

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Fiscal Year 2020 / ML 2019 Request for Funding



**Date:** May 31, 2018

**Program or Project Title:** Restoring the Upper Mississippi River at Lake Pepin: Phase 1

**Funds Requested:** \$750,000

**Manager's Name:** Rylee Main

**Title:** Executive Director

**Organization:** Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance

**Address:** P.O. Box 392

**City:** Red Wing, MN 55066

**Office Number:** 630-806-9909

**Mobile Number:** 630-806-9909

**Email:** rylee.main@lakepepinlegacyalliance.com

**Website:** www.lakepepinlegacyalliance.org

**County Locations:** Goodhue

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

- Southeast Forest

**Activity types:**

- Restore
- Enhance

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Habitat

### Abstract:

This project leverages more than \$10 million in federal funds to begin implementation of a system-wide effort to improve game fish and waterfowl production in the Upper Mississippi River by improving 100 acres of floodplain forest and up to 1,000 acres of aquatic and wetland habitat at the upper end of Lake Pepin. Local partners are working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to mitigate habitat degradation caused by turbidity and excess sediment accumulating at the head of the lake. Project construction is anticipated to begin in 2020.

### Design and scope of work:

The Upper Mississippi River is impaired for turbidity (fine sediments) from the confluence with the Minnesota River to Lake Pepin. Continued deposition of these Minnesota sourced suspended solids has resulted in a lack of aquatic vegetation, poor invertebrate production, and reduced abundance of fish and wildlife. Deep protected aquatic areas that would serve as habitat for bluegill and other species, including walleye and sauger, is lacking in both the backwaters and within large open water areas of upper Lake Pepin. Working through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Beneficial Use of Dredge Material Program, the Corps will create/enhance islands and isolated wetlands, protect banks, and create deeper water in protected areas. The expected outcomes of these features include an increase in the habitat sustainability index for ducks by at least 0.25, an increase in the average annual habitat units by a net gain of 250, restored floodplain and wetland plant communities, enhanced public access, decreased suspended solid concentrations, and more natural sediment transport and deposition.

Priorities for the upper end of Lake Pepin have been established as part of a collaborative effort among state and federal agencies in the 5-state region of the Upper Mississippi River. More localized habitat objectives correspond to the Pierce County Islands Wildlife Management Plan, approved by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Though the state line at the upper end of Lake Pepin is adjacent the Minnesota shoreline, and thus the initial project is located in Wisconsin, the benefits of productive fish and wildlife habitats accrue equally to citizens of both Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Minnesota DNR will remain highly involved in the planning and monitoring phases.

We recognize that the threshold in which habitat restoration at the head of Lake Pepin becomes cost-prohibitive is fast approaching. The current fishery is still robust, but there are concerns productivity is decreasing as sediment and turbidity impacts have long-term effects. This project is expected to restore productivity to historic levels for the next 50 years.

We realize the long-term sustainability of this project is dependent on continuing upstream sediment source reductions, however, not beginning the restoration of Lake Pepin will seriously impair Minnesotans' ability to enjoy fishing, hunting, and boating in this singularly unique reach of the Mississippi River.

Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance is coordinating and administering the 35% non-federal cost-share funds for project partners, while the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources remains the official non-federal sponsor. Support for the project is widespread, with on-going involvement from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Audubon MN, Ducks Unlimited, and local municipalities, alongside support from the National Wildlife Federation, the Minnesota Conservation Federation, the Red Wing Wildlife League, the Frontenac Sportsmen Club, and the Lake City Sportsmen Club.

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

- H4 Restore and protect shallow lakes
- H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams

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

- Ducks Unlimited Living Lakes Initiative
- National Audubon Society Top 20 Common Birds in Decline

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

This program will reduce the turbid-water state of the backwater complexes in upper Lake Pepin by building a series of islands to block wind and create quiet pockets to improve water clarity and rejuvenate aquatic vegetation. Restoring emergent and floating vegetation is important for a diversity of insects and fish species on which birds feed. Newly protected areas will be dredged to create deeper habitat for overwintering fish, and dredge material will be used to provide topsoil to establish bottomland hardwood forest on the islands.

Restoring islands, establishing bottomland hardwood forests, and restoring depth diversity will help bird species like Wood Ducks, Cerulean Warblers, Prothonotary Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, and many others. Establishing prairie and forest will also help to prevent new islands from being overtaken by invasive reed canary grass, which provides no habitat for forest-dependent birds, and prevents the natural regeneration of trees.

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

### **Southeast Forest:**

- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

## **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 Upper Lake Pepin aquatic and wetland habitat restoration project is proposed to take place within the Pierce County Islands Wildlife Area, owned and managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Wildlife Areas (Was) are acquired and managed under the authority of Section 23.09(2)(d)3, Wisconsin Statutes, and Chapter NR 1.51, Wisconsin Administrative Code. This property is open to the public for hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, and other nature-based outdoor recreation, and receives significant fishing, boating, and hunting use.

This project is considered phase 1 of a long-term vision for Lake Pepin focused on water quality, habitat, sediment management, and public access. In this first phase, we anticipate improvements in fisheries, suitable habitat for birds such as dabbling ducks and neotropical migrants through the enhancement and creation of a wide variety of plant communities, and enhanced floodplain forest habitat.

