

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2020 Accomplishment Plan



Date: December 12, 2019

Program or Project Title: DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition, Phase XII

Funds Recommended: \$ 2,410,000

Manager's Name: Jay Johnson

Organization: MN Dept. of Natural Resources

Address: 500 Lafayette Road

City: St. Paul, MN 55155

Office Number: 651-259-5248

Email: jay.johnson@state.mn.us

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

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: Clay, Kandiyohi, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Norman, Pipestone, Stearns, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie
- Wetlands

Abstract:

Acquire approximately 375 acres of high priority habitat for designation as Wildlife Management Area or Scientific and Natural Area in the LSOHC Prairie Planning Section emphasizing Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and soon to be finalized Conservation That Works, 3.0 WMA and AMA Acquisition & Management Strategic Plan guidance, and coordination with partners. All lands will be open for public hunting and fishing (a limited number of SNA's are proposed for limited hunting for instance archery only or hunting but no trapping).

Design and scope of work:

Approximately 375 acres of wildlife habitat will be protected through fee title acquisition and development as Wildlife Management Areas or Scientific & Natural Areas. While no match is indicated in this proposal, Outdoor Heritage appropriations to DNR for WMA and SNA acquisitions have historically been enhanced through donations, Reinvest in Minnesota Critical Habitat Match, and Surcharge (a \$6.50 surcharge on small game license sales to be used in part for land acquisition).

Wildlife Management Areas. WMAs protect lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and develop and manage these lands and waters for public hunting, fishing and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses such as wildlife watching and hiking. While highly successful, the current WMA system does not meet all present and future needs for wildlife habitat, wildlife population management, hunter access, and wildlife related recreation. This is notably true in the LSOHC Prairie Planning Section where public ownership in many counties is 2 percent or less. DNR Section of Wildlife uses a GIS-based tool to identify the highest priority tracts for potential WMA acquisitions. This quantitative approach scores and ranks acquisition proposals based on a set of weighted criteria and creates a standardized method for evaluating proposed acquisitions on a statewide level.

Criteria and weights are periodically reviewed and adapted to changing priorities. This ensures funds that are used to acquire lands align with DNR strategic priorities and support the 2002 Citizens' Committee report and soon to be finalized Conservation That Works, 3.0 WMA and AMA Acquisition & Management Strategic Plan for WMA acquisition.

Potential acquisition opportunities from willing sellers are coordinated with stakeholders and partners to eliminate duplication and identify concerns and support. Coordinating with partners has been successful to ensure we are working cooperatively and on priority parcels.

Scientific & Natural Areas. The SNA Program will increase public hunting and fishing opportunities while protecting sites with outstanding natural values. Protection is targeted at high priority areas identified in the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan with emphasis on prairie core areas identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. A quantitative system scores and ranks acquisition proposals based on a weighted set of six criteria. Priority is given to sites of high and outstanding biodiversity significance by the Minnesota Biological Survey, high quality native plant communities and habitat for endangered and threatened species. Larger parcels which adjoin other conservation lands, improve habitat management, are under imminent threat and are partially donated are also rated highly.

Properties acquired through this appropriation require County Board of Commissioners' written approval in the county of acquisition, will be designated as WMA or SNA through a Commissioner's Designation Order, brought up to minimum DNR standards, and listed on the DNR website. Basic site improvements will include boundary and LSOHC acknowledgement signs and may include any necessary site cleanup and parcel initial development.

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:

Potential acquisitions for WMAs and SNAs are objectively scored for their wildlife habitat value. The DNR uses weighted criteria and prioritizes high scoring parcels for acquisition. For example, candidates for WMAs score higher with a prairie grouse lek, in a pheasant habitat complex, presence of shallow lakes, and occurrence of deer wintering areas; candidates for WMAs and SNAs score higher which contain threatened, endangered, and other rare species and species of greatest conservation need and which are high quality native plant communities which support wildlife. As a focus on native prairie protection, parcels with native prairie are prioritized.

Native plant communities with exceptional value as wildlife habitat to be protected through this proposal include Southern dry prairie, dry sand-gravel prairie, mesic prairie, dry hill prairie, northern wet prairie, mesic brush prairie, wet seepage prairie, Southern drymesic oak hickory woodland, calcareous Fen.

