

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2020 Accomplishment Plan



Date: December 23, 2019

Program or Project Title: Targeted RIM Easement Program to the Individual Parcel: Pine and Leech Watersheds Phase 1

Funds Recommended: \$ 2,868,000

Manager's Name: Melissa Barrick

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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:

- Northern Forest

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest
- Habitat
- Wetlands

Abstract:

We will partner with the BWSR RIM Easement Program, Hubbard, Crow Wing, and Cass Counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to protect 1400 acres of high-quality private forest, wetlands, and shoreline in the Northern Forest Ecological Section. This project will be successful because of the sophisticated RAQ scoring, integrative parcel selection, proven outreach tactics, SWCD landowner relationships, and BWSR and SWCD RIM partnership. Development trends pose a serious threat to Cisco, Golden-winged Warbler, Northern Long-eared Bat, Blanding's Turtles, and over 107 unique, rare, endangered, and threaten species that live in uplands, lowlands, and mature forests of these.

Design and scope of work:

This project will use Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easements on targeted private forest, wetlands, and shoreline within the Leech Lake and Pine River Major Watersheds (hydrologic unit codes 07010102 and 7010105). These watersheds contain over 1,250 lakes, which cover 354 square miles. There are 88 lakes with High to Highest Outstanding Biological Significance (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR)), 92 wild rice lakes, and 29 cisco lakes. The Leech Lake and Pine River Landscape Stewardship Plans (LSP) calculated property values surrounding these high-quality waterbodies are worth over 10 billion dollars. The Pine River and Leech Watersheds have some of the highest quality lakes and fisheries within the lower 48 States. The tourism industries within Hubbard, Cass, and Crow Wing Counties generates over \$393 million in sales per year (Explore Minnesota 2017). The private lands within these watersheds deserve protection strategies to ensure that the habitat stay intact and to protect the local tourism economy and tax base

of Leech Lake and Pine River Watersheds. In 2016, the MN DNR, Board of Water and Soil Resources, Forest Resource Council, and Technical Service Area 8 developed a protection framework based on MN DNR Fisheries Cisco research. The MN DNR identified a strong correlation between lake water quality and habitat that sustains fish populations and maintaining 75 percent forest cover in the watershed. The LSPs determined existing protection levels in each of the 144 minor watersheds and the number of acres needed to achieve the 75 percent protection goal. The Leech and Pine River One Watershed One Plans (1W1P) adopted the 75 percent protection goal and pinpointed private woodlands as important to preserve. The 1W1Ps identified issues, concerns, and developed a targeted and measurable 10-year implementation plan. Both plans recognized conservation easements as an important tool to protect priority groundwater, habitat, and surface water. Mitch Brinks, a mapping specialist, developed a methodology for targeting specific large-tract private forested parcels. The methodology is called RAQ (Riparian, Adjacent, Quality), each private forested parcel is scored on a 0-10 scale based on the parcel proximity to water ("Riparian") or other protected lands ("Adjacency") and various local defined features ("Quality"), such as wild rice, cisco, and biodiversity (terrestrial or aquatic). The greatest risk for development and fragmentation is riparian private forest lands. The RAQ tool prioritizes private parcels adjacent to state or federal lands (protected lands in the model). This will create extensive long-lasting habitat complexes. The LSPs calculated private ownership as 49 percent and 28 percent (Pine River and Leech Watersheds). Over 320,000 acres of high-quality private forest (over 20 acres in size) has no protection status within these watersheds. The LSPs and 1W1Ps selected Headwaters, Whitefish lake, Lower Pine, Little Pine River, Woman Lake, Steamboat River, and Kabekona River (7 of 12 minor Watersheds) for habitat protection. Staff will utilize RAQ scores to filter 320,000 acres to 1400 acres within the minor watersheds. The 30-year-old BWSR RIM program has completed 7,000 easements. The project will implement 24 RIM easements.

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 MN DNR rare species guide indicated Leech and Pine River Watersheds contain over 108 rare species of fish, invertebrates, plants, reptiles, and mammals. These species depend on the fringe wetlands, forested corridors, high quality lakes, and shoreland vegetative habitat.

Blanding's Turtles need both upland and wetlands to complete their life cycle. This habitat includes calm shallow water bodies (type 1-3 wetlands) which are important amphibian and invertebrate breeding grounds food sources for the Blanding's Turtle. The turtles build their nest on undeveloped land in open grassy or brushy sand.

