

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Laws of Minnesota 2020 Accomplishment Plan



**Date:** December 17, 2019

**Program or Project Title:** Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape ACUB Protection Program - Phase VIII

**Funds Recommended:** \$ 3,164,000

**Manager's Name:** Shannon Wettstein

**Title:** District Manager

**Organization:** Morrison SWCD

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**Legislative Citation:** ML 2020, Ch. X, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd XX

**Appropriation Language:**

**County Locations:** Not Listed

**Eco regions in which work will take place:**

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Northern Forest

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Easement

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Forest
- Wetlands

### Abstract:

Phase VIII of the RIM Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape ACUB Partnership will utilize permanent conservation easements to acquire 1,546-acres of high quality habitat along the Crow Wing, Long Prairie, Gull, Nokasippi, and Mississippi River corridors and lake watersheds. Approximately 25 easements will be secured within the project area. BWSR will utilize the RIM easement process in partnership with the Morrison SWCD to secure habitat corridor easements on sites within Crow Wing, Cass, and Morrison counties during the appropriation term.

### Design and scope of work:

Phase VIII will protect approximately 1,546-acres of fish, game, migratory bird, and forest habitat along the Crow Wing, Long Prairie, Gull, Nokasippi, and Mississippi River corridors and lake watersheds within a 5-mile radius of Camp Ripley. This phase will secure approximately 25 permanent conservation Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easements, utilizing partnerships with Camp Ripley, a State Game Refuge, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the Morrison Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Easement acquisition will occur in portions of Morrison, Crow Wing, and Cass County that lie within this 5-mile radius.

Easement acquisition in this area will protect river and lake habitat corridors that are critical to the general public for fishing, hunting, and recreational opportunities. These riparian corridors are critical protection for the State of Minnesota, MN National Guard (MNNG) and National Guard Bureau (NGB) and its mission to sustain military training of soldiers, our local economy, the National Mississippi

River Flyway, and Mississippi Headwaters Board mission.

Parcels are targeted that have quality existing habitat, protect corridors and large habitat complexes and reduce future fragmentation. Evaluation criteria include ecological and habitat factors for resident and migratory wildlife species. The target area has been limited to ensure a concentration of easement acquisitions that provide landscape scale benefits and will allow for protection of large forested parcels that are in imminent threat of conversion.

The forested region of these three counties is where agriculture transitions to existing forested lands. Thousands of acres just outside of this work area are being converted from forest to annual cropping, primarily for potato/corn production. Forests not only provide critical wildlife habitat for game and non-game species, but forests lessen the impact of water quality contamination from land use practices. This region of the state, most specifically Morrison County, is the fastest growing county in the state for the loss of grazing land to annual cropping. The loss of forests would exacerbate problems associated with conversion. Drinking water standards in the area are also in jeopardy with the increase in irrigation and large scale livestock operations, so protecting the forested lands has become a critical issue.

In 2016 Camp Ripley was designated as a federal Sentinel Landscape, one of seven in the nation. This designation by both State and Federal entities coordinates strategies to protect this landscape. Many agencies have identified their scope of priorities within the Sentinel Landscape 10-mile boundary. The Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program has never had less than 250-interested landowners on the waiting list for participation. To date Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) support of \$9M has leveraged \$39M in federal dollars and protected 30,000-acres.

### **How does the request address MN habitats that have: historical value to fish and wildlife, wildlife species of greatest conservation need, MN County Biological Survey data, and/or rare, threatened and endangered species inventories:**

The forest habitat protected by this proposal falls within the Camp Ripley-Pillsbury-Lake Alexander Important Bird Area (IBA). The 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) identifies 346 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) 92 being birds. This project area supports the greatest concentration of nesting Red-shouldered Hawks in the state along with 65 other SGCN birds. Thirty six other non-avian SGCN have also been identified within this area totaling nearly 30% of all SGCN within the state. This project directly addresses two primary causes of SGCN declines, habitat fragmentation and climate change impacts.

