish of walleye, northern pike, muskellunge and lake trout. They require cold, well-oxygenated waters, a condition most common in deep water lakes with healthy watersheds. Minnesota DNR Fisheries researchers studied tullibee lakes and designated 68 lakes in Minnesota as the primary "refuge lakes" for tullibee that need protection. Fisheries research has shown that healthy watersheds with intact forests are fundamental to good fish habitat.

The Clean Water Critical Habitat (CWCH) Technical Committee evaluated all tullibee lakes in our project area and prioritized 16 lakes for action. In assigning priorities, the CWCH considered: (1) the ecological value of the lake, (2) the percent of the minor watershed currently protected, (3) the number of parcels in the watershed greater than 20 acres in size, (4) partner organizations available for advising on outreach efforts, and (5) investment by other agencies and organizations to protect lands and watersheds.

Due to the high level of interest in the program and its great success to date, we are applying for a Phase V of this effort. In this phase

we will protect strategically important lands with both conservation easements and fee title acquisitions. We will protect approximately 1300 acres with conservation easements. The conservation easement partners will include County Soil & Water Districts, MNDNR Fisheries, Minnesota Land Trust and LLAWF, with the Minnesota Land Trust holding the easements. This team will conduct outreach to potential landowners and help evaluate the projects to assure we are prioritizing those projects with the greatest conservation outcomes. In addition, to ensure the best conservation return on the state's investment, landowner willingness to donate a portion of the easement value will be a key component of the parcel's evaluation.

We also propose to secure two fee-title acquisitions totaling 205 acres. The first acquisition is on Wabedo Lake. The parcel is 122 acres which includes 1,227 feet of sensitive shoreland which supports a high bird and aquatic vertebrate species. The property is adjacent to public land. The uplands include three small wetlands. The second fee title acquisition is on Ten Mile Lake. The parcel is 83 acres in size and includes approximately 1,300 feet of sensitive shoreland and 70 acres of northern hardwoods with Freshwater Emergent, Freshwater Forest/shrub and Freshwater Pond wetlands.

Finally, we propose to restore 140 acres of priority shoreland and upland habitat on protected easement and fee title properties to the benefit of the 16 targeted tullibee lakes. Program partners will identify those projects where restoration and enhancement activities will have the greatest impact on impacting the health of these priority lakes.

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes

### **Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:**

- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Long Range Plan for Muskellunge and Large Northern Pike Management Through 2020

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

Protection of critical near shore parcels, riparian areas and key forested parcels will be tracked by analyzing the land surface of the watershed. If the tullibee "refuge" lake is less than 25% disturbed by development or intensive land use and 75% of the land area of the watershed is permanently protected, these lakes can generally be assured to maintain high water quality that will support tullibee and resiliency against climate change. The MN DNR AMA Plan identifies north central lakes as the priority focus for AMA's.

### **Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:**

#### **Northern Forest:**

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

### **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:**

Our Fisheries Habitat Protection Program is focused on protecting some of the most important recreational and sport fisheries lakes in Minnesota and helps preserve this State's proud angler heritage. When many residents endorsed the Legacy act they indicated a strong interest in seeing lakes protected. With over 5,400 recreational fishing lakes it is extremely difficult to prioritize which lakes to protect. By focusing on Tullibee "refuge" lakes, our efforts are targeted and achievable. Over the next fifteen years our program will move 16 targeted cold water lakes into a protective class by protecting 75% of the watershed from development. These efforts will protect some of the most important recreational lakes in Minnesota from degradation. Additionally many of our targeted lakes are also classified as Biologically Significant lakes (high and outstanding). During our landowner enrollment in the conservation easement program it became very apparent that many landowners are willing to donate easements, bequest their land to MNDNR or take modest compensation to protect this region. Our program is cultivating a high conservation ethic and developing effective tools for landowners to protect their land and waters. It is also creating a great shared responsibility essential to maximizing our investment to achieve our targeted protection goals.

### **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:**

Timothy Cross and Peter Jacobson's "Landscape factors influencing lake phosphorus concentrations across Minnesota" white paper determined that coldwater fish communities are especially vulnerable to eutrophication from increased phosphorus concentrations.

Decreases in hypolimnetic oxygen concentrations have direct negative effects on fish (like Tullibee) that physiologically require oxygenated cold water to survive, grow and reproduce. Protection is viewed as the most cost effective strategy when applied to watersheds where human activities have not already significantly elevated phosphorus levels.

Peter Jacobson and Mike Duval in "Protecting Watershed of Minnesota Lakes with Private Forest Conservation Easements: A Suggested Strategy" stated that protecting the forests in these watersheds from development is critical for maintaining water quality in these lakes. While large areas of land in forested portions are under public ownership, a considerable amount is also owned by private individuals in some of our most critical lake watersheds. These parcels are increasingly being "split up" and sold. Working forest easements allow sustainable timber harvest, but protect the land from further development. Modeling by MN DNR Fisheries research unit suggests that total phosphorus concentrations remain near natural background levels when less than 25% of the lakes watershed is disturbed. The tullibee "refuge" lakes have watersheds with less than 25% disturbed land uses and are good candidates for protection. The report referenced high priority lakes could include very deep lakes with exceptional water quality and support coldwater fish populations like tullibee.

Minnesota DNR Fisheries researchers studied tullibee lakes and designated 68 lakes in Minnesota as the primary "refuge lakes" for tullibee. We focused our protection efforts on the 16 highest quality tullibee lakes that will require modest to moderate levels of land protection to achieve 75% protection levels. Protecting the habitats of tullibee "refuge" lakes along the shoreline and surrounding forest lands is essential to a sustained sport fishery.