Wild rice provides some of the most important habitat for Minnesota's migrating and breeding waterfowl. More than 17 species of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) use wild rice areas as habitat for breeding, migration, and/or foraging. They include: Common Loon, Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Red-necked Grebe, Sora Rail, Virginia Rail, Yellow Rail, Black Tern, Rusty Blackbird, Sedge Wren, Lesser Scaup, Northern Pintail, and American Black Duck. Wild Rice grows in shallow lakes, rivers, and shallow bays of deeper lakes.

Recently, the Northern Long-eared Bat was added to federal threatened species list because of the lack of roosts. The MN DNR and US Fish and Wildlife Service identified over 11 townships in Cass, Crow Wing, and Hubbard Counties that contain mature roost trees for the Northern Long-eared Bat. Approximately, 230 mature roost trees were identified in Minnesota. An estimated 30 percent of the trees were identified in Hubbard, Cass and Crow Wing Counties.

The MN DNR identified the Golden-winged Warbler as a SGCN due to a population that has declined by 60 percent across the United States and Canada. Minnesota's critical upland, lowland, and mature forest habitats support over 47 percent of the species 'global population'. This bird is a Minnesota icon and symbol of private land stewardship. These unprotected private forest and upland habitats are a mecca for all these species. This project will protect these crucial habitats.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

This project will utilize LSPs and 1W1P minor watersheds science-based targeting to expand important habitat corridors and complexes on private lands. The RAQ Tool will score individual private, forested parcels in the following manner: Riparian is whether the parcels is next to a priority water resource (1-3 points), Adjacency is whether it is next to existing state, county, or federal land (1-3 points), and Quality is the locally determined value of the land (1-3 Points), which can include a number of criteria, such as trout/cisco lakes, wild rice, old growth forests, MN DNR phosphorus sensitivity, rare species, biodiversity, and groundwater recharge and sensitive areas. The LSPs provided: 62,000 RAQ scores for all private parcels, RAQ score maps, databases, landowner outreach tables, percent of protected land, rare and unique species, species of concern, cisco and wild rice, and easement acre goal for each subwatershed. This data targets RIM easements to the parcel level and this allows us to hand select the best parcels for habitat value and prevent future fragmentation in the entire watershed. This methodology is proven through Environmental Natural Resource Trust Fund and Clean Water Fund RIM easement program. The local government units will utilize LSPs to complete the following items:

Step 1: Filter outreach database to find parcel RAQ scores 7-9 within a prioritized HUC 10 subwatershed that are adjacent to selected high quality lakes.

Step 2: Review selected parcels and scores.

Step 2: Develop individual maps for each landowner with the specific easement boundary and price associated with the easement.

Step 3: Mail information on RIM easement program and map to selected landowners.

Step 5: Host landowner meeting and invite partnering state agencies and landowners to attend the event.

Step 4: Rank and score RIM applications with internal scoring sheet.

Step 5: Host interagency committee meeting to review all applications.

Step 6: Begin RIM easement application process with BWSR.

The Crow Wing SWCD has utilized this mythology and has protected over 12 miles of shoreline and 1,245 acres of habitat. The BWSR RIM is one of the most efficient and effective Minnesota easement programs.

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

- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H7 Keep water on the landscape

Which other plans are addressed in this program:

- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program:

Northern Forest:

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

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

Does this program include leverage in funds:

No

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

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

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

Not Listed

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

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement into perpetuity. The BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry-out oversight, monitoring and inspection of its conservation easements. Easements are inspected for the first five consecutive years beginning in the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and partners' staff document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at \$6,500 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship cover costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and any enforcement necessary.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2023 beyond	RIM Stewardship Fees	Monitoring	Enforcement as neccessar	

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?

The Reinvest in Minnesota Easement program is partnership between the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The Cass, Hubbard, and Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District staff will guide landowners through the program and provide required items to the BWSR staff to complete the actual easement documents. This is a voluntary program. Each SWCD will work with landowners in their own counties to complete the easement process. The Crow Wing SWCD will be the fiscal agent for this grant and complete required LSOHC reporting.

Who will be the easement holder?

BWSR is the easement holder. The SWCD is contracted through BWSR to complete annual monitoring. The SWCD reports back to BWSR on annual reporting for each easement in their county.

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

We anticipate to complete 16 easements. Approximate four to five easements per county.

