

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2020 / ML 2019 Request for Funding

PA 04



Date: May 31, 2018

Program or Project Title: Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, Phase X

Funds Requested: \$6,610,000

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County Locations: Becker, Big Stone, Brown, Chippewa, Clay, Cottonwood, Grant, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Mahnomen, Marshall, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Pipestone, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Roseau, Stearns, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Wilkin, and Yellow Medicine.

Regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie

Abstract:

The Nature Conservancy and US Fish and Wildlife Service will work together to permanently protect native prairie and associated complexes of wetlands and native habitats in western and central Minnesota by purchasing approximately 2,000 acres of fee title properties and/or permanent habitat easements. Approximately 1,000 acres will be native prairie. Work will be focused in areas identified as having significant biodiversity by the Minnesota Biological Survey and located in priority areas in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan.

Design and scope of work:

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) was established in 2000 to address the loss of America's grasslands and the decline of grassland wildlife. The Refuge was created to permanently preserve and restore a portion of our disappearing tallgrass prairie. The Refuge is authorized to work in the prairie landscapes of western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa.

To date, the Refuge has protected 9,660 acres in Minnesota. Funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) will allow The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), working in partnership, to significantly accelerate this progress. TNC and USFWS will cooperate on protecting approximately 2,000 acres of native prairie and associated habitat in the 49 Minnesota counties within the Refuge boundary. Of these, we expect to protect approximately 900 acres in fee title and approximately 1,100 acres with permanent habitat easements.

This program's work is targeted at protecting high-quality native habitat in areas with existing concentrations of native prairie, wetlands, and protected lands. The lands protected will consist of native prairie and associated habitats including wetlands, streams, and lakes.

Potential acquisitions are reviewed using the following criteria:

- 1) Is there untilled native prairie on the tract? If not, is it adjacent to untilled native prairie?
- 2) Is the property in a priority area (core/corridor/complex) identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (Prairie Plan)?

- 3) Is it adjacent to an existing complex of protected land?
- 4) Was it identified by Minnesota Biological Survey (Biological Survey) as having concentrations of threatened and endangered species and communities?
- 5) Is it suitable for public recreation?

Because of the nature of parcel ownership, some properties acquired through this program will likely include small areas of converted or degraded habitat needing restoration/enhancement. Restoration/enhancement will be completed where needed. With this program's focus on native habitat, only a limited amount of cropland restoration has been required. To date, less than 2% of the land acquired was cultivated at the time of purchase. The funds budgeted for this work are primarily for enhancement, like tree and brush removal, to prepare these properties for long-term, sustainable management.

Previous OHF support has allowed the partners to make significant progress towards our shared goal of protecting and buffering the remaining native prairie. The first property was acquired in March, 2013. Since then, 5,465 acres have been added to the Refuge with OHF funding. Of these, 3,220 acres are classified as untilled native prairie. Additional habitat includes 514 acres of wetlands and more than 12 miles of stream and/or lakefront. Offers have been extended to landowners for the protection of 760 additional acres. Talks are ongoing with a long list of interested landowners.

With additional support from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, this program will continue to make real and lasting progress towards protecting Minnesota's native prairies and the wildlife that depend on those lands.

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

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

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area (HPA) Final Environmental Impact Statement

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

This program's work is guided by the Prairie Plan and Northern Tallgrass Prairie's Habitat Preservation Area plan. Key goals include: 1) Protecting Minnesota's remaining native prairie, and 2) Connecting and buffering prairies in larger complexes of native prairie, grasslands, wetlands, and existing protected lands.

OHF support has helped the partners make substantial progress towards both goals. To date, 59% of the acres protected have been untilled native prairie and 90% have been in Prairie Plan priority areas. The Prairie Plan identifies areas (cores/corridors/complexes) with the greatest opportunities for long-term conservation of these habitats. Exceptional projects in other areas may be considered. However, the focus is on these priority areas.

This proposal builds on this success. Approximately 1,000 acres of native prairie will be protected and critical areas identified in the Prairie Plan will be strengthened and connected.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

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

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

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 Council's 25-Year Framework identifies protecting Minnesota's remnant native prairies as a critical priority. By carefully targeting our work, the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge (NTP NWR) program can help the Council make significant and permanent progress towards that goal.

Biological Survey data on species and habitat quality identifies and prioritizes projects. The Prairie Plan identifies sites that build on

existing concentrations of habitat and protected lands. TNC and/or USFWS biologists do additional survey work on each site. Using this information, the program focuses on acquiring high-quality habitat in places with the best opportunities for long-term success.