### **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:**

Tullibee (aka cisco) is the preferred forage fish for walleye, northern pike, muskellunge and lake trout. They require cold, well oxygenated waters - a condition most common in lakes with deep water and healthy watersheds. Tullibee populations are the "canary in the coalmine" for three significant threats to Minnesota's sport fisheries: shoreland development, watershed health and climate warming. Deep, cold water lakes with high quality, well-oxygenated waters and natural, undisturbed land cover along the shorelines and within their watersheds will have the best chance to sustain tullibee populations in the face of these threats and will serve as a "refuge" for the tullibee if annual temperatures increase.

Minnesota DNR Fisheries research studied tullibee lakes and designated 68 lakes in Minnesota as primary "refuge lakes" for tullibee that need protection. Sixteen (16) of these lakes representing 23.5% of the designated "refuge" lakes are located in Crow Wing, Aitkin, Cass and Hubbard counties. These lakes are premier recreational and sport fishery lakes. Fisheries research has shown that healthy watersheds with intact forest are fundamental to good fish habitat. The MN DNR Fisheries Habitat Plan states near shore fish habitat affected by shoreland disturbance can impact fisheries. Maintaining good water quality is critical to sustaining tullibees as determined by the water oxygen level and nutrient content. Lakeshore development can negatively impact healthy ecosystems for sport fish and their forage due to increased runoff and physical alteration of shoreland habitat.

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

The information below provides general averages for tullibee in Minnesota. These averages are generated from available data and published sources, and do not capture the variability inherent in populations of fish. Natural populations, including healthy populations with good habitat, vary among locations, and also rise and fall within lakes and rivers. Most fish surveys conducted by MNDNR produce an index of abundance (catch per unit effort) rather than a population estimate. MNDNR provided the following detailed information - Aquatic system: Tullibee lakes: Indicator: Tullibee: Ave. number or biomass NA; Other criteria: Sampling does not provide a reliable number of individuals, but assessment netting provides an indicator of tullibee presence, and the presence of multiple year classes provides evidence that tullibee are continuing to reproduce.

### **Outcomes:**

#### **Programs in the northern forest region:**

- Private shoreline habitat and forested parcels totaling 1505 acres will be permanently protected from development and fragmentation through conservation easements. Riparian forest lands under easement will maintain healthy habitat complexes for upland and aquatic species; forest cover will enhance water quality habitat for tullibee lakes. Greater public access for wildlife and outdoors-related recreation will be attained through Fee-Title acquisition open to public for hunting and fishing. Conservation easement properties will protect fish habitat to insure high quality fishing opportunities.

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

LLAWF and MLT are long standing conservation organizations that do not depend on Outdoor Heritage Funds to sustain or maintain our work. The majority of financial support for both LLAWF and MLT must be raised on an annual basis. The work in this proposal allows both organizations to enhance and accelerate ongoing conservation efforts in North Central Minnesota.

The fee-title acquisitions will be owned and managed by Cass County. The Minnesota Land Trust will hold the conservation easements acquired. The land protected through these conservation easements will be sustained through the best 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. In addition, MLT encourages landowners to undertake active ecological management of their properties, provides them with habitat management plans, and works with them over time to secure resources (expertise and funding) to undertake these activities over time.

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

| Year            | Source of Funds                    | Step 1                                    | Step 2                               | Step 3 |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 2019 and beyond | MLT Stewardship & Enforcement Fund | Monitor easements annually in perpetuity. | Enforce easement terms as necessary. |        |

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

The next ten years are a critical window of opportunity to protect some of the "best of the best" sport fishery lakes in Minnesota. While recent economic slowed shoreland development, realtors now report a resurgence of shoreland property sales. Growth will be driven by baby boomers and technology that allows landowners to live, work and play from the same location. With land values rising in the region, now is the time to protect these tullibee "refugee" lakes and maximize the effectiveness of this fisheries habitat protection project. We are building considerable momentum with effective partnerships with The Nature Conservancy and North Central Conservation Roundtable. We believe these synergistic efforts will increase leveraging and maximize results.

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

This proposal includes the following funds as leverage to our OHF request:

- Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund: LLAWF received an ENRTF grant of \$30,000 to pilot a program to undertake and evaluate the effectiveness of RIM Conservation Easements in a watershed protection context in the Mississippi Headwaters area.
- Landowner donation in the amount of \$1,350,000 in easement value is proposed based on results obtained in past appropriations.
- Landowner donation in the amount of \$103,000 is proposed for fee acquisitions.
- In 2014, LLAWF and Roosevelt Lake Association conducted a community fundraiser for our Woods Bay fee title acquisition. We will continue this model of fundraising support with Wabedo and Ten Mile lakes.

**Relationship to other funds:**

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund

**Describe the relationship of the funds:**

Our LCCMR grant "Multi-benefit Watershed Scale Conservation on North Central Lakes" is a pilot program to evaluate the effectiveness of RIM Conservation Easements in a watershed protection context. RIM easements, which are formula-based and targeted toward bare land, complement the easements pursued in our proposal to LSOHC, which are based on appraisal over entire parcels and focused on natural habitat. Lakes selected in the pilot overlap with our targeted lakes. These easements complement each other and should result in an increase of protected lands on our targeted lakes and help move these lakes to a 75% protection level. Landowner outreach allows us to increase the level of landowner engagement including developing targeted lake maps, mailings, workshops and lake association presentations. To date, our landowner outreach efforts resulted in landowner donations in the amount of \$851,000 in easement value; a donative value of \$1,350,000 is proposed for this phase of the program. Leverage in the amount of \$103,000 is proposed for fee acquisitions and will model successful fundraising partnerships after our Woods Bay Fee Title Acquisition with Roosevelt Lake Association (RALALA).