Lands in this proposal are also occupied by two federally listed species, the gray wolf and the northern long-eared bat. Populations of these species rely on unbroken tracts of forest which are the focus of this proposal. Many studies have indicated that road density has direct, negative, impact on wolf habitat utilization especially during their breeding season. The project area is on the fringe of forest habitat that is under extreme pressure from development leading to habitat fragmentation. Permanent protection of these parcels is critical to the long term recovery of these species under the Endangered Species Act as well as many of the state listed SGCN neotropical migratory birds in the area.

### **Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:**

Parcels are targeted that have quality existing habitat, protect corridors and large habitat complexes and will reduce future fragmentation. Evaluation criteria include ecological and habitat factors for resident and migratory wildlife species. The target area has been limited to ensure a concentration of easement acquisitions that provide landscape scale benefits. The target work area also contains high value existing habitat and public access via existing Wildlife Management Areas that are being buffered with easements.

The MN County Biological Survey has identified several native plant communities within this project area that are vulnerable to extirpation as well as sites with existing high biodiversity. Most of these identified areas lie within the northern extent of this 5-mile project boundary under high development pressure due to their proximity to the cities of Baxter & Brainerd. Protecting these parcels is a high priority for the ACUB Program.

In the fall and spring of 2018/19 DNR staff have started an amendment process to the State Wildlife Action Plan that would include the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape within a future Conservation Focus Area. This effort is expected to be completed in 2019. The largely forested 50-mile section of the Mississippi River, its associated major tributaries, wetland and lake systems all elevate the habitat significance of this program geography.

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

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

## Which other plans are addressed in this program:

- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

## Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program:

### Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

### Northern Forest:

- Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement

## Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Clean Water Fund
- Dept. of Defense and National Guard Bureau

### Describe the relationship of the funds:

Due to the success of the Camp Ripley ACUB partnership, the MN Legislature passed the Sentinel Landscape Designation in 2015. This law (MS 190.33) formalized a process that we have used to enhance the implementation of the ACUB program that will complement the DOD's national Sentinel Landscape program. Establishing Sentinel Landscapes in state law enabled the federal Sentinel Landscape designation in 2016. This allows the program to better leverage federal funding from agencies beyond just the DOD. It also better aligns federal and state programs that could support private landowners in a Sentinel Landscape. Sentinel Landscape programs seek to preserve the working rural lands and natural values of private lands, which is important for both national defense and conservation priorities. Camp Ripley was the first such designation of a National Guard facility and only the 7th designated Sentinel Landscape in the country. The Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape partnership has secured \$2.8M federal funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for EQIP, CSP and Healthy Forest Reserve Program starting 2017. The Partnership will apply for RCPP funding Phase II in the fall of 2019.

The SWCD offices in Crow Wing and Morrison counties have applied for Clean Water Funds and the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) funds to assist landowners with forest stewardship planning, nutrient management planning, and most importantly drainage management. The counties utilize all resources available to enhance the easement properties. Our additional partners and efforts include USDA NRCS, MN Forest Resource Council, local water planning, county planning and zoning offices, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP) with BWSR, DNR, PF, NRCS, MASWCD, and SWCDs as primary partners, provides funding to SWCDs to utilize technicians to promote the conservation provisions of the Federal Farm Bill and other conservation program opportunities to private landowners. The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) via LCCMR recommendations provided \$1.0M in FY10-11, \$625,000 in FY12-13, \$3.0M in FY14-15 and \$1.0M in FY16-17.

## Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

The Department of Defense (DOD) Readiness Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program requires a 25% match to those federal funds. The OHF has been a critical piece in the ACUB now Sentinel Landscape partnership success. The Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape partnership with Morrison SWCD as the fiscal will apply for NRCS-Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) dollars (\$10 million) in the fall of 2019 to further leverage the total partnership funding. In addition, but not secured, year end funding is often appropriated from REPI. In the last fiscal year the program also received a private donation of land (120-acres) to support the program.

**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 proposal is not supplanting or a substitution for any previous funding not from Legacy Fund sources or for the same purpose.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2007 - Present	Department of Defense (DOD)/National Guard Bureau (NGB)	\$28,400,000
2010 - Present	LCCMR: Camp Ripley Crow Wing/Morrison SWCD and city of Baxter	\$1,460,000
2016 - Present	NRCS-RCPP funding from USDA	\$2,800,000

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

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

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

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020 - Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Compliance Checks first 5 years then every 3rd year.	Corrective actions of any violations.	Enforcement Action taken by MN Attorney Generals office.
2020 - Ongoing	Landowner Responsibility	Maintain compliance with easement terms.		