This program's previous work demonstrates this focus. 5,465 acres have been protected, including 3,220 acres identified as native prairie. The Biological Survey classifies 2,702 acres as biologically significant, with 1,110 having High or Outstanding quality. 4,904 acres are in Prairie Plan priority areas. These high-quality, diverse lands provide habitat for a wide range of game and other wildlife.

This program also strives to maximize conservation results with the funding available. To date, habitat has been protected at an average cost of \$2,210/acre. Projected costs in this phase are \$3,305/acre, due to several potential projects in higher-cost areas of the state. This program offers a cost-effective opportunity to preserve high-quality habitat.

By focusing on the best available habitat, building on existing conservation work, and doing this as affordably as possible, NTP NWR is helping to build a real and lasting legacy.

Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

This program's goals are guided by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area plan. Individual properties are reviewed/approved by TNC and USFWS biologists using the parcel selection criteria described above, including: native prairie, location in prairie complexes, nearby protected lands, and Biological Survey research.

Biological Survey data is a critical part of this review. Every proposed project is evaluated using Survey information on: 1) Native prairie sites, 2) Rare, threatened and endangered species locations, and 3) Areas of biodiversity significance.

The selection criteria also recognize the importance of building on existing complexes and reducing fragmentation. If a prairie is small or isolated, the animal and plant species that live there are at risk. The best approach is conserving larger areas, like the Prairie Plan's cores/complexes/corridors, that have the scale, species diversity, and connectivity to support functioning prairie systems over the long-term.

The numbers shared above demonstrate this program's success at identifying and protecting biologically significant lands located in areas with existing complexes of habitat and protected lands.

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:

The NTP NWR program takes the approach that specific species are best protected by conserving high-quality habitat in the most critical prairie areas.

This focus on habitat quality has produced results. Of the 5,465 acres protected, 2,702 have been identified as having significant biodiversity by the Biological Survey. These high-quality lands provide habitat for a wide range of species, from game species to those that are endangered, threatened, or in greatest conservation need.

Biological Survey field work has identified populations of 27 rare species located wholly or partially on NTP NWR properties protected with OHF-funding. Benefited species include:

Birds – Henslow's sparrow (endangered), Wilson's phalarope (threatened), greater prairie-chicken, marbled godwit, short-eared owl, and yellow rail

Butterflies – Dakota skipper (endangered), Poweshiek skipperling (endangered), arogos skipper, Pawnee skipper, and regal fritillary

Fish - Topeka shiner (endangered)

Reptiles - Blanding's turtle (threatened)

Plants – sterile sedge (threatened), hair-like beak rush (threatened), blanket flower, buffalo grass, few-flowered spikerush, Hall's sedge, least moonwort, Missouri milk-vetch, mudwort, prairie mimosa, slender milk-vetch, slender plantain, small white lady's slipper, and western white prairie clover

A highlight this year was the protection of two parcels with 5,700' feet of frontage on streams and rivers identified as critical habitat for the Topeka Shiner. OHF-funding for this program has now protected almost 4 miles of habitat for this federally-listed species.

Future acquisition work will be guided by this same focus on high-quality, diverse habitat, benefiting a wide range of species.

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

To ensure consistency we are using the five indicator species and metrics identified by MNDNR to represent the prairie/grassland

habitats: pheasant, prairie chicken, bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, and monarch butterfly.

Pheasant

By looking at the ratios of CRP acres in Minnesota to pheasant harvest, we can estimate that every three acres of grassland habitat has the potential to produce one harvested pheasant rooster.

Prairie Chickens

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

Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrow

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

Monarch Butterfly

Research from the University of Minnesota has shown that it takes approximately 30 milkweed plants to result in one monarch butterfly contributing to the overwintering Mexican population. Grasslands can have between 100-250 milkweed stems per acre. An acre of restored or enhanced grassland could potentially contribute 3 to 8 monarchs to the population.