**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 request will not supplant or substitute previous funding of either Minnesota Land Trust or Leach Lake Watershed Foundation.

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

| Appropriation Year | Source               | Amount |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------|
| ML2015             | ENRTF Award to LLAWF | 30,000 |
| ML2010             | ENRTF Award to LLAWF | 76,200 |

## Activity Details

### Requirements:

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

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition? - **No**

Both LLAWF and MLT take great pride in keeping local governments aware of and supportive of our conservation efforts. Both of our proposed fee title acquisitions have local government support. We do not seek local government approval for our Conservation Easements. We keep counties and townships informed of our efforts.

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection - **Yes**

Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) 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 restoration and enhancement 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 G MO 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**

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

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

We do not anticipate any variations.

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 not allowed.

Trails used for timber management purposes exist on the properties to be purchased in fee, and will continue to be used as such by Cass County after acquisition. No new trails will be developed. All forest roads are considered open to motorized travel unless posted closed with County Board consent. Motorized and non-motorized use is allowed.

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

Conservation Easements: Existing trails and roads for easement properties 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.

Fee Acquisition: For fee title transactions involving Cass County, road and trail maintenance is done on an as needed basis while monitoring is completed by staff forester.

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

## Accomplishment Timeline

| Activity  | Approximate Date Completed |
|---|----------------------------|
| Fee title acquisition of 205 acres (122 acres on Wabedo Lake and 83 acres on Ten Mile Lake) | 4/1/2022                   |
| Protection of 1300 acres via Conservation Easements   | 6/30/2022                  |
| Landowner outreach, consultation, technical assistance and easement preparation             | Ongoing through June 2022  |

# Budget Spreadsheet

**Total Amount of Request: \$6,788,000**

## Budget and Cash Leverage

| BudgetName                 | LSOHC Request      | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source                                     | Total              |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------|
| Personnel                  | \$320,000          | \$0                  |   | \$320,000          |
| Contracts                  | \$338,000          | \$0                  |   | \$338,000          |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT    | \$1,030,000        | \$103,000            | Lake Assoc, Sellers, COLA and Community Fundraising | \$1,133,000        |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT   | \$0                | \$0                  |   | \$0                |
| Easement Acquisition       | \$4,500,000        | \$1,350,000          | Landowners  | \$5,850,000        |
| Easement Stewardship       | \$216,000          | \$0                  |   | \$216,000          |
| Travel                     | \$27,000           | \$0                  |   | \$27,000           |
| Professional Services      | \$233,000          | \$0                  |   | \$233,000          |
| Direct Support Services    | \$85,000           | \$0                  |   | \$85,000           |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | \$18,000           | \$0                  |   | \$18,000           |
| Capital Equipment          | \$0                | \$0                  |   | \$0                |
| Other Equipment/Tools      | \$9,000            | \$0                  |   | \$9,000            |
| Supplies/Materials         | \$12,000           | \$0                  |   | \$12,000           |
| DNR IDP                    | \$0                | \$0                  |   | \$0                |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>\$6,788,000</b> | <b>\$1,453,000</b>   |   | <b>\$8,241,000</b> |

## Personnel

| Position     | FTE         | Over # of years | LSOHC Request    | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source | Total            |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| MLT Staff    | 0.75        | 3.00            | \$203,000        | \$0                  |                 | \$203,000        |
| LLAWF Staff  | 0.50        | 3.00            | \$117,000        | \$0                  |                 | \$117,000        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1.25</b> | <b>6.00</b>     | <b>\$320,000</b> | <b>\$0</b>           |                 | <b>\$320,000</b> |

## Budget and Cash Leverage by Partnership

| BudgetName                 | Partnership          | LSOHC Request      | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source | Total              |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Personnel                  | Minnesota Land Trust | \$203,000          | \$0                  |                 | \$203,000          |
| Contracts                  | Minnesota Land Trust | \$278,000          | \$0                  |                 | \$278,000          |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT    | Minnesota Land Trust | \$0                | \$0                  |                 | \$0                |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT   | Minnesota Land Trust | \$0                | \$0                  |                 | \$0                |
| Easement Acquisition       | Minnesota Land Trust | \$4,500,000        | \$1,350,000          | Landowners      | \$5,850,000        |
| Easement Stewardship       | Minnesota Land Trust | \$216,000          | \$0                  |                 | \$216,000          |
| Travel                     | Minnesota Land Trust | \$18,000           | \$0                  |                 | \$18,000           |
| Professional Services      | Minnesota Land Trust | \$185,000          | \$0                  |                 | \$185,000          |
| Direct Support Services    | Minnesota Land Trust | \$55,000           | \$0                  |                 | \$55,000           |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | Minnesota Land Trust | \$0                | \$0                  |                 | \$0                |
| Capital Equipment          | Minnesota Land Trust | \$0                | \$0                  |                 | \$0                |
| Other Equipment/Tools      | Minnesota Land Trust | \$9,000            | \$0                  |                 | \$9,000            |
| Supplies/Materials         | Minnesota Land Trust | \$5,000            | \$0                  |                 | \$5,000            |
| DNR IDP                    | Minnesota Land Trust | \$0                | \$0                  |                 | \$0                |
| <b>Total</b>               |                      | <b>\$5,469,000</b> | <b>\$1,350,000</b>   |                 | <b>\$6,819,000</b> |

