

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2020 Accomplishment Plan



Date: December 18, 2019

Program or Project Title: Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program - Phase IX

Funds Recommended: \$ 2,237,000

Manager's Name: Courtney Phillips

Title: Project Manager

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

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: Freeborn

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Enhance
- Protect in Fee
- Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Habitat
- Wetlands

Abstract:

The Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) Phase IX Habitat Restoration Program will restore, enhance, and protect 503 acres of essential prairie upland, wetland, and streambank habitat across the watershed. As a result of strategic projects, key biological functioning parcels will be permanently protected, streambank habitat will be protected, vegetation and feeding sources will be restored for migratory fowl habitat and wetlands will be restored from row crop agriculture. Projects in Phase IX are critical for the benefit of fish, waterfowl, and wildlife populations, reversing the trend of wetland loss and habitat degradation.

Design and scope of work:

Program Goals:

In 2014, the SRRWD created a phased approach to restore, protect, and enhance degraded habitat conditions by implementing projects on a lake-shed basis. The Watershed Habitat Restoration Program is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Create wetlands to improve waterfowl breeding and migratory success
- Remove rough fish species and restore desirable fish, waterfowl and wildlife populations aiming at critical species of concern
- Increase fish habitat, spawning areas and waterfowl nesting areas

- Restore streambanks and increase wildlife habitat and its natural prairie
- Increase and improve the use of restored public natural resources
- Enhance native aquatic rooted vegetation and protect the watershed from invasive species

The program will also interconnect and reestablish important flyway habitats within Minnesota. Once completed, the program will establish waterfowl and fish populations, increase habitat for wetland dependent wildlife, and create the wildlife mecca that was recorded in the late 1800s.

Specifically, Phase IX will contribute to the District's goals by:

- Acquire 133 acres of key targeted acquisitions to protect land along the Shell Rock River, establish upland prairie, and improve nesting habitat and waterfowl food sources
- Enhance 20 acres of streambank habitat for fish, amphibians and waterfowl benefit
- Reestablish 50 acres of wetland basins from row crop agriculture, reversing wetland loss and habitat degradation
- Enhance 300 acres of vegetation in Panicum Prairie, an important flyway that is critical to nesting waterfowl, upland game, and other wading bird species

This proposal uses a programmatic approach to achieve protection, restoration, and enhancement of lakes, wetlands, streams and native prairie landscapes. The program includes projects that are prioritized on the significance of the benefits to aquatic habitat, urgency of the work, availability of leveraged funds, location of projects and agreements with relevant planning documents. The SRRWD has a proven track record with the LSOHC and implementing projects that protect, restore and enhance natural resources. The SRRWD continues to receive strong support for these projects from landowners, local governments and sporting organizations. Finally, this program will preserve an outdoor legacy for Minnesotans to use and enjoy for generations.

Background:

The SRRWD covers 246 square miles inside Freeborn County and includes a complex system of wetlands, streams, and shallow lakes that drain into the Shell Rock River. Managing habitat for this complex system is imperative to the SRRWD as well as understanding its role for providing critical habitat for fish, waterfowl and wildlife. Habitat degradation of wetlands, streams, and shallow lakes is an issue of statewide importance that requires accelerated investment in projects to reverse this degradation. Protection and restoration of this critical habitat is the highest priority of the SRRWD and is directly affected by invasive aquatic vegetation, land use changes, increased water demands, populations of invasive fish species such as common carp, and artificial drainage. Degradation in habitat is influencing available food sources for game fish populations that include Northern Pike, Bluegill, Yellow Perch and Walleye, and duck populations including Northern Pintail, Redhead, Canvasback and Lesser Scaup.

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 SRRWD understands that when critical habitats are lost due to land use changes and other factors, restoring the habitat is imperative to the protection of species and their ecological processes. Important species are disappearing at an alarming rate and the SRRWD has the opportunity to protect specific targeted habitats and the species that call it home.

Using the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources tool for species in greatest conservation need by habitat, the SRRWD has identified species of importance for the oak savanna landscape. Those species include the Marsh Wren and Common Moorhen for birds, mussels such as Sheepnose and Round Pigtoe, and amphibians including the Blanding's turtle.