Outcomes:

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands *This program's work is primarily focused on the Prairie region. A small portion of the Refuge, however, falls in the Forest-Prairie Transition region. If work is done in this region, the following outcomes will be measured and reported: 1) Total acres protected, 2) Acres of native prairie, 3) Acres of wetland, 4) Feet of stream- and lake-front, 5) Acres within Prairie Plan priorities, 6) # of endangered/threatened/species in greatest conservation need (SGCN) on protected properties.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands *The program's top priority is protecting native prairie. The majority of lands acquired will be native prairie and associated habitats including wetlands, streams and lakes. The parcel selection criteria also favor building onto existing complexes of prairie/grassland/wetland and protected land. The following outcomes will be measured and reported for acquisition in this region: 1) Total acres protected, 2) Acres of native prairie, 3) Acres of wetland, 4) Feet of stream- and lake-front, 5) Acres within Prairie Plan priorities, 6) # of endangered/threatened/SGCN on protected properties.*

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

Outdoor Heritage Funds will be used to purchase the land in fee title or to purchase perpetual habitat easements. The land and easements purchased will be transferred to the USFWS to become units of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. Long term costs for restoration, management, and wildlife/habitat/easement monitoring will be funded through annual USFWS operations funding.

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

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|----------|--|--|--------|--------|
| Annually | USFWS - Annual Service Operating Funds | Monitoring and management by USFWS managers, biologists, field and realty staffs to ensure the long-term health of these habitats. Activities may include burning, mechanical, biological and sometimes chemical treatments. | | |

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 Minnesota Biological Survey identifies approximately 248,000 acres of remaining native prairie in Minnesota. Only about half of these are currently protected. These unprotected prairies remain at high risk of conversion to other uses such as row-crop production, gravel mining, and development. Reduced crop prices have lessened the pace of conversion for now, but these long-term trends haven't gone away. It's imperative that we protect the remaining native prairie as quickly as we can before it is lost.

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

This proposal includes \$788,900 in leverage. The USFWS has committed \$250,000 of in-kind staff support from USFWS field staff. A letter has been provided from the USFWS confirming these funds. This phase includes \$138,900 of support from TNC, covering half the cost of Direct Support Service (DSS) with private funds. Finally, this round includes \$400,000 in leverage from a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant for fee and easement acquisition in western Minnesota. For the four completed rounds of this program, we have exceeded our original leverage estimates by over 20%. We hope to continue that success in this round.

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

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

This project does not substitute or supplant any previous funding. The work described in this proposal would not be funded or completed without this appropriation.

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

| Appropriation Year | Source | Amount |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| ML 2010 | USFWS In-Kind Contribution | \$308,000 |
| ML 2015 | TNC Private Contributions | \$44,600 |
| ML 2016 | TNC Private Contributions | \$5,500 |
| ML 2010 | TNC Private Contributions | \$37,700 |
| ML 2011 | USFWS In-Kind Contribution | \$144,000 |
| ML 2011 | TNC Private Contributions | \$23,200 |
| ML 2012 | USFWS In-Kind Contribution | \$139,400 |
| ML 2012 | TNC Private Contributions | \$36,100 |
| ML 2014 | USFWS In-Kind Contribution | \$67,600 |
| ML 2014 | TNC Private Contributions | \$64,400 |
| ML 2015 | USFWS In-Kind Contribution | \$112,300 |

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**

We will follow the county/township board notification processes as directed by current statutory language.

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**

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

Are the funds confirmed - **Yes**

Documentation

What are the types of funds?

Cash Match - \$400000

In-Kind Match - \$250000

Land Use:

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **Yes**

Explain

No food plots will be established on OHF acquired properties. 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 plantings. In some cases this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seedbank. Neonicotinoid treated seeds will not be used. We would not expect agricultural crop use to exceed 3 years on any given OHF acquired property.

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**

Lands acquired by fee will be open to the public taking of fish and game during the open season according to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, United States Code, title 16, section 668dd, et seq.

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 - **No**

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

Accomplishment Timeline

| Activity | Approximate Date Completed |
|--|----------------------------|
| Purchase agreements/Options for the first 450 acres of fee and 550 acres of easement acquisition | June 30, 2021 |
| Purchase agreements/Options for the remaining 450 acres of fee and 550 acres of easement acquisition | June 30, 2022 |
| Grassland/wetland restoration and enhancement completed | June 30, 2024 |

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$6,610,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

| Budget Name | LSOHC Request | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Personnel | \$470,000 | \$250,000 | USFWS | \$720,000 |
| Contracts | \$270,000 | \$0 | | \$270,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | \$2,700,000 | \$200,000 | USFWS NAWCA | \$2,900,000 |
| Easement Acquisition | \$2,640,000 | \$200,000 | USFWS NAWCA | \$2,840,000 |
| Easement Stewardship | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Travel | \$12,000 | \$0 | | \$12,000 |
| Professional Services | \$281,600 | \$0 | | \$281,600 |
| Direct Support Services | \$138,900 | \$138,900 | TNC | \$277,800 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Capital Equipment | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Other Equipment/Tools | \$18,000 | \$0 | | \$18,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | \$79,500 | \$0 | | \$79,500 |
| DNR IDP | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Total | \$6,610,000 | \$788,900 | - | \$7,398,900 |