This is only one of many projects that have been identified to improve fish and wildlife habitat in and around Lake Pepin. Given the significant presence of the Corps' Navigation program and the US Fish and Wildlife refuge, we anticipate the availability of federal funds to support this long-term vision.

## **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:**

Lake Pepin represents a significant corridor of open space and habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals. The upper

end of Lake Pepin contains channels and backwaters that provide critical spawning areas for important sport fish species such as sauger and walleye, which use Lake Pepin most of the year. Lake Pepin is part of the U.S. Geological Survey's Long-Term Resource Monitoring Program, which exists to support decision makers with the information needed to maintain the Upper Mississippi River system as a viable multiple-use river ecosystem. Utilizing information collected at the Lake City Field Station, desired future habitat conditions for the upper end of Lake Pepin have been established.

This proposed project is located within the Pierce County Wildlife Area, which is the only publicly managed waterfowl area and refuge along this section of the Mississippi River and contributes to one of the largest contiguous stretches of floodplain forest habitat in the Midwest. Recommendations for the Pierce County Island wetland complex have been identified and endorsed by the Fish and Wildlife Workgroup and the River Resources Forum - representing the five-state region of the Upper Mississippi River. These recommendations include: increasing the coverage of emergent vegetation by 40 percent, stabilizing several miles of eroding shoreline, increasing water depths in select backwater sites, improving the quality of terrestrial habitat, and constructing islands. The recommendations are designed to offset the impacts of sedimentation, improve habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds, and improve conditions for aquatic species.

## 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:

Game fish found in Lake Pepin include northern pike, walleye, sauger, yellow perch, white bass, and a variety of centrarchids. Centrarchid overwintering habitat for backwater fish (bluegill, largemouth bass, crappie, etc.) has declined at the upper end of Lake Pepin due to sedimentation and island dissection. Historically, centrarchid overwintering habitat was present in the two primary project areas included in this proposal: Wacouta Bay, and the Bay City area. Now, most of the backwater areas that have adequate depth to provide over winter fish habitat, also have flow that makes it unsuitable for overwintering centrarchids.

Northern pike, crappie, and largemouth bass are all strongly associated with large, near shore strands of aquatic plants. High suspended solid concentrations continue to limit light penetration and rooting capability of submersed vegetation. These conditions have had the greatest influence on aquatic habitat in the upper portion of Lake Pepin, Wacouta Bay, and the Bay City Flats. This project proposes to restore submerged, emergent, and floating vegetation where it has been lost. The Corps of Engineers will construct islands to protect existing aquatic vegetation beds and improve conditions for the growth of aquatic vegetation in other shallow areas. When combined with the construction of islands, backwater dredging will incrementally improve centrarchid habitat in the project area. Increased availability of deeper water combined with reduced velocities will greatly improve wintertime habitat conditions.

Wetland restoration and riparian island creation will increase nesting habitat and migratory stopover habitat. Restoring islands, establishing native grassland and oak savanna, and restoring depth diversity will help bird species like Wood Ducks, Cerulean Warblers, Prothonotary warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, and many others. Lake Pepin provides critical stopover habitat for the common merganser and has been designated a globally important bird area.

Three protected wildlife species are found in this project area: the bald eagle, the Blanding's turtle, and the wood turtle. This project will improve habitat for the Blanding's turtle and the wood turtle, and ensure a robust fishery for overwintering eagle roosts in the project area.

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

The Corps uses a dabbling duck habitat model to evaluate some of the benefits of proposed project features. Project objectives, including increased water depth and increased aquatic vegetation, are anticipated to improve the carrying capacity for dabbling ducks with an increase in the average annual habitat units by a net gain of 250. Trumpeter swans are also an indicator of successful wetland restoration. Trumpeter swans are strictly territorial on their breeding areas with shoreline complexity and food availability being factors in defining the area being defended. A reasonable expectation is that 1 trumpeter swan pair would be supported by each 150 acres of wetlands protected, restored, or enhanced, though territories can range in size from 4 acres to 250 acres.

Other wildlife indicator species include the Veery and Prothonotary Warblers, both of which are indicators of improved floodplain forest. The Veery requires moist forest floors, and Prothonotary Warblers need healthy regeneration of trees for nesting cavities (5 to 6-inch DBH). Currently, much of the floodplain forest is too mature to provide sufficient habitat.

Weed shiners and yellow perch have strong responses to increases in aquatic vegetation, which has cascading effects, including more food for waterfowl. The increased presence of Large Mouth Bass and Bluegill provide a good indicator that overwintering habitat for other species is being met, even for the less common species. We can also expect 2 adults per acre for walleye, and 10 adults per acre for northern pike in the restored aquatic system.

## Outcomes:

### Programs in southeast forest region:

- Large corridors and complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat typical of the unglaciated region are restored and protected. *Lake Pepin represents a significant corridor of open space and habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals. In addition to the monitoring and adaptive management plan established as part of the final report within the feasibility study, the project area will be regularly sampled as part of the U.S. Geological Survey's Long-Term Resource Monitoring Program. The aforementioned indicator species will be used as a measure of success for bottomland hardwood forest restoration, wetland restoration,*

overwintering habitat, and water clarity and aquatic vegetation.