## Personnel - Minnesota Land Trust

| Position     | FTE         | Over # of years | LSOHC Request    | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source | Total            |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| MLT Staff    | 0.75        | 3.00            | \$203,000        | \$0                  |                 | \$203,000        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>0.75</b> | <b>3.00</b>     | <b>\$203,000</b> | <b>\$0</b>           |                 | <b>\$203,000</b> |

| BudgetName              | Partnership                          | LSOHC Request | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source                         | Total       |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|---|-------------|
| Personnel               | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$117,000     | \$0                  |   | \$117,000   |
| Contracts               | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$60,000      | \$0                  |   | \$60,000    |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | Leech Lake Area Watershed            | \$1,030,000   | \$103,000            | Lake Assoc, Sellers, COLA and Community | \$1,133,000 |

| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT    | Foundation                           | \$1,000,000        | \$100,000        | Fundraising | \$1,100,000        |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT   | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$0                | \$0              |             | \$0                |
| Easement Acquisition       | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$0                | \$0              |             | \$0                |
| Easement Stewardship       | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$0                | \$0              |             | \$0                |
| Travel                     | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$9,000            | \$0              |             | \$9,000            |
| Professional Services      | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$48,000           | \$0              |             | \$48,000           |
| Direct Support Services    | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$30,000           | \$0              |             | \$30,000           |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$18,000           | \$0              |             | \$18,000           |
| Capital Equipment          | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$0                | \$0              |             | \$0                |
| Other Equipment/Tools      | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$0                | \$0              |             | \$0                |
| Supplies/Materials         | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$7,000            | \$0              |             | \$7,000            |
| DNR IDP                    | Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation | \$0                | \$0              |             | \$0                |
| <b>Total</b>               |                                      | <b>\$1,319,000</b> | <b>\$103,000</b> |             | <b>\$1,422,000</b> |

**Personnel - Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation**

| Position     | FTE         | Over # of years | LSOHC Request    | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source | Total            |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| LLAWF Staff  | 0.50        | 3.00            | \$117,000        | \$0                  |                 | \$117,000        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>0.50</b> | <b>3.00</b>     | <b>\$117,000</b> | <b>\$0</b>           |                 | <b>\$117,000</b> |

Amount of Request: \$6,788,000  
Amount of Leverage: \$1,453,000  
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 21.41%  
DSS + Personnel: \$405,000  
As a % of the total request: 5.97%  
Easement Stewardship: \$216,000  
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 4.80%

**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 MNDNR 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.

In a process approved by MNDNR on May 24, 2017, Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation used a simplified allocation methodology that resulted in MNDNR approving a 20% indirect rate of allowable expenses. We anticipate a similar rate for this proposal.

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

Yes. The budget includes \$212,000 for R/E associated contract work. Remaining funding in this line item is for subcontracting to qualified vendors the writing of habitat management plans for easement properties.

**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:**

MLT routinely rents cars for travel to easement properties.



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

We expect a donative value of \$1,350,000 to be provided by landowners for conservation easements secured through this phase of the program. Leverage of \$103,000 is proposed for the two fee acquisitions through LLAWF fundraising efforts.

**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:**

The Conservation Easement portion of the proposal could be reduced and the budget modified to reflect changes to adjusted outputs. There are a certain level of fixed costs associated with landowner outreach, technical review of applications and site visits of landowner finalist making it challenging to scale below 50% reduction.

## Output Tables

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

| Type                                     | Wetlands | Prairies | Forest | Habitats | Total |
|--|----------|----------|--------|----------|-------|
| Restore                                  | 0        | 0        | 0      | 40       | 40    |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0        | 0        | 0      | 205      | 205   |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability  | 0        | 0        | 0      | 0        | 0     |
| Protect in Easement                      | 0        | 0        | 0      | 1,300    | 1,300 |
| Enhance                                  | 0        | 0        | 0      | 100      | 100   |
| Total                                    | 0        | 0        | 0      | 1,645    | 1,645 |

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

| Type                                     | Wetlands | Prairies | Forest | Habitats    | Total       |
|--|----------|----------|--------|-------------|-------------|
| Restore                                  | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$100,000   | \$100,000   |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$1,319,000 | \$1,319,000 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability  | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$0         | \$0         |
| Protect in Easement                      | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$5,189,000 | \$5,189,000 |
| Enhance                                  | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$180,000   | \$180,000   |
| Total                                    | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$6,788,000 | \$6,788,000 |

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

| Type                                     | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | Northern Forest | Total |
|--|-------------|----------------|-----------|---------|-----------------|-------|
| Restore                                  | 0           | 0              | 0         | 0       | 40              | 40    |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0           | 0              | 0         | 0       | 205             | 205   |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability  | 0           | 0              | 0         | 0       | 0               | 0     |
| Protect in Easement                      | 0           | 0              | 0         | 0       | 1,300           | 1,300 |
| Enhance                                  | 0           | 0              | 0         | 0       | 100             | 100   |
| Total                                    | 0           | 0              | 0         | 0       | 1,645           | 1,645 |

**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     | \$100,000       | \$100,000   |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$1,319,000     | \$1,319,000 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability  | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$0             | \$0         |
| Protect in Easement                      | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$5,189,000     | \$5,189,000 |
| Enhance                                  | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$180,000       | \$180,000   |
| Total                                    | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$6,788,000     | \$6,788,000 |

**Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type**

| Type                                     | Wetlands | Prairies | Forest | Habitats |
|--|----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Restore                                  | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$2,500  |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$6,434  |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability  | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$0      |
| Protect in Easement                      | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$3,992  |
| Enhance                                  | \$0      | \$0      | \$0    | \$1,800  |

**Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section**

| Type                                     | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | Northern Forest |
|--|-------------|----------------|-----------|---------|-----------------|
| Restore                                  | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$2,500         |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$6,434         |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability  | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$0             |
| Protect in Easement                      | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$3,992         |
| Enhance                                  | \$0         | \$0            | \$0       | \$0     | \$1,800         |

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles**

1 mile

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:

Criteria based scoring systems provide a standardized set of data from which multiple projects can be compared relative to each other and individual projects can be compared against a baseline. Scoring systems are a set of data, not a final, complete decision making tool. Local expertise and experience, programmatic goals, timelines, available resources, capacity, and other more subjective factors might also come into play in project selection and decision making.