Personnel

| Position | FTE | Over # of years | LSOHC Request | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|-----------------------------|------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Protection Staff | 1.20 | 3.00 | \$336,300 | \$0 | | \$336,300 |
| Project Manager | 0.33 | 3.00 | \$102,000 | \$0 | | \$102,000 |
| Grant Administration | 0.11 | 3.00 | \$30,700 | \$0 | | \$30,700 |
| Science/Stewardship Staff | 0.01 | 3.00 | \$1,000 | \$0 | | \$1,000 |
| USFWS In-Kind Staff Support | 0.00 | 0.00 | \$0 | \$250,000 | USFWS | \$250,000 |
| Total | 1.65 | 12.00 | \$470,000 | \$250,000 | - | \$720,000 |

Amount of Request: \$6,610,000

Amount of Leverage: \$788,900

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 11.93%

DSS + Personnel: \$608,900

As a % of the total request: 9.21%

Easement Stewardship: \$0

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -%

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

DSS is based on The Nature Conservancy's Federally Negotiated rate as proposed and subsequently approved by the US Dept. of Interior on an annual basis. The portion requested from the grant represents 50% of this rate, with the remaining 50% contributed as leverage.

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

These funds are entirely for restoration/enhancement work. This program targets lands that are already in good condition. The acquired properties may, however, need some work to get them into a condition where they can be sustained into the future using standard prairie management techniques. The most typical activity is tree or woody vegetation removal, with reseeding of the affected areas. The requested amount is based on our experience in earlier rounds of this program.

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:

Rental car expense is also included.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The Personnel line item includes USFWS In-Kind support. Fee Acquisition w/o PILT and Easement Acquisition include leverage from a NAWCA fee and easement acquisition grant. The leverage offered on the DSS line reflects one-half of the Conservancy's federally approved indirect rate. These funds are privately raised.

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:

This request is part of an ongoing NTP NWR acquisition program, allowing us to scale activities up or down depending on available funding. If funding is modified, the balance of fee/easement acquisition may be reviewed to ensure adequate funding for each activity.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

| Type | Wetlands | Prairies | Forest | Habitats | Total |
|--|----------|----------|--------|----------|-------|
| Restore | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | 0 | 900 | 0 | 0 | 900 |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | 1,100 | 0 | 0 | 1,100 |
| Enhance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 2,000 | 0 | 0 | 2,000 |

Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?

| Type | Native Prairie |
|--|----------------|
| Restore | 0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | 300 |
| Protect in Easement | 700 |
| Enhance | 0 |
| Total | 1,000 |

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

| Type | Wetlands | Prairies | Forest | Habitats | Total |
|--|----------|-------------|--------|----------|-------------|
| Restore | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$3,342,100 | \$0 | \$0 | \$3,342,100 |
| Protect in Easement | \$0 | \$3,267,900 | \$0 | \$0 | \$3,267,900 |
| Enhance | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total | \$0 | \$6,610,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$6,610,000 |

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | Northern Forest | Total |
|--|-------------|----------------|-----------|---------|-----------------|-------|
| Restore | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | 0 | 45 | 0 | 855 | 0 | 900 |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | 55 | 0 | 1,045 | 0 | 1,100 |
| Enhance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 100 | 0 | 1,900 | 0 | 2,000 |

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 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$167,100 | \$0 | \$3,175,000 | \$0 | \$3,342,100 |
| Protect in Easement | \$0 | \$163,400 | \$0 | \$3,104,500 | \$0 | \$3,267,900 |
| Enhance | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total | \$0 | \$330,500 | \$0 | \$6,279,500 | \$0 | \$6,610,000 |

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

| Type | Wetlands | Prairies | Forest | Habitats |
|--|----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Restore | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$3,713 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Easement | \$0 | \$2,971 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Enhance | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | Northern Forest |
|--|-------------|----------------|-----------|---------|-----------------|
| Restore | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$3,713 | \$0 | \$3,713 | \$0 |
| Protect in Easement | \$0 | \$2,971 | \$0 | \$2,971 | \$0 |
| Enhance | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

I have read and understand Section 15 of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Statute 97A.056, and the Call for Funding Request. I certify I am authorized to submit this proposal and to the best of my knowledge the information provided is true and accurate.