### Activity Details:

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

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

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

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

Who will manage the easement?

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

Who will be the easement holder?

**BWSR will be the easement holder.**

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

**The anticipated number of easements we plan to accomplish is 25 for a total of 1,546 acres.**

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

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

This appropriation is funding a program that will have a parcel list identified at a later time. Roads or trails are typically excluded from the easement area if they serve no beneficial purpose to easement maintenance, monitoring, or enforcement. This question is being answered with utmost flexibility in absence of a LSOHC definition of trails and specified trail types (permanent or temporary, beneficial for maintenance, animal trails, etc.).

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the BWSR RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5-years and then every 3rd year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implement a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms.

Under the terms of the RIM Easement Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost shared from a variety of sources.

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

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

Though uncommon, there could be a potential for new trails to be developed, if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g. firebreaks, berm maintenance, etc). This question is being answered with utmost flexibility in absence of a LSOHC definition of trails and specified trail types (permanent or temporary, beneficial for maintenance, animal trails, etc.).

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the BWSR RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5-years and then every 3rd year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implement a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms.

Under the terms of the RIM Easement Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost shared from a variety of sources.

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation? - **No**

Not Listed

### Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Co mpleted
Obtain applications from eligible landowners	June 30,20 23
Allocations to specific parcels	June 30,20 23
Easements recorded	June 30, 20 23
Final report submitted	November 1, 20 23

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/1/2023

### Federal Funding:

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **No**

### Outcomes:

#### Programs in the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation *A summary of the total of wetland acres and associated forest land secured under easement through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. Sustained habitat availability within a certain region is expected to maintain the carrying capacity of associated wildlife within that region. This would affect both game and non-game species. We expect sustained populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these easements are secured.*

#### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Rivers and streams provide corridors of habitat including intact areas of forest cover in the east and large wetland/upland complexes in the west *A summary of the total of wetland acres and associated forest land secured under easement through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. Sustained habitat availability within a certain region is expected to maintain the carrying capacity of associated wildlife*

*within that region. This would affect both game and nongame species. We expect sustained populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these easements are secured.*

# Budget Spreadsheet

*Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan*

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

The program will accommodate the reduced appropriations by limiting the number of easements to 25 and the number of acres to 1,546.

**Total Amount of Request: \$ 3164000**

**Budget and Cash Leverage**

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$235,300	\$0		\$235,300
Contracts	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$2,622,700	\$0		\$2,622,700
Easement Stewardship	\$162,500	\$0		\$162,500
Travel	\$5,500	\$0		\$5,500
Professional Services	\$110,700	\$0		\$110,700
Direct Support Services	\$17,000	\$0		\$17,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$7,900	\$0		\$7,900
Supplies/Materials	\$2,400	\$0		\$2,400
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$3,164,000	\$0		\$3,164,000

**Personnel**

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.35	4.00	\$168,000	\$0		\$168,000
Easement Processing	0.32	3.00	\$67,300	\$0		\$67,300
Total	0.67	7.00	\$235,300	\$0		\$235,300

Amount of Request: \$3,164,000

Amount of Leverage: \$0

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.00%

DSS + Personnel: \$252,300

As a % of the total request: 7.97%

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

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

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental? - No**

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging:**

The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

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

There is no direct leverage for this project. However, to date the Federal Government has contributed over \$33,000,000 to other protection projects within the Sentinel Landscapes area. This project would contribute to the goals of the Sentinel Landscapes initiative.