MLT and LLAWF accept proposals via an RFP process from targeted landowners with properties on prioritized tullibee lakes. A technical team of experts scores and ranks each project proposal and identifies priorities from those submitted.

The attached scoresheet provides an approach to criteria based scoring that considers: 1) Ecological Integrity/Viability as current status; 2) Threat/Urgency as a future scenario if protection is not afforded; and 3) Cost reflecting the overall value realized through the acquisition of a conservation easement (including a reflection of donative value). Ecological Integrity weights property size, condition, and context equally (at least as an initial starting point). The three primary factors, when taken together, provide a good estimate of long-term viability for biodiversity at the site: 1) Size of the parcel to be protected, 2) Condition of the habitat on the parcel, and 3) its Landscape context (both from a protection and ecological standpoint).

## Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

## Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

### Aitkin

| Name       | TRDS     | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Cedar Lake | 04727231 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |
| Long Lake  | 04625210 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |
| Round Lake | 04923225 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |

### Cass

| Name           | TRDS     | Acres | Est Cost  | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|----------------|----------|-------|-----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Girl Lake      | 14128233 | 0     | \$0       | No                   | No       | No       |
| Long Lake      | 14231233 | 0     | \$0       | No                   | No       | No       |
| Roosevelt Lake | 13826208 | 0     | \$0       | No                   | No       | No       |
| Wabedo         | 14028232 | 122   | \$565,000 | No                   | Full     | Full     |

### Crow Wing

| Name               | TRDS     | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|--------------------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Borden Lake        | 04428215 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |
| Crooked Lake       | 04528216 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |
| Island-Loon Lake   | 13727205 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |
| Ossawinamakee Lake | 13628204 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |
| Whitefish Lake     | 13728207 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |

### Hubbard

| Name          | TRDS     | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|---------------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Big Sand Lake | 14138228 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |
| Kabekona Lake | 14332230 | 0     | \$0      | No                   | No       | No       |

## Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

**Cass**

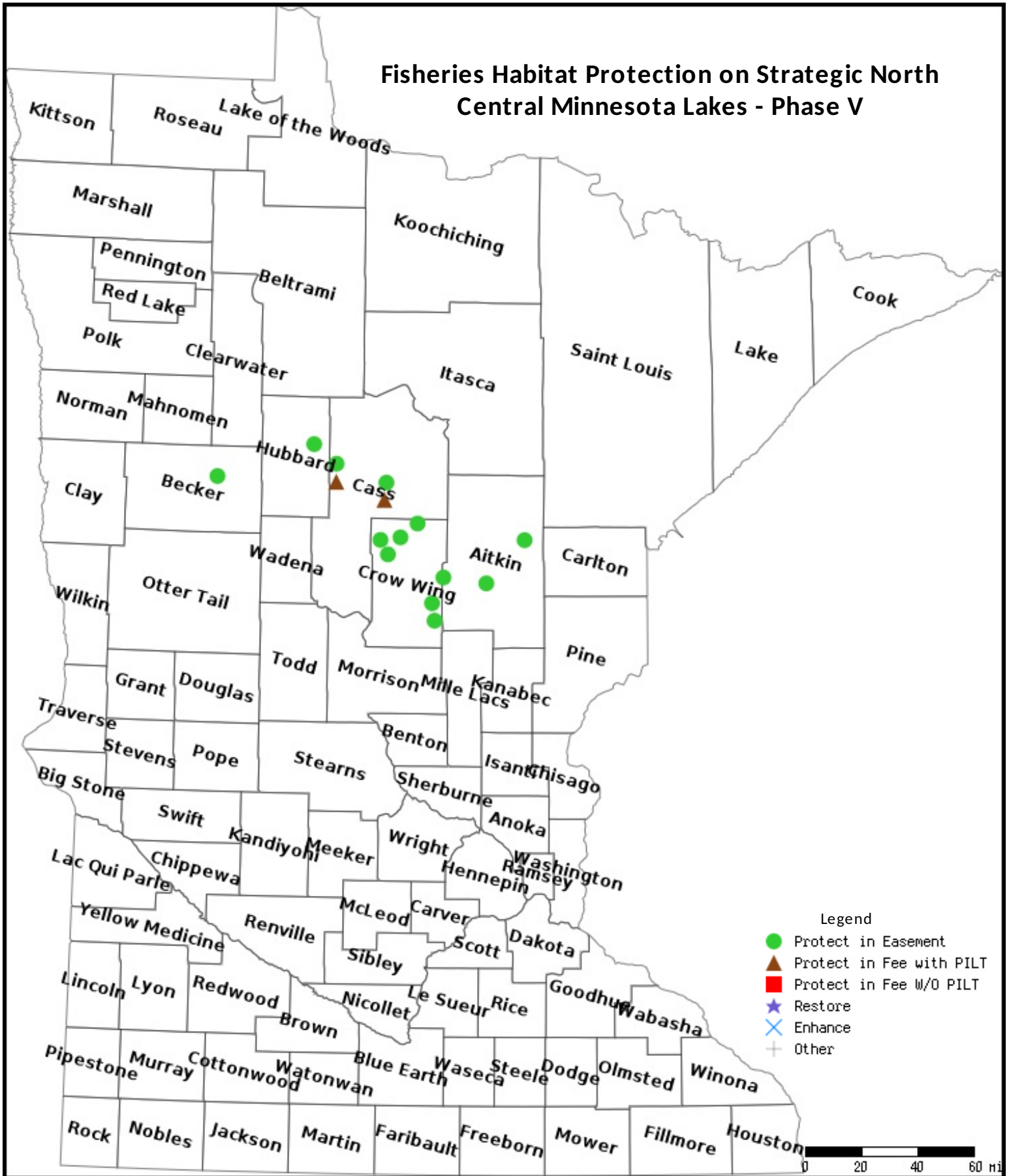
| Name          | TRDS     | Acres | EstCost   | # Bldgs? | Bldg Improve Desc                   | Value of Bldg | Disposition of Improvements |
|---------------|----------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Ten Mile Lake | 14131233 | 83    | \$465,000 | 1        | Cabin will be removed from property | \$46,800      | Remove                      |

**Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity**

No parcels with an other activity type.

# Parcel Map

## Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - Phase V



Data Generated From Parcel List



# Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes

## Phase 5

### The Minnesota Land Trust and the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation are requesting **\$6,788,000** for the fifth phase of the Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes program.

During the fifth phase of this program, the Minnesota Land Trust and the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation will protect 1,505 acres (1,300 acres of permanent conservation easement and 205 acres fee-title acquisition) of high priority critical fish habitat and 1 mile of shoreline on 16 priority tullibee “refuge” lakes and their associated watersheds. We will restore 140 acres of associated habitat.

Our efforts will be focused on Tullibee refuge lakes and their watersheds. Applications to our easement program will be evaluated and ranked to maximize conservation benefit, leveraging \$1,453,000 in private donative value.

### How Does the Program Support State Goals?

This program targets critical near-shore habitats, riparian areas, and key forested parcels on 16 priority tullibee “refuge” lakes identified by Minnesota DNR Fisheries researchers. This work is in line with the goals set out in the *Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management*, and the *Long Range Plan for Muskellunge and Large Northern Pike Management Through 2020*.



Hansi Johnson

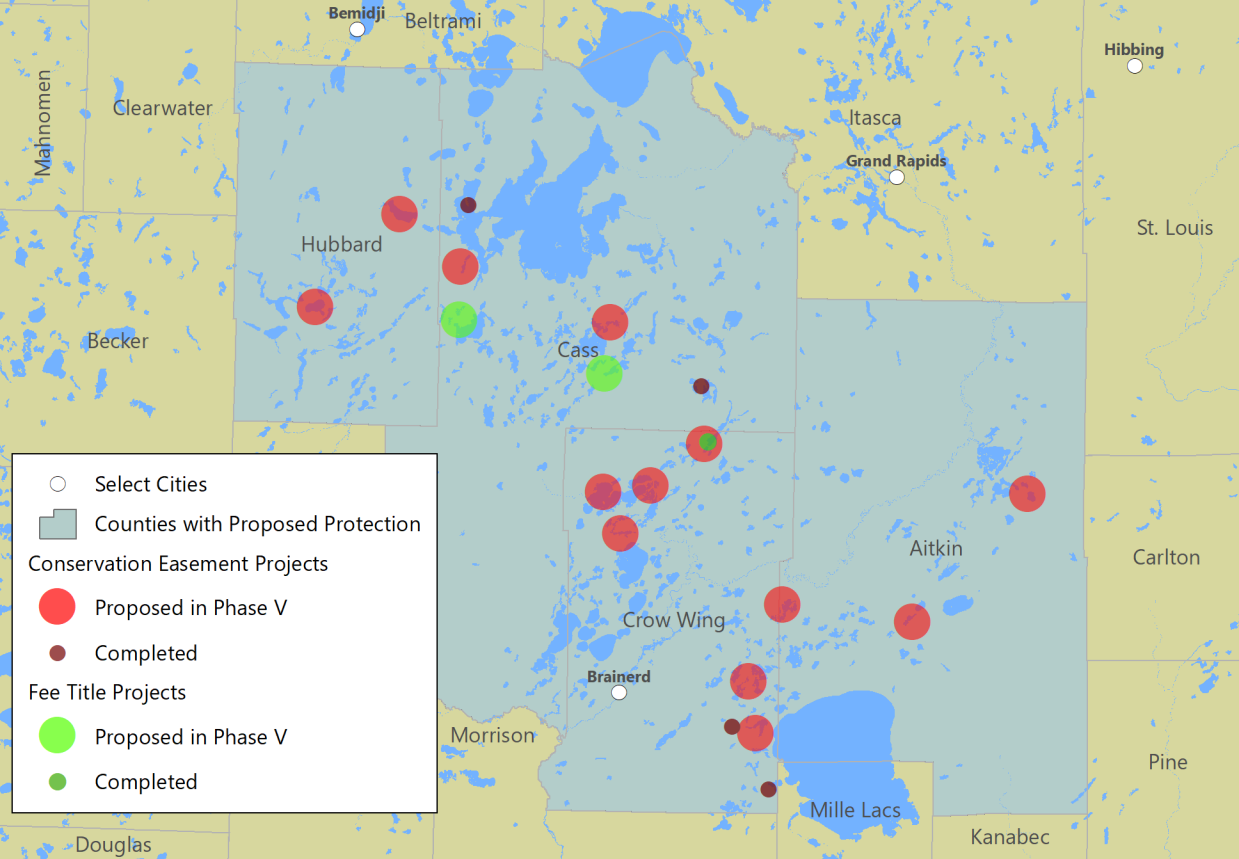
### Outdoor Heritage Fund Request:

**\$6,788,000** to protect **1,505** acres and restore/enhance **140** acres.

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

### What Are the Outcomes?

- Private forested parcels totaling 1,505 acres and 1 mile of shoreline habitat will be protected to the benefit of tullibee.
- Forest lands will maintain healthy habitat and enhance water quality.
- Public access for wildlife and outdoors-related recreation will be attained through 205 acres of fee-title acquisition.