Parcel List

Explain the process used to select, rank and prioritize the parcels:

Each parcel is reviewed/approved by USFWS and TNC program staff and biologists to ensure that they meet this program's objectives. Parcels are prioritized using the following criteria:

- 1) Is there native prairie on the tract? If not, is it adjacent to native prairie? This program's top priority is protecting untilled native prairie, as identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey or site visits by trained biologists.
- 2) Is the property in a priority area (Core/Complex/Corridor) identified in the Prairie Plan? Outstanding parcels outside of the priority areas may be considered.
- 3) Is it adjacent to an existing complex of protected land?
- 4) Was it identified by Biological Survey as having concentrations of threatened and endangered species and communities?
- 5) Is it suitable for public recreation? Lands purchased in fee title will be open to the public taking of fish and game. Conservation easements purchased with OHF support will be open only with landowner permission.

For more detail on these criteria, see the attached Parcel Prioritization Criteria document.

Properties proposed on the Parcel List below do not reflect actual parcels, but rather illustrate the areas in which this program may work. Maintaining anonymity of parcels is an important consideration for the organization in order to protect landowner privacy rights and to maintain the integrity of good faith negotiations. Following the review described above, all selected parcels will be submitted to the L-SOHC for approval prior to acquisition through an Accomplishment Plan amendment request.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Becker

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 14142233 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 14142236 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Big Stone

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 12446209 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 12446212 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Brown

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 10834213 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 10834216 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Chippewa

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 11739213 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 11739216 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Clay

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 14247201 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 14247204 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Cottonwood

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 10734220 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 10734223 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Grant

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 13044233 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 13044236 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Jackson

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 10436219 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 10436222 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Kandiyohi

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 12236207 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 12236210 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Kittson

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 16045203 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 16045206 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Lac qui Parle

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 11943209 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 11943212 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Lincoln

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 10945214 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 10945217 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Lyon

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 11243215 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 11243218 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Mahnomen

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 14642208 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 14642211 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Marshall

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 15746213 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 15746216 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Murray

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 10740207 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 10740210 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Nicollet

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 11132208 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 11132211 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Nobles

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 10140225 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 10140228 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Norman

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 14647201 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 14647204 | 99 | \$1,000 | Yes | Full | Full |

Otter Tail

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 13244202 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 13244205 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Pennington

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 15345227 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 15345230 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Pipestone

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 10846219 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 10846222 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Polk

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 15449201 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 15449204 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Pope

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 12336213 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 12336216 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Red Lake

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 15144201 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 15144204 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Redwood

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 11336201 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 11336204 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Renville

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 11437219 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 11437222 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Rock

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 10345225 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 10345228 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Roseau

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 16242207 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 16242210 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Stearns

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 12335213 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 12335216 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Stevens

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 12543213 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 12543216 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Swift

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 12042209 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 12042212 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Traverse

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 12548219 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 12548222 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Wilkin

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 13647202 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |
| NA | 13647205 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |

Yellow Medicine

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|------|----------|-------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| NA | 11546221 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | Full | Full |
| NA | 11546224 | 99 | \$1,000 | No | No | No |