One of the fastest declining populations in Minnesota has been the loss of Minnesota's native mussels. The freshwater mussel is threatened by a multitude of sources including dams and stream channelization, wetland drainage, bank erosion, invasive mussels and water pollution. The District is focused on improving habitat and water quality conditions, as well as providing habitat with in-water features that will improve the quality of habitat for threatened Round Pigtoe, and endangered Sheepnose mussels.

The Common Moorhen is listed as special concern in the Oak Savanna habitat and can be attributed to the loss of well-vegetated ponds and wetlands. With projects proposed by Phase IX, wetland creation and vegetation enhancement of 350 acres can provide restored habitat for both the Common Moorhen and Marsh Wren. Blanding's turtles are listed as being a threatened species and creating streambank restorations that include habitats such as turtle hibernaculum and restoring wetland with marshy areas will provide habitat for this threatened species.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

The SRRWD utilizes precision conservation modeling with monitoring to identify Property Management Zones (PMZs) on a sub-watershed basis. The PMZs are prioritized, evaluated conservation measures and project locations chosen to mitigate specific areas contributing to degradation of habitat which reduces populations of aquatic vegetation, fish, waterfowl and wildlife within the lake-

shed.

Historically the Shell Rock River Watershed is a shallow lake system with diverse populations of fish, waterfowl and wildlife. With degraded habitat becoming a concern, and more areas listed as below biodiversity significance in the MN County Biological Survey (MCBS) for Freeborn County, the District has ongoing efforts with identifying key PMZs to implement projects that expand habitat corridors and protects areas identified by the MCBS.

One of the land acquisitions is contained within areas identified on the MCBS, permanently projecting the valued significance of the land. The 300 acre wetland vegetation restoration borders significant areas. Projects such as these are important to expanding corridors and reaching the targeted 9 square mile parcels. Implementing site specific habitat restorations projects, in line with areas identified in the MCBS, are progressively improving populations of native fish, waterfowl and wildlife habitat to once again create a wildlife mecca.

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

- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Which other plans are addressed in this program:

- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program:

Prairie:

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

Relationship to other funds:

- Clean Water Fund

Describe the relationship of the funds:

In 2016, the SRRWD received \$825,000 in BWSR Targeted Watershed Funding (Clean Water Fund) that is being used to complete a streambank restoration and two wetland restoration projects. Although the intent for the projects is to increase water quality, those projects have secondary benefits that align with LSOHC priorities for improved habitat.

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

The Habitat Restoration Program, Phase IX, builds and expands upon previous LSOHC funding including the Wedge Creek, White Lake and Fountain Lake Fish Barriers (2009-10); Shell Rock River Headwaters Project (2011-12); Albert Lea Lake Dam and Fish Barrier (2013-14); Goose Creek Fish Barrier (CPL Grant) (2013-14); Shell Rock River Headwaters Restoration, Phase II (CPL Grant) (2014-15); Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program, Phase IV (2015-16); the Habitat Restoration Program, Phase V (2016-17); the Habitat Restoration Program, Phase VI (2017-18) and the Habitat Restoration Program, Phase VII (2018-19).

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:

Not applicable to the SRRWD at this time.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2012	Local Tax Levy	\$180,000
2013	Local Tax Levy	\$230,000
2014	Local Tax Levy	\$804,750
2015	Local Tax Levy	\$200,000
2016	Local Tax Levy	\$750,000
2017	Local Tax Levy	\$500,000
2018	Local Tax Levy	\$400,000

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

The Shell Rock River Watershed District is authorized by Minnesota state statute 103D and operates under a series of 10 year Water Management Plans that are approved by the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR). The District recently updated its second generation waterplan and is entering the One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) Comprehensive Management Plan process. This second generation plan and 1W1P includes a top to bottom comprehensive list detailing natural resource restoration, management, enhancement and protection strategies.