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

The construction features outlined in this project are designed to be dynamic and intended to emulate natural river processes. Therefore, we expect operation and maintenance to be minimal. The Wisconsin DNR – the non-federal sponsor and landowner – will be responsible for any maintenance needed over a 50-year timeframe.

A monitoring and adaptive management plan will be developed and included as part of the final project report, following the completion of the feasibility study. Typically, monitoring and adaptive management tasks extend up to 10 years following project completion, and close-out of the project would occur when the level of success of the project is determined adequate or when the maximum 10-year monitoring period has been reached. Funding for this management and maintenance will be financed through the WDNR as part of the requirements in Section 23.09(2)(d)3 Wisconsin Statutes, and NR 1.51, Wisconsin Administrative Code authorizing the management of Wildlife Areas.

The project area is also regularly sampled as part of the U.S. Geological Survey's Long-Term Resource Monitoring Program, and therefore the data collected will provide an opportunity to measure resource improvements beyond the 10-year maximum monitoring period for water quality, vegetation, and fish.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2019	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Complete Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan	Approve Final Report	
2021	Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance / LCCMR	Expand Ecological Master Plan	Plan for Supplemental Restoration	
2022 - 2032	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Monitor Project Area & Assess Conditions / Benefits		
2022 - 2032	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Maintenance of constructed features, if needed.		

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

Worsening water clarity in the project area indicates that the threshold in which habitat restoration becomes cost-prohibitive is fast approaching. An immediate opportunity exists to measurably improve conditions through state and federal partnerships. Years of coordination and planning have led to a 18-month federally funded feasibility study for this project, which will be completed in early 2019.

Construction of project features is anticipated to begin in 2020 pending a 35% non-federal match. The inability to secure this match will result in reallocation of the Corps' funding that would otherwise be used in Lake Pepin. If this opportunity is missed, the timing and funds needed to re-build a committed coalition of partners may be too little too late. Not beginning the restoration of Lake Pepin while partners and funding are aligned will seriously impair Minnesotan's ability to enjoy fishing, hunting, and boating in this reach of the Mississippi River.

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

Federal funds for this project come from a variety of sources within the Corps of Engineers' programs. The current project budget anticipates the need for \$4.7 million in non-federal funds, to leverage \$8.9 million from the Corps Beneficial Use of Dredged Materials program. This request of \$750,000 will leverage \$1.4 million from that program. If sufficient funds are secured through the Beneficial Use program, the Corps is able to spend an additional \$6 million from their channel maintenance funds to transport needed materials, bringing the total project budget up to \$19.6 million.

A proposal for this project is also being considered by the Corps for inclusion in a pilot program, which would expand the scope of the project and allocate another \$5 million to achieve habitat and public access objectives.

### Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund

### Describe the relationship of the funds:

The Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance has submitted a proposal to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota's Resources in the amount of \$500,000 to support the non-federal match for this project.

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:

N/A

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2017	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	\$450,000

## Activity Details

### Requirements:

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

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program - **Yes**

Is the 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 (WMA, Public Waters)**

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

Are the funds confirmed - **No**

What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds - **06/01/2019**

### Land Use:

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

## Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Riparian island creation and restoration (nesting habitat) (100 acres)	6/30/2022
Backwater enhancement (spawning / overwinter habitat) (1,000 acres)	6/30/2022
Wetland restoration (migratory stopover habitat) (10 acres)	6/30/2022

# Budget Spreadsheet

**Total Amount of Request: \$750,000**

## Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$750,000	\$1,400,000	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	\$2,150,000
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$1,400,000</b>		<b>\$2,150,000</b>

Amount of Request: \$750,000  
 Amount of Leverage: \$1,400,000  
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 186.67%  
 DSS + Personnel: \$0  
 As a % of the total request: 0.00%  
 Easement Stewardship: \$0  
 As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -%

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

The Corps' Beneficial Use program offers a federal match for non-federal funds, based on a 35/65 cost-share ratio. This request (3.5% of the total project budget) leverages \$1.4 million from that program. With the match, this investment translates to 11% of the total project budget.

**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:**

Features can be removed or added depending on availability of non-federal matching funds. Administrative costs will not differ significantly with changes to the scope. Certain features must work in concert to maximize benefits to each area, but some areas can be removed to decrease cost, reducing the total acreage restored.

## Output Tables

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

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	50	0	50	750	850
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	50	250	300
Total	50	0	100	1,000	1,150

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

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$34,000	\$0	\$32,500	\$485,500	\$552,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$32,500	\$165,500	\$198,000
Total	\$34,000	\$0	\$65,000	\$651,000	\$750,000

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	850	0	0	850
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	300	0	0	300
Total	0	0	1,150	0	0	1,150

**Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$552,000	\$0	\$0	\$552,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$198,000	\$0	\$0	\$198,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$750,000	\$0	\$0	\$750,000

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

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$680	\$0	\$650	\$647
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$650	\$662

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$649	\$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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$660	\$0	\$0

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

12 River Miles

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:

Beginning with agreed upon desired future habitat conditions for the upper end of Lake Pepin, an initial project scope was identified by the project team. More localized priority areas were established to align with objectives detailed in the Pierce County Islands Wildlife Management Plan. Selection and prioritization of specific parcels were determined based on the expected habitat benefit per dollar spent, and with consideration of public use and public interest. Completion of the feasibility study may further refine project features to maximize project benefits but will remain in the identified project area.

## Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

### Goodhue

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Wacouta Bay	11314236	100	\$750,000	Yes

## Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

### Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

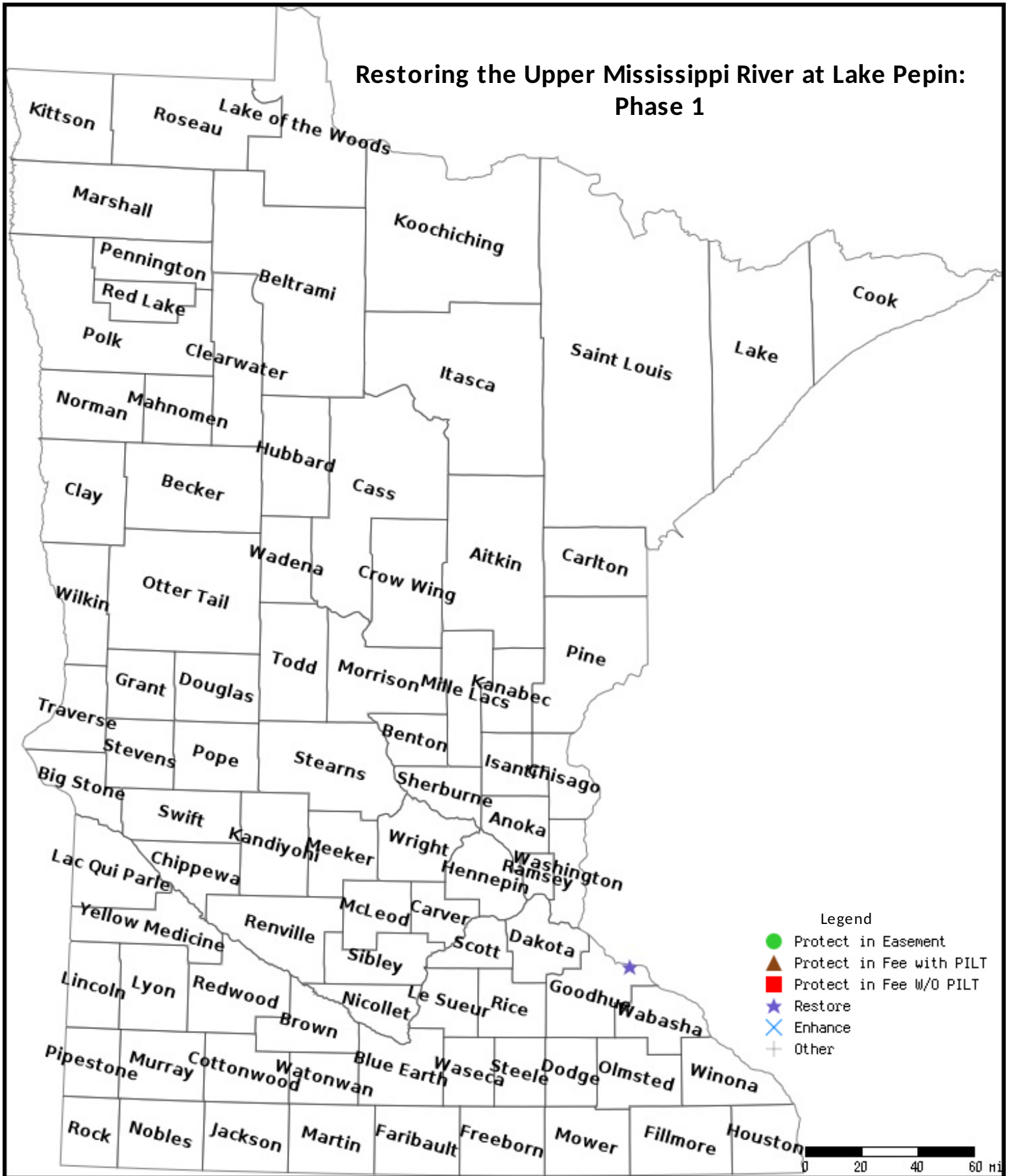
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

## Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

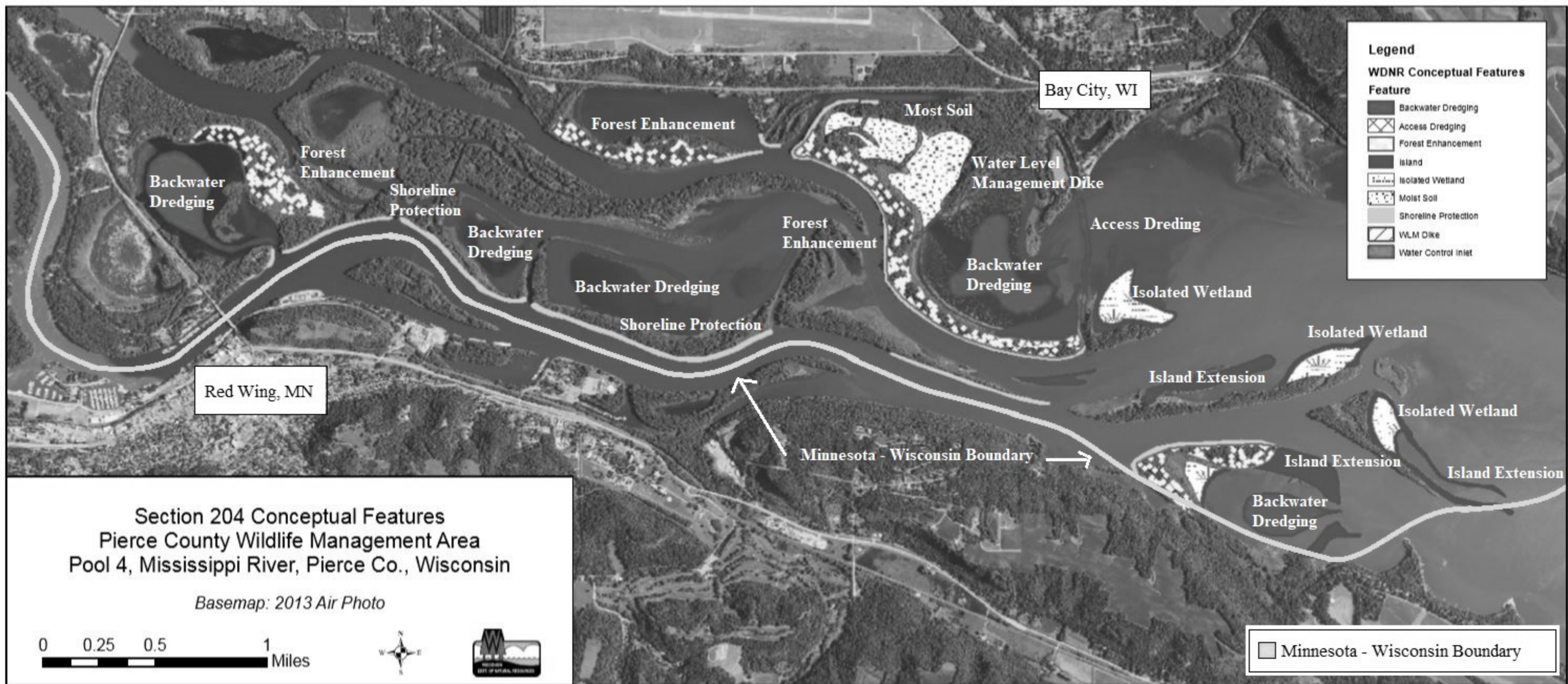
# Parcel Map

## Restoring the Upper Mississippi River at Lake Pepin: Phase 1



- Legend
- Protect in Easement
  - ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
  - Protect in Fee W/O PILT
  - ★ Restore
  - ✕ Enhance
  - ⊕ Other





### Restoring the Upper Mississippi River at Lake Pepin: Phase 1

Benefits to Minnesota
Improved fish and wildlife production
Improved access to adjacent communities (Wacouta Bay, MN and Bay City, WI)
Improved boat safety
Demonstration for future MN-based projects
Ecological Master Plan for future MN-based projects

Project Components	Secured Investments
18-Month Feasibility Study	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: \$450,000
Material Excavation & Transportation	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: \$6 - \$11 million
Terrestrial & Aquatic Habitat Improvements	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: \$5.5 - \$8.7 million City of Red Wing: \$100,000





JASON LEWIS  
2ND DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

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April 21, 2017

Rylee Main  
Executive Director  
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance  
PO Box 392  
Red Wing, MN 55066

Dear Rylee:

Insuring the continued use of Lake Pepin for recreational, commercial, and ecological interests is important to me. I was pleased to learn of the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance's efforts to keep Lake Pepin navigable and healthy for years to come. Communities all along the Mississippi depend on the Lake and I am committed to its sustainment.

As you mentioned, the recent increase in sedimentary deposit is causing loss of water depth, reduced visibility, aquatic vegetation reductions, and creating poor habitat conditions.

Since our meeting, my staff and I have had many conversations with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and will continue to advocate for a solution to this problem. Most recently, the St. Paul District USACE Colonel and I discussed a meeting between the Legacy Alliance, WiDNR, and the USACE. I informed the USACE that I intend to participate in the next stakeholder meeting where MnDNR would also be included. The purpose is to ensure that all parties are up-to-date on possible solutions and aware of the consequences of inaction. The USACE informed me they plan to hold this meeting in mid-May.

Lastly, this week, I met with the USACE, MnDNR, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services to discuss the restoration of the Upper Mississippi and the growing threat of Asian Carp to our rivers and the Great Lakes.