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

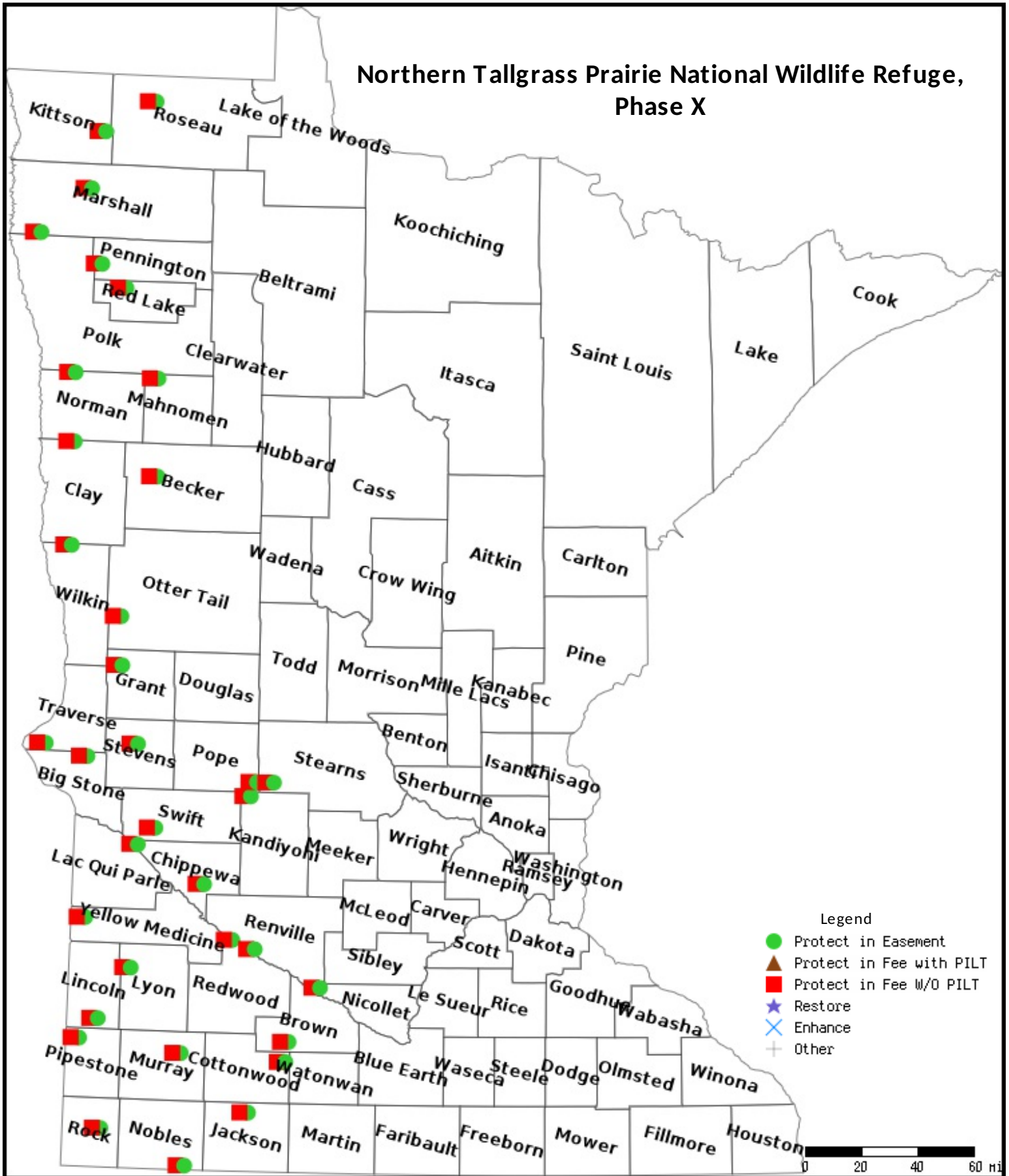
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, Phase X



Data Generated From Parcel List

Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge - Phase 10

Funding Requested: \$6,610,000



Program Goals

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy will work together to protect native prairie and wildlife habitat in Minnesota for present and future generations.

Phase 10 Goals

The requested funding will allow us to permanently conserve approximately 2,000 acres of native prairie and wildlife habitat in western and central Minnesota. Planned outcomes include:

- 900 acres of fee acquisition
- 1,100 acres of permanent conservation easements

This work will target areas identified as having significant biodiversity by the Minnesota Biological Survey and as priority areas in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan.



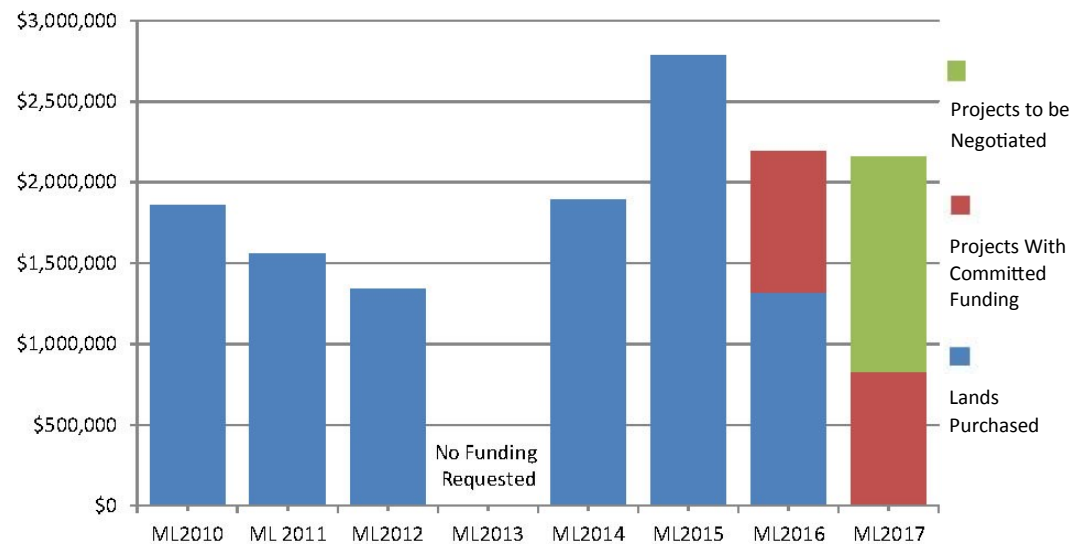
SueChaplin

Henslow's Sparrow - OHF funding for this program protected 80 acres of critical habitat for this endangered species. Additional species on this western Minnesota property include upland sandpipers, marbled godwits and Iowa skippers.