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

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



## Output Tables

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

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	1,546	0	1,546
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1,546	0	1,546

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

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$3,164,000	\$0	\$3,164,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$3,164,000	\$0	\$3,164,000

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

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	1,546	0	0	0	1,546
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1,546	0	0	0	1,546

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

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$3,164,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,164,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$3,164,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,164,000

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

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$2047	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$20.47	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers*

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

2.6

## Parcel List

*For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.*

### Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

### Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

### Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

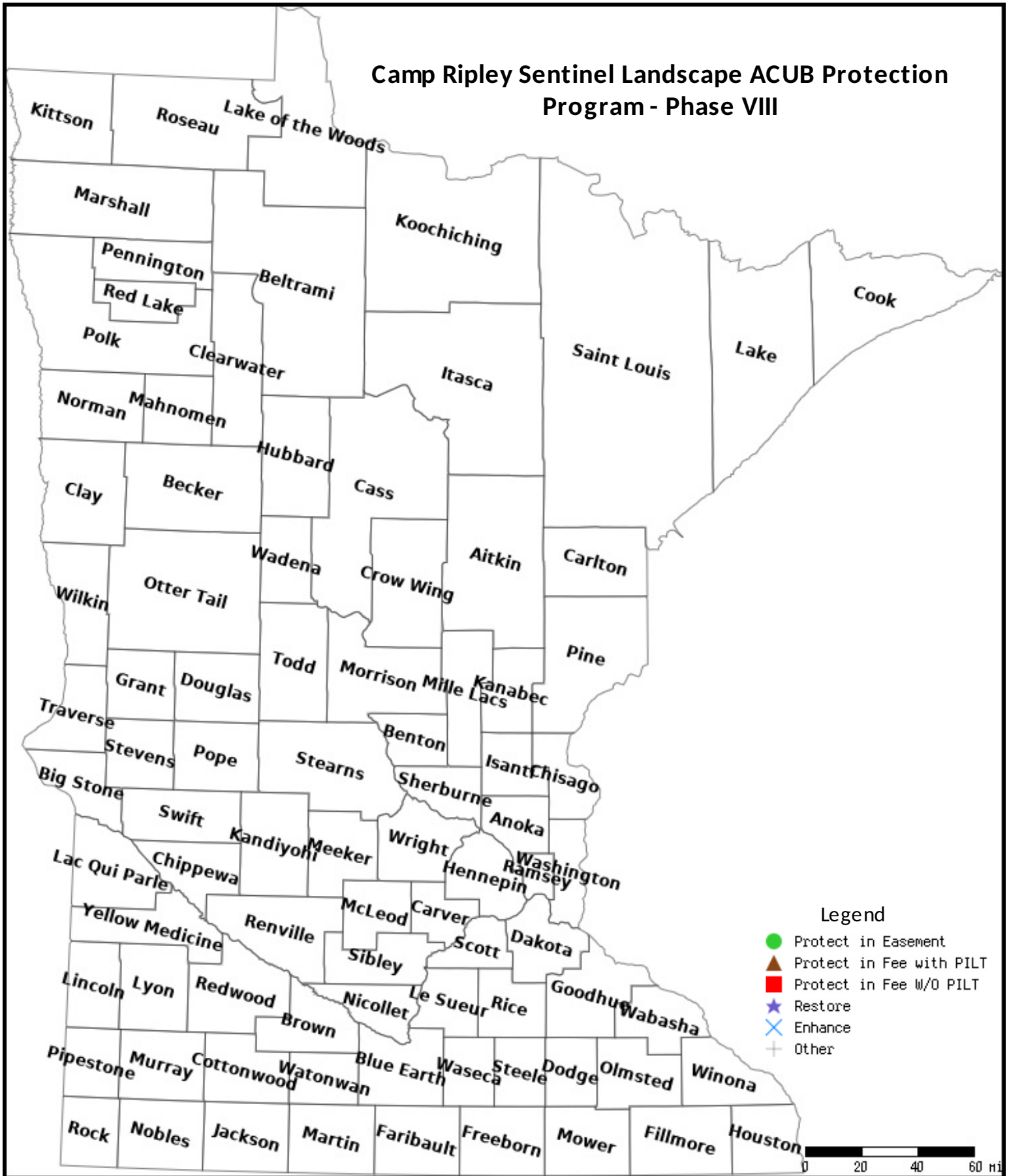
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

### Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

# Parcel Map

## Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape ACUB Protection Program - Phase VIII



Data Generated From Parcel List