Please continue to keep my office up to date on your initiatives and feel free to share my support for Lake Pepin with your members. I am encouraged to know we have strong local support for this important project.

Sincerely,



Jason Lewis  
Member of Congress



RON KIND  
THIRD DISTRICT, WISCONSIN  
SENIOR WHIP

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June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance  
Rylee Main  
PO Box 392  
Red Wing, MN 55066

Dear Rylee:

I am pleased to write this letter of support on behalf of the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance as it shares a border with counties in Wisconsin's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District. It is my sincere hope that your efforts to sustain Lake Pepin's ecosystem are successful.

Lake Pepin's issues include sedimentation which have hampered recreational activities as well as threatened aquatic and bird habitat and impacted the local economies. The long-term solutions and focus the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance has provided are crucial to sustaining Lake Pepin for future generations.

As the U.S. Representative for Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District, I have a keen interest in supporting Wisconsin's vibrant and diverse economy. This comprehensive project will improve water quality and recreational opportunities, alongside the broader reach of your organization which aims to reduce sediment flow to Lake Pepin through innovative efforts that will provide economic opportunities for farmers.

This project has widespread public-private support and has already proved to be a huge asset. Good luck with your efforts.

Sincerely,



Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

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**KATHLEEN VINEHOUT**  
STATE SENATOR

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November 9, 2017

Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance  
Rylee Main  
Executive Director  
PO Box 392  
Red Wing, MN 55066

Dear Ms. Main,

Thank you for your efforts to build a coalition to restore Lake Pepin for Wisconsin and Minnesota communities. Your cause is noble and daunting, but I am assured the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance has the ability to accomplish this incredible feat. I strongly support your efforts, and I encourage community leaders, local governments and citizen stakeholders to support your efforts too.

Lake Pepin's restoration efforts will help our communities remain a great place to recreate. Hunters, anglers, boaters, and many other recreationists enjoy the Lake Pepin area during every season of the year. Mississippi River communities rely heavily on the tourism dollars spent at their local businesses. Keeping the river navigable and the lake productive for recreation is crucial for keeping tourism dollars flowing into our communities.

This project provides economic and environmental benefits. For over two decades, state and federal agencies expressed concerns about habitat loss in Pool 4 of the Mississippi River. Water turbidity and increased phosphorus levels contributed to the water quality degradation in Lake Pepin over the years. The work done by the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance to bring state and federal environmental regulators together is commendable. Addressing these issues now will ensure the lake can remain a great habitat for wildlife.

I strongly support the efforts of the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance. It's my hope their work will ensure future generations are able to enjoy this amazing treasure along the Mississippi River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen", written over a horizontal line.

Kathleen Vinehout  
State Senator  
31<sup>st</sup> Senate District





February 26, 2018

Rylee Main, Executive Director  
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance  
P.O. Box 392  
Red Wing, MN 55066

Dear Ms. Main,

On behalf of the City of Red Wing, thank you for your work and the activities of the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance in educating the public about the environmental changes occurring at Lake Pepin and advocating that cities and towns get proactive.

This letter confirms that the City of Red Wing commits \$50,000 in 2018 and \$50,000 in 2019 for a total of \$100,000 toward the Lake Pepin sediment removal project.

Lake Pepin plays a crucial role in supporting the economy and the economic development of cities and towns across this region, and we invite other communities to also participate in helping fund the work of the Alliance. Lake Pepin is one of our greatest natural assets, and making it viable and clean for future generations will take a multi-pronged approach with numerous partners and strategic solutions.

Again, we thank you and your board for your dedication to this long-term work. Please keep us informed on your progress.

Sincerely,

Sean M. Dowse, Mayor  
City of Red Wing

Kim P. Beise, City Council President  
City of Red Wing



**Resolution Supporting the Upper Pool 4 & Lake Pepin Habitat Restoration Project**

WHEREAS, Lake Pepin is the only natural lake on the Upper Mississippi River and provides unique habitat for fish and wildlife, including many rare species; and

WHEREAS, Lake Pepin is a valuable cultural, aesthetic, recreational and economic asset to local communities and the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, Lake Pepin has been officially designated as a globally significant bird area due to globally high numbers of Common Mergansers which stop to feed on fish during their annual fall migration; and

WHEREAS, Sediment is being deposited at an alarming rate and without action, the upper third of Lake Pepin will fill with sediment by the end of the century and the entire 26,000 acre lake will fill within 340 years; and

WHEREAS, Sediment causes serious water quality issues and Lake Pepin has been on Minnesota's Impaired Waters List for turbidity for over a decade; and

WHEREAS, High turbidity muddies the water and prevents establishment of aquatic vegetation which provides critical food and shelter for fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, High turbidity and lack of vegetation threaten Lake Pepin's fish and wildlife populations, recreation, and economic value; and

WHEREAS, Concern over habitat loss and degradation in Upper Pool 4 and Lake Pepin has been discussed by state and federal agencies and stakeholders for over two decades; and

WHEREAS, The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Total Maximum Daily Load study calls for a decrease in internal sediment loading from wind and wave resuspension in Lake Pepin by fifty percent to help achieve submersed aquatic vegetation targets; and

WHEREAS, The construction of islands at other locations along the Upper Mississippi River has reduced wind wave action and sediment resuspension and greatly improved habitat and water quality, and

WHEREAS, The filling of Lake Pepin limits access to small boats for fishing and recreation, and

WHEREAS, Dredging to increase water depths in selected backwater sites has improved deep-water fish habitat and small boat navigation in other areas, and

WHEREAS, An island construction and backwater dredging project on Upper Pool 4 and Lake Pepin would improve habitat, water quality, and small boat navigation; therefore

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Village of Bay City strongly supports the Upper Pool 4 & Lake Pepin Habitat Restoration Project and will assist with project education and outreach, and funding if opportunities arise.