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. Existing trails and roads are identified during the easement acquisition process. Some roads and trails, such as agricultural field accesses, are allowed to remain.

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 7,000 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 SWCD, 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 minimal use trails, if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g. firebreaks, berm maintenance, etc). Unauthorized trails identified during the monitoring process are in violation of the easement.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the BWSR RIM Reserve Program that has over 7,000 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 SWCD, 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 Completed
Prioritize RAQ scores 7-9 within a specific HUC 10 subwatershed that are adjacent to selected high quality lakes.	August 20 21
Outreach and Mailing for specific parcels	September 20 21
Rank Score Applications/Interagency Team Meetings	January-March 20 22
Work with BWSR and Landowner to complete RIM easements	January 20 22-20 24
Completed required reporting for LSOHC	Semiannual basis

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 *This project will measure the number acres of forestland, wetlands, and habitat enrolled into RIM easements. We also will measure the number of miles of shoreline protected and the individual minor watershed 1W1P plan percent protection goal. The other evaluation will include scoring sheet for each conservation easement, public meeting evaluation forms, and anecdotal information from landowners on species on their land, habitat value, and might also include cultural resource protection. This project will employ lessons learned from past easement program which include: excellent communication, direct and correct landowner responsibility information, maps, standard payment rate, direct mailing, and partnering meeting.*

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

This project will complete less conservation easements. The funding stayed the same for easement costs related to personnel.

Total Amount of Request: \$ 2868000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$259,500	\$0		\$259,500
Contracts	\$95,500	\$0		\$95,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$2,284,200	\$0		\$2,284,200
Easement Stewardship	\$156,000	\$0		\$156,000
Travel	\$7,800	\$0		\$7,800
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$7,000	\$0		\$7,000
Supplies/Materials	\$8,000	\$0		\$8,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$2,868,000	\$0		\$2,868,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Mgmt	0.35	3.00	\$126,000	\$0		\$126,000
Easement Processing	0.31	3.00	\$43,500	\$0		\$43,500
Outreach Specialist	0.15	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Office Manager	0.14	3.00	\$40,000	\$0		\$40,000
Total	0.95	12.00	\$259,500	\$0		\$259,500

Budget and Cash Leverage by Partnership

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	BWSR	\$169,500	\$0		\$169,500
Contracts	BWSR	\$50,500	\$0		\$50,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	BWSR	\$2,284,200	\$0		\$2,284,200
Easement Stewardship	BWSR	\$156,000	\$0		\$156,000
Travel	BWSR	\$4,800	\$0		\$4,800
Professional Services	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	BWSR	\$30,000	\$0		\$30,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	BWSR	\$7,000	\$0		\$7,000
Supplies/Materials	BWSR	\$2,000	\$0		\$2,000
DNR IDP	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$2,704,000	\$0		\$2,704,000

Personnel - BWSR

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Mgmt	0.35	3.00	\$126,000	\$0		\$126,000
Easement Processing	0.31	3.00	\$43,500	\$0		\$43,500
Total	0.66	6.00	\$169,500	\$0		\$169,500

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	SWCD Crow Wing	\$90,000	\$0		\$90,000
Contracts	SWCD Crow Wing	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	SWCD Crow Wing	\$3,000	\$0		\$3,000
Professional Services	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	SWCD Crow Wing	\$20,000	\$0		\$20,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	SWCD Crow Wing	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
DNR IDP	SWCD Crow Wing	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$164,000	\$0		\$164,000

Personnel - SWCD Crow Wing

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Outreach Specialist	0.15	3.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Office Manager	0.14	3.00	\$40,000	\$0		\$40,000
Total	0.29	6.00	\$90,000	\$0		\$90,000

Amount of Request: \$2,868,000

Amount of Leverage: \$0

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.00%

DSS + Personnel: \$309,500

As a % of the total request: 10.79%

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

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

What is included in the contacts line?

Crow Wing SWCD will contract with Cass and Hubbard SWCD to complete the initial landowner outreach which will include: landowner phone calls, letters, events, and other ways to reach individual landowners. BWSR contracts with each SWCD to complete Easement Process \$2,000 for complete easement.

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 for mileage and food.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Do not anticipate leverage other sources of funds.