**MINNESOTA  
LAND TRUST**

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.

2356 University Ave. W.  
Suite 240  
St. Paul, MN 55114

(651) 647-9590

[mnland@mnland.org](mailto:mnland@mnland.org)

[www.mnland.org](http://www.mnland.org)

## What has Been Accomplished to Date in the Program?

### Phase I (Complete):

Completed 5 projects protecting 705 acres (602 acres conservation easements / 103 acres fee) of habitat and 7.9 miles of shoreline. **Leverage in the amount of \$851,000 was realized.**

### Phases II and III (In Progress):

Eight conservation easements have been prioritized under Phases II and III and are in negotiations. The program will protect 1,675 acres of habitat and ~12 miles of shoreline.

### Phase IV (Planned):

Starting in July, we will begin using the fourth Phase IV of the program to protect 445 acres and 1 mile of shoreline.



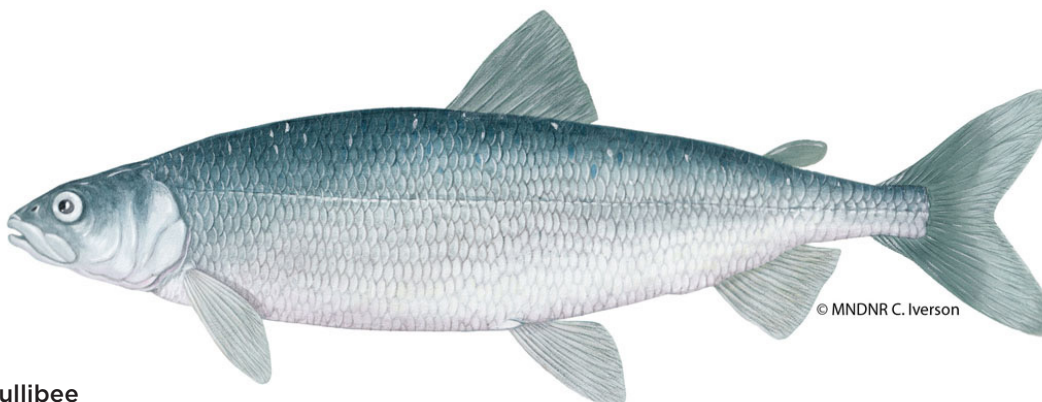
The mission of the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation (LLAWF) is to promote activities that preserve and sustain the natural resources in the Leech Lake Watershed and neighboring region of North Central Minnesota, including Hubbard, Cass, Crow Wing, and Aitkin counties, for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.

PO Box 124  
Walker, MN 56484

(218) 547-4510

[info@leechlakewatershed.org](mailto:info@leechlakewatershed.org)

[leechlakewatershed.org](http://leechlakewatershed.org)



Tullibee

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## Clean Water Critical Habitat Project Scoresheet (Draft 03/13/18)

### Program Requirements

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| In a Tullibee Lake Watershed?                         | Yes or No |
| In Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing or Hubbard County?         | Yes or No |
| At least 10 acres protected in Conservation Easement? | Yes or No |
| Others?   | Yes or No |

### Clean Water Critical Habitat Project Scoresheet

Criteria-based scoring systems provide a standardized set of data from which multi projects can be compared to each other and individual projects can be compared against a base-line. Scoring systems are a set of data, not a final, complete decision making tool. Local expertise and experience, programmatic goals, timelines, available resources, capacity, and other more subjective factors might also come into play in project selection and decision making.

The following scoresheet provides an approach to criteria based scoring that considers: 1) Ecological Integrity/Viability as current status; 2) Threat/Urgency as a future scenario if protection is not afforded; and 3) Cost reflecting the overall value realized through the acquisition of a conservation easement (including a reflection of donative value).

Ecological Integrity weighs property size, condition, and context equally (at least as an initial starting point). The three primary factors, when taken together, provide a good estimate of long-term viability for biodiversity at the site: 1) Size of the parcel to be protected, 2) Condition of the habitat on the parcel, and 3) its Landscape context (both from a protection and ecological standpoint). This framework is used widely across the world by a large number of conservation organizations and agencies and here in Minnesota by the Minnesota DNR, Minnesota Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and others.

Cost and Threat/Urgency as additional, separate considerations.

| 1. ECOLOGICAL FACTORS                                       |       |            |                                    |
|---|-------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Size/Abundance of Habitat (1/3 of Overall Ecological Score) |       |            |                                    |
| Criteria  | Score | Max Points | Draft Guidelines -                 |
| Feet of Shoreline   |       | 30         | 10 points for 0 - 2,000 feet       |
|   |       |            | 15 points for 2,001 - 5,000 feet   |
|   |       |            | 20 points for 5,001 - 10,000 feet  |
|   |       |            | 25 points for 10,001 - 20,000 feet |
|   |       |            | 30 points for ≥ 20,000 feet        |
| Parcel Acres to be Protected by Easement                    |       | 60         | 10 points for 10 - 30 acres        |
|   |       |            | 20 points for 31 - 80 acres        |
|   |       |            | 30 points for 81 - 160 acres       |
|   |       |            | 40 points for 161 - 300 acres      |
|   |       |            | 50 points for 301 - 400 acres      |
|   |       |            | 60 points for ≥ 401 acres          |
| <b>0 Size/Abundance Subtotal Score</b>                      |       |            |                                    |