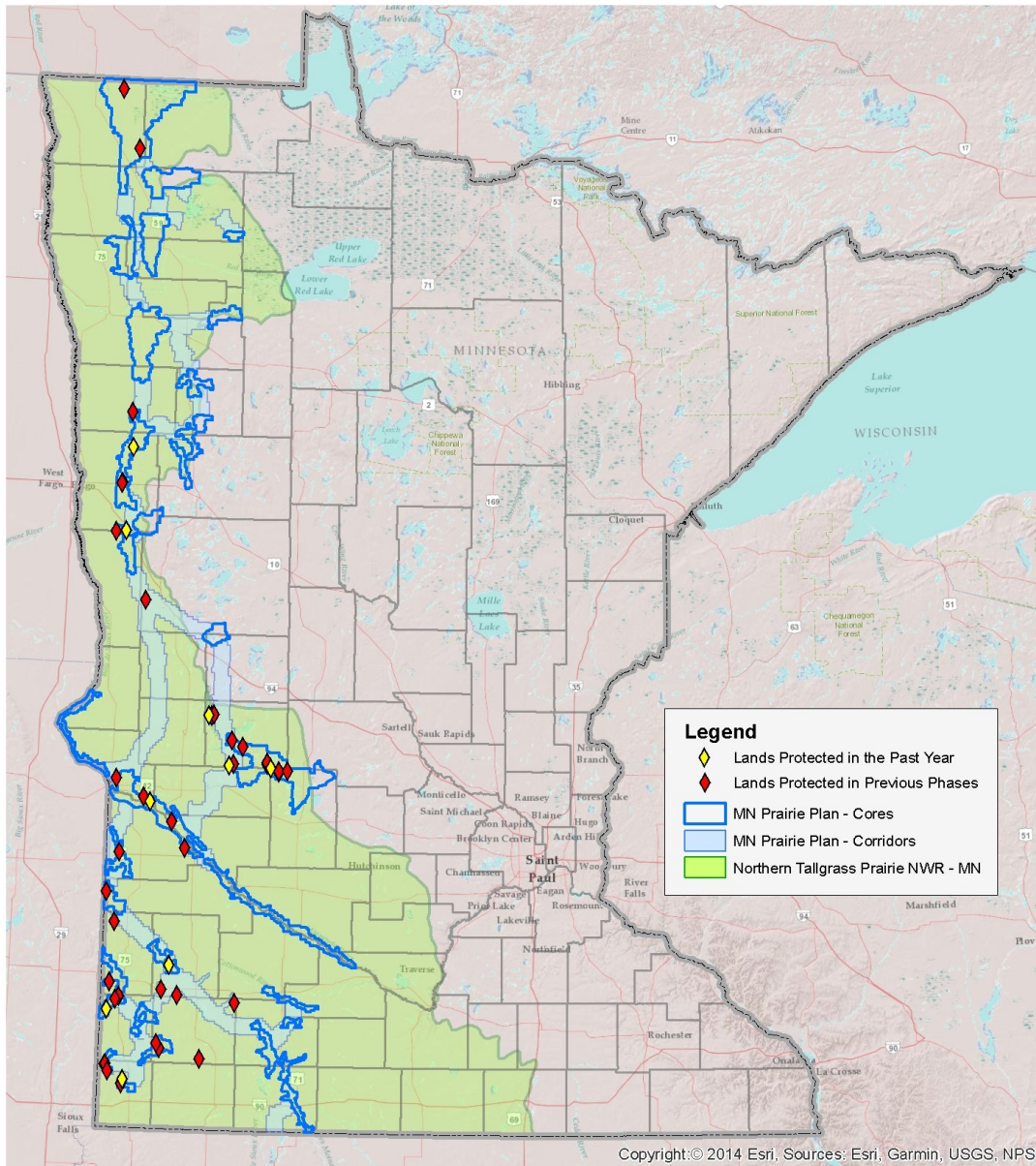
Native Prairie/Wetland Complex - This native prairie and wetland complex in central Minnesota was permanently protected with OHF support. This acquisition added 156 acres to an existing, 2,700-acre block of protected habitat.