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

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

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	280	0	560	560	1,400
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	280	0	560	560	1,400

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	\$573,600	\$0	\$1,147,200	\$1,147,200	\$2,868,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$573,600	\$0	\$1,147,200	\$1,147,200	\$2,868,000

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	0	0	0	1,400	1,400
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	1,400	1,400

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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,868,000	\$2,868,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,868,000	\$2,868,000

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	\$20.49	\$0	\$20.49	\$20.49
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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20 49
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

4

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

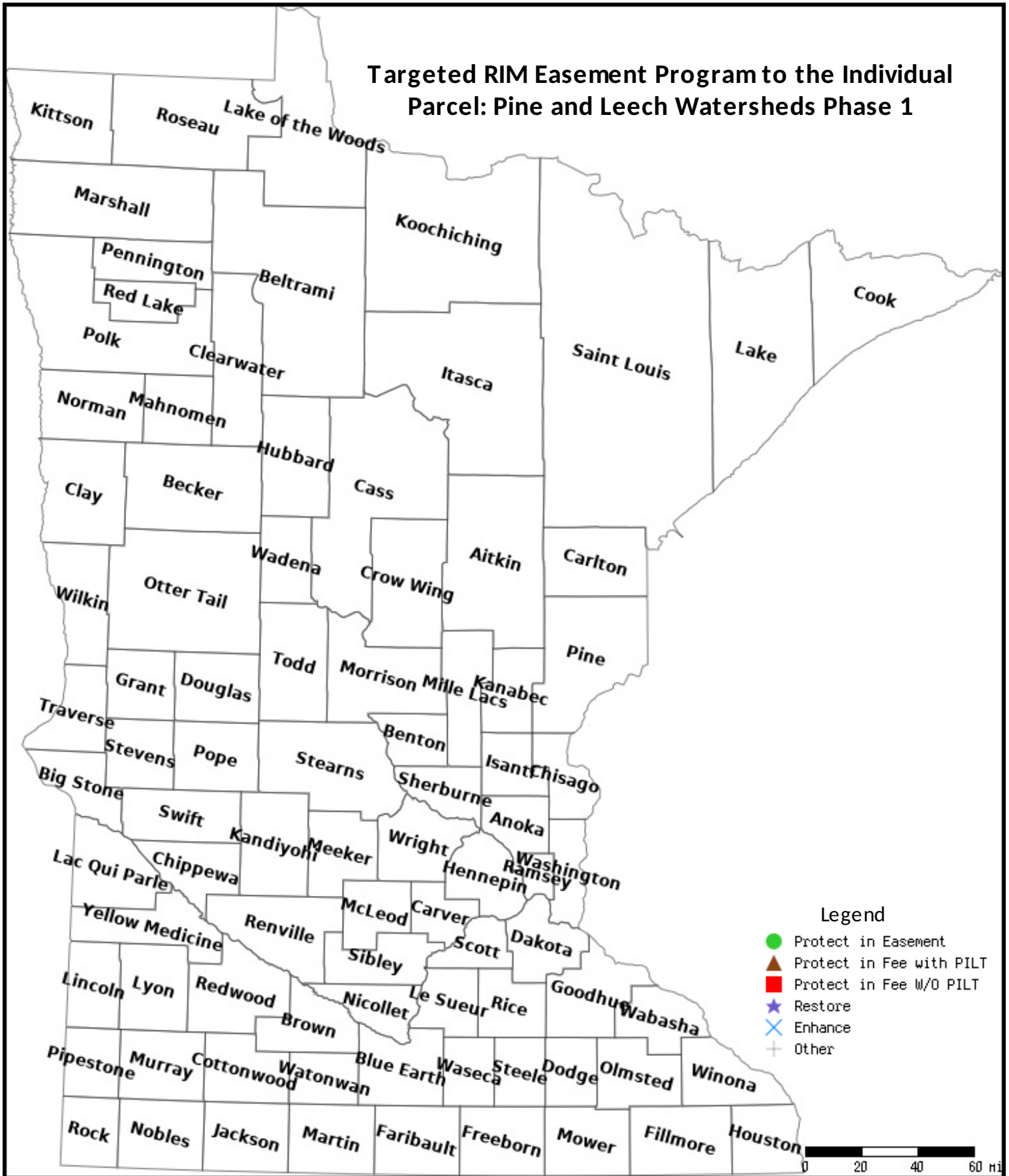
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Targeted RIM Easement Program to the Individual Parcel: Pine and Leech Watersheds Phase 1



Data Generated From Parcel List