Signed James H. Turvillie

Dated 12-9-15

Village President

Attest Shawnie King  
Clerk/Treasurer

**RESOLUTION 15-092**

**CITY OF LAKE CITY, MINNESOTA**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE UPPER POOL 4 AND LAKE PEPIN HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT**

**WHEREAS**, the economy and character of the City of Lake City rely heavily on the tourism and recreational opportunities created by a healthy and navigable Lake Pepin, and

**WHEREAS**, Lake Pepin, as part of the Upper Mississippi River, has been on Minnesota's Impaired Waters List for turbidity since 2004, and

**WHEREAS**, the deposit of sediment in Lake Pepin has increased at an alarming rate and threatens the viability of the lake, and

**WHEREAS**, the highest concentration of migrating Common Mergansers in the world occurs on Lake Pepin in November, with counts of 20 – 70,000 each year, designating Lake Pepin as a globally important bird area, and

**WHEREAS**, Common Mergansers feed on the open water fish species in Lake Pepin, and

**WHEREAS**, concern over habitat loss and degradation in Upper Pool 4 near the head of Lake Pepin has been discussed off and on by state and federal agencies and stakeholders for over two decades, and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Total Maximum Daily Load study calls for a decrease in internal sediment loading from wind and wave resuspension in Lake Pepin by fifty percent to help achieve submersed aquatic vegetation targets, and

**WHEREAS**, aquatic vegetation provides habitat for fish species and is very important as a food resource for migratory waterfowl, and

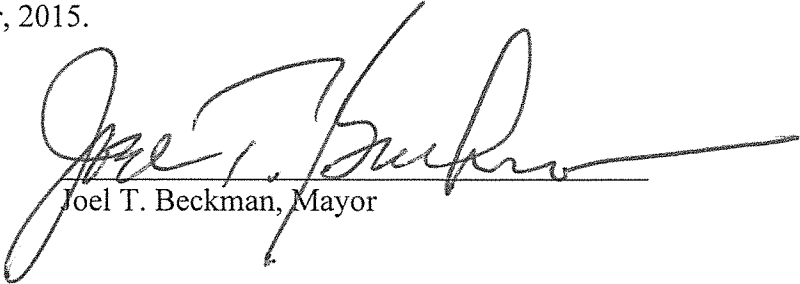
**WHEREAS**, the filling in of Lake Pepin has already limited access to small boats for fishing and recreation, and

**WHEREAS**, management actions proposed by state and federal agencies through the Environmental Pool Plans and other documents can reduce wind fetch to cut down on sediment re-suspension through the construction of islands, to improve water quality and increase coverage of emergent vegetation, and can stabilize eroding shoreline, improve terrestrial habitat, and increase water depths in selected backwater sites, therefore improving deep-water fish habitat and small boat navigation, and

**WHEREAS**, without implementation of proposed management actions, the head of Lake Pepin will be completely filled in with sediment by the end of the century, and the entire 26,000 acre lake is on course to be filled, and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Lake City Council at its meeting in Lake City, MN on September 14th, 2015 offer strong support for the Upper Pool 4 & Lake Pepin Habitat Restoration Project.

Resolution adopted this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2015.



Joel T. Beckman, Mayor

Attest:



Kari Schreck, City Clerk





**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE UPPER POOL 4 & LAKE PEPIN  
HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT**

**WHEREAS**, Lake Pepin is the only natural lake on the Upper Mississippi River and provides unique habitat for fish and wildlife, including many rare species; and

**WHEREAS**, Lake Pepin is a valuable cultural, aesthetic, recreational and economic asset to local townships, counties, villages and the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin; and

**WHEREAS**, Lake Pepin has been officially designated as a globally significant bird area due to globally high numbers of Common Mergansers which stop to feed on fish during their annual fall migration; and

**WHEREAS**, Sediment is being deposited at an alarming rate and without action, the upper third of Lake Pepin will fill with sediment within 84 years and the entire 26,000 acre lake will fill within 340 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Sediment causes serious water quality issues and Lake Pepin has been on Minnesota's Impaired Waters List for turbidity for over a decade and is proposed to be listed on Wisconsin's Impaired Waters List for total phosphorus; and

**WHEREAS**, High turbidity muddies the water and prevents establishment of aquatic vegetation which provides critical food and shelter for fish and wildlife; and

**WHEREAS**, High turbidity and lack of vegetation threaten Lake Pepin's fish and wildlife populations, recreation, and economic value; and