| Quality/Condition of Resource (1/3 of Overall Ecological Score)   |       |            |                                       |
|---|-------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Criteria  | Score | Max Points | Draft Guidelines -                    |
| Designated Sensitive Shoreland  |       | 30         | 10 point for ≤ 33%                    |
|   |       |            | 20 points for 34 - 66%                |
|   |       |            | 30 points for 67 - 100%               |
| % Property Developed (more development, less value)   |       | 30         | 0 points for ≥ 31% developed          |
|   |       |            | 10 points for 21 - 30% developed      |
|   |       |            | 20 points for 11 - 20% developed      |
|   |       |            | 30 points for 0 - 10% developed       |
| Quality of Associated Natural Communities (DNR Native Plant Communities within the properties using Conservation Status Rank (s_rank_description) and the Condition Rank (condition_rank) of each native plant community) |       | 30         | <b>STATUS RANK (DNR GIS Data)</b>     |
|   |       |            | 15 = S1 Critically imperilled         |
|   |       |            | 11 = S2 Imperilled                    |
|   |       |            | 7 = S3 Vulnerable to extirpation      |
|   |       |            | 3 = S4 Uncommon not rare              |
|   |       |            | 0 = S5 Common and abundant            |
|   |       |            | <b>CONDITION (DNR GIS Data)</b>       |
|   |       |            | 15 = A Excellent ecological integrity |
|   |       |            | 10 = B Good                           |
|   |       |            | 5 = C Fair                            |
| 0 = D Poor  |       |            |                                       |

| Landscape Context (1/3 of Overall Ecological Score)  |       |            |  |
|--|-------|------------|--|
| Criteria   | Score | Max Points | Draft Guidelines -   |
| Adjoining protected land   |       | 30         | All sides=30, One side=10, No=0 Public land would include tribal land. |
| Near, but not adjoining, protected land within 3 miles of the property   |       | 30         | 10 point for 500 - 6,000 acres   |
|  |       |            | 20 points for 6,001 - 12,000 acres                                     |
|  |       |            | 30 points for 12,001 - 18,000 acres                                    |
| Ecological context - amount and quality of existing natural communities/cover within 3 miles of property (Native Plant Communities and/or the MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance). |       | 30         | 30 = __ acres within 3 mile radius                                     |
|  |       |            | 25 = __ acres within 3 mile radius                                     |
|  |       |            | 20 = __ acres within 3 mile radius                                     |
|  |       |            | 15 = __ acres within 3 mile radius                                     |
|  |       |            | 10 = __ acres within 3 mile radius                                     |
|  |       |            | 5 = __ acres within 3 mile radius                                      |
| <b>Context subtotal score</b>  |       |            |  |
| <b>Ecological Total = (Size + Quality + Landscape)/3.</b>  |       |            |  |

| <b>2. Threat/Urgency</b>   |       |            |                                  |
|--|-------|------------|----------------------------------|
| Criteria   | Score | Max Points | Draft Guidelines -               |
| <b>Urgency - Disturbance in Minor Watershed (more disturbance, higher score)</b> |       | 45         | 45 points for ≥ 31% developed    |
|  |       |            | 30 points for 21 - 30% developed |
|  |       |            | 20 points for 11 - 20% developed |
|  |       |            | 10 points for 0 - 10% developed  |
| <b>Risk Clasification from Water Plans (more risk, higher score)</b>             |       | 45         | 10 = Vigilance                   |
|  |       |            | 20 = Protection                  |
|  |       |            | 30 = Risk                        |
|  |       |            | 45 = High Risk                   |

| <b>3. Cost - Consider after inital application screening and landowner knowledge.</b> |       |            |                         |
|---|-------|------------|-------------------------|
| Criteria  | Score | Max Points | Draft Guidelines -      |
| <b>Cost/donative value (Bang for the buck)</b>  |       | 90         | 90 = 90 - 100% donation |
|   |       |            | 70 = 51 - 89% donation  |
|   |       |            | 50 = 26 - 50% donation  |
|   |       |            | 30 = 5 - 25% donation   |
|   |       |            | 0 = 0 - 4% donation     |





## Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation

mailing: PO Box 124, Walker, MN 56484-0124  
office: 615 Minnesota Ave, Walker, MN 56484  
218-547-4510  
[www.leechlakewatershed.org](http://www.leechlakewatershed.org)

Tax ID # 41-1887906

May 18, 2018

Mark Johnson, Executive Director  
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 95  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Johnson,

The Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation (LLAWF) is partnering with the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) for the fifth year to submit an application for the Outdoor Heritage Funds for the FY2020/ML2019 cycle. We are extremely proud to be able to participate in the use of Outdoor Heritage Funds to be able to use these funds to protect northern waters, habitats, fish and wildlife through the conservation of private and public lands. Since 2014 this partnership has protected 601 acres and 38,103 shoreline feet through conservation easements and 103 acres through fee title acquisition for public management in north central Minnesota and the headwaters of the Mississippi River.

The LLAWF Board of Directors is currently recruiting for a new executive director and anticipate filling this position by the fall of 2018. In the transition, we are prioritizing on the administration and execution of LSOHC grant phases II - IV. MLT has agreed to act as the grant administrator for the current submission of "Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - Phase V" until the Executive Director position is permanently filled.

Please let us know if you have any questions. The LLAWF Board is fully committed to fulfilling our responsibilities related to the LSOHC grants which are key to protecting the valuable resources in north central Minnesota.

Sincerely,

  
Timothy Bremicker  
Chairperson

  
Mary Ackerman  
Vice - Chairperson

c.: Kris Larson, MLT; Wayne Ostlie, MLT