The SRRWD relies on multiple funding sources including a citizen-driven local option sales tax, local levy, and multiple public and private funding sources including previously LSOHC phased project to assist in the District's restoration efforts. The District has an aggressive monitoring protocol that generates yearly data used for extensive reporting. The habitat efforts that accrue from the Phase IX Restoration Program will be easily incorporated into this existing results-driven reporting framework. This reporting can be used to generate public interest and education of a watershed based restoration approach. The District has commitment and funding sources necessary to maintain existing and future natural resource enhancement projects.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2023	Sales Tax and LSOHC	Construction and Erosion Inspections	Erosion Control and Maintenance Inspections and Implementations	Maintenance Inspections and Implementations
2024	Sales Tax and LSOHC	Construction and Erosion Control Inspections	Erosion Control and Maintenance Inspections and Implementations	Maintenance Inspections and Implementations
2025	Sales Tax	Maintenance Inspections and Implementations		

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 county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j) - **Yes**

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

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

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

All projects will be open to public fishing. One of the projects will be closed to firearm use due to being within city limits.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA

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

In the Phase IX Habitat Restoration Program there are two proposed acquisitions.

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:

There is currently a county road that transects the Glenville property. This will not be included with the acquisition and the property limits will be the road right of way.

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

The road will still be in use by the general public, it will just not be included in the acquisition.

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

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation? - **Yes**

Yes, one of the parcels will be restored with this appropriation. The other parcel will be for permanent protection surrounding a river.

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

Is the activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 - **Yes (WMA, Public Waters)**

Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Finalize project planning, design, permitting work and acquisitions	December 2020
Begin projects during the 2020 construction season following completion of design, permits, and contracting	2021 Construction Season to 2023
Complete all restoration and habitat improvements projects and finalize acquisitions	End of 2023 Construction Season
Vegetation enhancement on restoration projects	June 2023
Maintenance and monitoring of all restoration and habitat improvement projects.	Ongoing

Date of Final Report Submission: 6/30/2025

Federal Funding:

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

Outcomes:

Programs in prairie region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species will be measured by the increase of use days for migrating waterfowl and improved habitat acres for unique species. The protected, restored and enhanced shallow lakes, wetlands, and streambanks will provide habitat to wildlife and support healthy natural resource conditions for long term benefits. The projects will offer an oasis for migratory waterfowl by re-established and connecting MCBS corridors, and flyway habitats. Improved and permanently protected areas will provide a lasting habitat for Minnesota's unique species and provide improved access to public natural resources.

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

As a result of the reduced allocation, three projects will not be completed. Of the remaining five key projects, the dollars allocated to the enhancement efforts were reduced to match the LSOHC appropriation and in kind funding dollars.

Total Amount of Request: \$ 2237000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$45,000	\$25,000	Local Option Sales Tax, Local Option Sales Tax	\$70,000
Contracts	\$774,500	\$0		\$774,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$891,500	\$0		\$891,500
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$277,800	\$75,000	Local Option Sales Tax	\$352,800
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$10,000	\$0		\$10,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$238,200	\$0		\$238,200
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$2,237,000	\$100,000		\$2,337,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Manager	0.43	1.00	\$25,000	\$10,000	Local Option Sales Tax	\$35,000
Program Assistant	0.43	1.00	\$20,000	\$15,000	Local Option Sales Tax	\$35,000
Total	0.86	2.00	\$45,000	\$25,000		\$70,000

Amount of Request: \$2,237,000

Amount of Leverage: \$100,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 4.47%

DSS + Personnel: \$45,000

As a % of the total request: 2.01%

What is included in the contacts line?

All the work in the contract line is centered on enhancement costs, minus fifteen percent professional services and twenty percent supplies.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The SRRWD is an agency that has a secured local option sales tax in place that will be used to provide the leveraged funds. The leveraged funds are allocated for professional services and staff.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	50	0	0	0	50
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	112	0	0	21	133
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	320	320
Total	162	0	0	341	503

Table 2. Total Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$380,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$380,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$870,400	\$0	\$0	\$145,100	\$1,015,500
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$841,500	\$841,500
Total	\$1,250,400	\$0	\$0	\$986,600	\$2,237,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	50	0	50
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	133	0	133
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	320	0	320
Total	0	0	0	503	0	503

Table 4. Total Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$380,000	\$0	\$380,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,015,500	\$0	\$1,015,500
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$841,500	\$0	\$841,500
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,237,000	\$0	\$2,237,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$7600	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$7771	\$0	\$0	\$6910
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2630

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7600	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7635	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2630	\$0

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

20500 Feet

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

Freeborn

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Bancroft Stream Enhancement	10 321229	20	\$349,000	No
Bancroft Wetland Restoration	10 321221	50	\$365,000	No
Panicum Prairie Enhancement	10 121235	300	\$477,500	No