**WHEREAS**, Concern over habitat loss and degradation in Upper Pool 4 and Lake Pepin has been discussed by state and federal agencies and stakeholders for over two decades; and

**WHEREAS**, The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Total Maximum Daily Load study calls for a decrease in internal sediment loading from wind and wave resuspension in Lake Pepin by fifty percent to help achieve submersed aquatic vegetation targets; and

**WHEREAS**, The construction of islands at other locations along the Upper Mississippi River has reduced wind wave action and sediment resuspension and greatly improved habitat and water quality, and

**WHEREAS**, The construction of islands will provide a cost efficient depository for dredged channels and other areas of the lake, and

**WHEREAS**, The filling of Lake Pepin limits access to shallow draft boats for fishing and recreation, and

**WHEREAS**, Dredging to increase water depths in selected backwater sites has improved deep-water fish habitat and boat navigation in other areas, and

**WHEREAS**, An island construction and backwater dredging project on Upper Pool 4 and Lake Pepin would improve habitat, water quality, and boat navigation; therefore

**THEREFORE BE RESOLVED** that the Pepin County Land Conservation Committee and the Pepin County Board of Supervisors do hereby strongly support the Upper Pool 4 & Lake Pepin Habitat Restoration Project and will assist with project education and outreach, and funding if opportunities arise.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the County Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Walker, the DNR Secretary Stepp, the Wisconsin Counties of Pierce and Buffalo, the Minnesota Counties of Goodhue and Wabasha, and the State Legislators representing Pepin County.

RECOMMENDED BY THE PEPIN COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION/UW-EXTENSION AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Dwight Jelle*  
Dwight Jelle, Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS VOTE  
5   0   0   0  
In favor   Oppose   Absent   Abstain

FISCAL IMPACT:

*Pamela Dewitt*  
Finance Director

COUNTY BOARD ACTION:

ADOPTED  
 DEFEATED      by the Pepin County Board of Supervisors this 20th day of July 2016  
 TABLED  
9      0      3      0  
In favor      oppose      absent      abstain

*Marce Bauer*  
County Clerk

*Dwight Jelle*  
County Board Chair

**RESOLUTION NO. 15-33**  
**SUPPORTING the UPPER POOL 4 & LAKE PEPIN HABITAT RESTORATION**  
**PROJECT**

**WHEREAS**, Lake Pepin is the only natural lake on the Upper Mississippi River and provides unique habitat for fish and wildlife, including many rare species; and

**WHEREAS**, Lake Pepin is a valuable cultural, aesthetic, recreational and economic asset to local communities and the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin; and

**WHEREAS**, Lake Pepin has been officially designated as a globally significant bird area due to globally high numbers of Common Mergansers which stop to feed on fish during their annual fall migration; and

**WHEREAS**, Sediment is being deposited at an alarming rate and without action, the upper third of Lake Pepin will fill with sediment by the end of the century and the entire 26,000 acre lake will fill within 340 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Sediment causes serious water quality issues and Lake Pepin has been on Minnesota's Impaired Waters List for turbidity for over a decade; and

**WHEREAS**, High turbidity muddies the water and prevents establishment of aquatic vegetation which provides critical food and shelter for fish and wildlife; and

**WHEREAS**, High turbidity and lack of vegetation threaten Lake Pepin's fish and wildlife populations, recreation, and economic value; and

**WHEREAS**, Concern over habitat loss and degradation in Upper Pool 4 and Lake Pepin has been discussed by state and federal agencies and stakeholders for over two decades; and

**WHEREAS**, The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Total Maximum Daily Load study calls for a decrease in internal sediment loading from wind and wave resuspension in Lake Pepin by fifty percent to help achieve submersed aquatic vegetation targets; and

**WHEREAS**, The construction of islands at other locations along the Upper Mississippi River has reduced wind wave action and sediment resuspension and greatly improved habitat and water quality, and

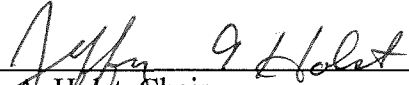
**WHEREAS**, The filling of Lake Pepin limits access to small boats for fishing and recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, Dredging to increase water depths in selected backwater sites has improved deep-water fish habitat and small boat navigation in other areas; and


**WHEREAS**, An island construction and backwater dredging project on Upper Pool 4 and Lake Pepin would improve habitat, water quality, and small boat navigation; therefore

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Pierce County Board of Supervisors that Pierce County strongly supports the Upper Pool 4 & Lake Pepin Habitat Restoration Project and will assist with project education and outreach, and will encourage grant funding if opportunities arise.

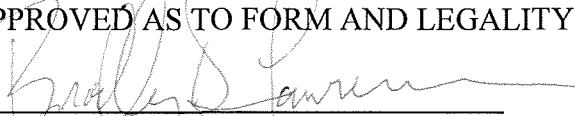
Dated this 26<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2016.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeffrey A. Holst, Chair  
Pierce County Board of Supervisors

ATTESTED TO BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jamie Feuerhelm, County Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bradley D. Lawrence, Corp. Counsel  
BDC

Adopted: ~~ADOPTED~~

FEB 23 2016