Financial Update — Status of Acquisition Funding from Previous OHF Rounds



Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

Lands Protected with OHF-Funding



The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.



25 12.5 0 25
Miles
Scale = 1:3,300,000

Created by: RCJ, TNC in MN/ND/SD, 2018/5/29
S:\Grant\2018\USFWS Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR FY 2019
Proposal\Attachment 01 TP NWR Hearing Map - 20180229.mxd

Program Accomplishments through May 2018

- 5,465 acres of habitat permanently protected at an approximate cost of \$2,210 acre
- 3,220 acres of native prairie acquired
- 514 acres of wetlands and more than 12 miles of stream or lakefront conserved
- 2,702 acres with significant biodiversity preserved, as determined by the Minnesota Biological Survey
- 90% of projects completed in MN Prairie Plan priority areas
- Protected habitat for endangered and threatened species, species of concern, and other wildlife, including: Wilson's phalarope, short-eared owl, Dakota skipper, Topeka shiner, Blanding's turtle, small white lady's slipper, and sandhill cranes.

Prioritizing Projects

Each project is reviewed using the following criteria:

- 1) Is there native prairie on the tract? If not, is it adjacent to native prairie?
- 2) Is the property in a priority area identified in the MN Prairie Plan?
- 3) Is it adjacent to an existing complex of permanently protected habitat?
- 4) Was it identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey as having concentrations of threatened and endangered species, species of concern, and rare communities?
- 5) Is it suitable for public recreation?

Parcel Selection Criteria used by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Land Acquisition Program

The purpose of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Protection National Wildlife Refuge Program is to accelerate progress towards the US Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) goal of permanently protecting and enhancing 77,000 acres of prairie remnants across the broad area originally covered by the Northern Tallgrass Prairie. The Land Acquisition Program supports the acquisition of fee title or conservation easements in the 49 western Minnesota counties included in the refuge boundary. The USFWS and The Nature Conservancy (Conservancy) are partners in this Program.

Parcels are reviewed by both the USFWS and Conservancy to ensure that they meet the priorities of both partners. They are then submitted to LSOHC staff for final review/approval. This review is based on the following criteria:

1. **Native prairie on all or most of tract, or adjacency to existing native prairie.** The emphasis of this Program is protecting and enhancing native prairie, as identified by DNR Biological Survey or site inspection by trained biologist. Protecting native prairie includes the need to buffer and connect native remnants via restoration of non-native lands. The partners will identify and work with private landowners to acquire tracts that further our shared goal of native prairie conservation, and in particular, those that meet the other criteria listed below.
2. **Within core area boundary or in critical corridors between core areas.** This Program will assist with building "functioning landscapes" by focusing in areas with concentrations of existing native prairie. The 2017 Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan identified 28 prairie cores and connecting corridors within the Refuge. The partners will give priority to those parcels that are within these core areas or that help form critical corridors to maintain landscape function.
3. **Near existing protected lands.** Building larger protected complexes is preferred to simplify and reduce overall management costs and travel time. In general, larger protected blocks are more effective at conserving the full array of wildlife species and biological diversity. The partners will strategically identify properties that are in areas where the USFWS already has a presence and prioritize these higher than those that are isolated.
4. **Greater habitat and species diversity, or host to unique species.** Parcels that host a rare habitat or a continuum of habitats, such as interconnected upland, wetland, riparian, and stream features, will be recognized as having added ecological value and given greater priority. Tracts with underrepresented, small-scale features (e.g. threatened species), will also be prioritized.
5. **Suitability for public recreation.** Constitutional language requires that the lands purchased in fee title be open to the public taking of fish and game. Fee title lands purchased with this grant will be opened. Lands especially suited to these uses will be given a higher priority. Conservation easements purchased with Outdoor Heritage Fund support will be open to hunting only with landowner permission.

6. **Willing Seller.** We will only work with willing sellers, and those that can abide by the statutory process laid out for use of public funds. We work with landowners to ensure that they are comfortable with the Program and how it will affect their property.
7. **Avoid buildings.** Existing buildings pose a challenge because they may not be eligible for Outdoor Heritage Fund use and they require additional effort to demolish or sell. Properties with structures are carefully reviewed to ensure that they do not place an undue burden on the USFWS or Conservancy.