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Freeborn

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Bancroft Property	10 321221	112	\$857,900	No	No	No
SRR Glenville Property	10 120206	21	\$132,600	No	No	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

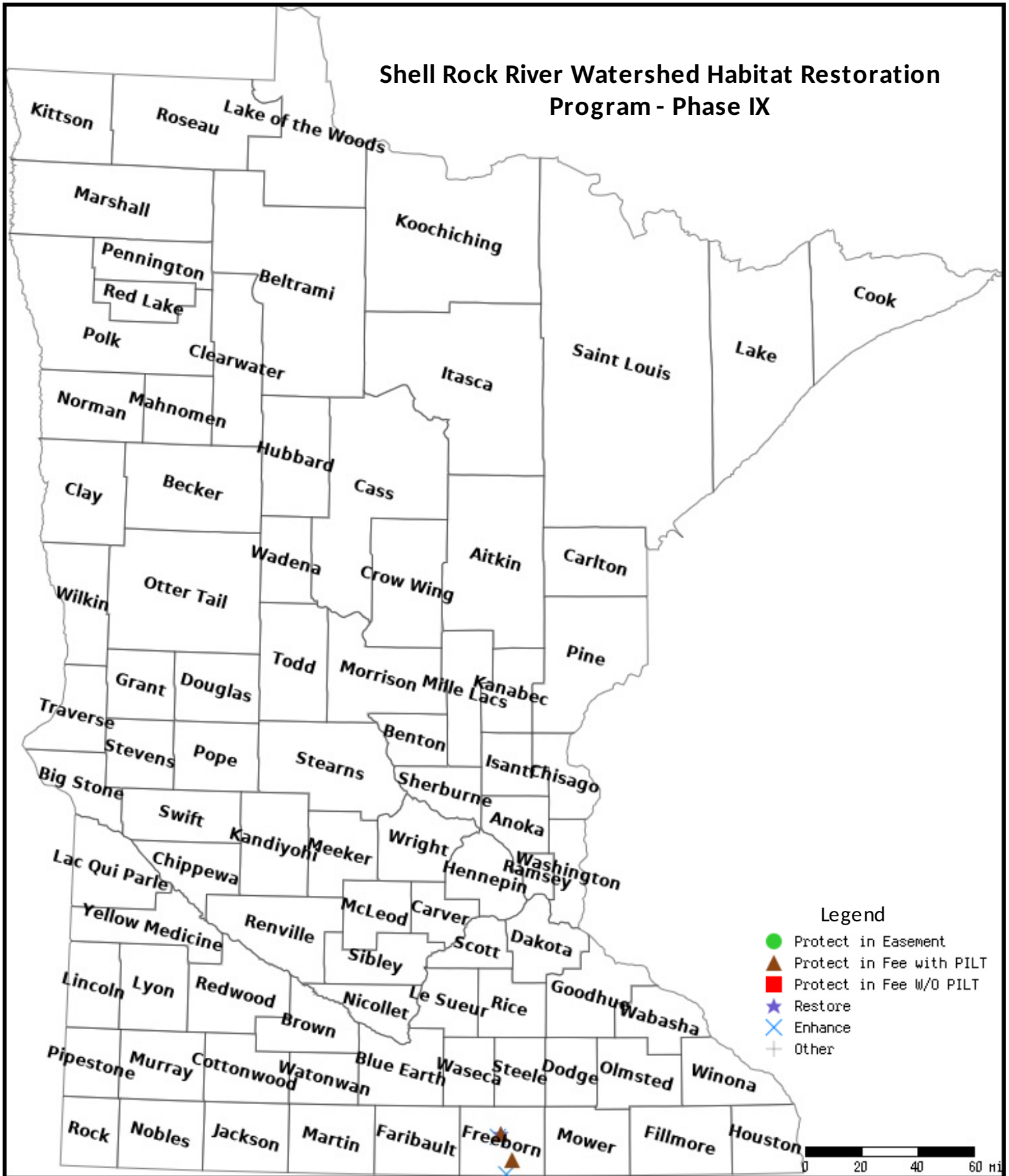
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program - Phase IX



Data Generated From Parcel List