The following species of greatest conservation need and rare species have documented occurrences on or near parcels targeted in WMA and SNA acquisition through this appropriation: mammals – white-tailed jackrabbit, prairie vole, harvest mouse, northern grasshopper mouse, and western harvest mouse; birds – greater prairie chicken, chestnut-collared longspur (endangered), upland sandpiper, American bittern, marbled godwit, Nelson's sparrow, Henslow's sparrow, black-throated blue warbler, red-shouldered hawk, Loggerhead shrike; reptiles/amphibians: wood turtle (threatened) and mudpuppy; Topeka shiner; invertebrates – regal fritillary, Dakota skipper, Iowa Skipper, Ottoo Skipper, Pawnee Skipper, Poweshiek skipper, leadplant flowermoth, phlox moth, and plants – small white lady's-slipper and Western prairie fringed orchid.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

The DNR uses GIS-based scoring systems to objectively rank potential acquisitions and develop statewide priority lists. These systems incorporate scientific data giving priority to locations within: 1) an important habitat corridor or complex (such as identified by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, Pheasant Action Plan, SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan, and the new Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan), 2) native plant communities and sites of outstanding and high biodiversity significance mapped by Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS), and 3) parcels that adjoin existing units or other conservation lands. In addition, scoring takes into account habitat containing endangered, threatened, and other rare species, watershed/wetland qualities as well as habitat management considerations and suitability for public access, hunting and fishing.

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation

Which other plans are addressed in this program:

- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation 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:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund

Describe the relationship of the funds:

During some years, the DNR also receives Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund (ENRTF) appropriations for SNA acquisition. Usually, different projects are funded with each type of fund with priority given to expending the oldest appropriations first on eligible parcels. However, acquisition of some large parcels are made possible by using a combination of funds (such as OHF and ENRTF).

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

Historically, Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations to DNR for WMA and SNA acquisitions have been matched by land owner donations of value, Reinvest in Minnesota Critical Habitat Match, and Surcharge (a \$6.50 surcharge on small game license sales to be used in part for land acquisition). The amount of match has varied with each appropriation. The historic average for match has been 16%. While not being listed in this proposal, we anticipate this trend will continue and OHF dollars will be matched by the other funding sources listed above.

Some of the landowners that sell to the State do so out of a conservation ethic and are willing to donate value. In prioritizing parcels that have similar habitat value, a landowner willing to donate value will be the priority.

Our practice is to inform all landowners of the appraised value of their respective property. It is up to them if they want to donate a portion of the value.

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 request is an acceleration of the DNR WMA and SNA acquisition program work to a level not attainable but for the appropriation.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2010	SNA ENRTF	471,400
2011	SNA ENRTF	679,600
2011	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	824,259
2011	WMA Surcharge	1,830,000
2012	SNA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	720,000
2012	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	864,750
2013	WMA Surcharge	1,500,000
2014	SNA ENRTF	1,289,800
2014	WMA Bonding Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	2,000,000
2014	WMA Surcharge	1,860,000
2015	SNA ENRTF	2,348,300
2015	WMA ENRTF	400,000
2015	WMA Surcharge	1,615,000
2016	SNA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	400,000
2016	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	2,548,300
2016	WMA Surcharge	1,561,913
2018	WMA Surcharge	750,000
2017	SNA ENRTF	10,400
2017	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	591,400
2017	WMA Surcharge	750,000
2018	SNA ENRTF	1,500,000
2018	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	1,740,800
2009	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	3,072,138
2009	SNA ENRTF	1,026,000
2010	WMA Bonding	500,000
2010	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	2,308,358

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

According to WMA/AMA Directive on development standards, WMAs are developed to at least minimum standards within two years of acquisition for facility and habitat development that will provide basic asset preservation, public access and safety, environmental and cultural resource protection and soil and water resource conservation. Initial development efforts can extend 2-3 years beyond the “minimum standard” time table to establish high quality native plant communities. All new WMA acquisitions require a WMA Initial Development Plan (IDP) be completed by the Area Wildlife Supervisor responsible for land management and approved by the Region. SNAs have similar standards with site specific work being directed by each site’s Adaptive Management Plan. As part of the state outdoor recreation system, ongoing maintenance will be accomplished through routine management activities accomplished by our network of DNR offices. Periodic enhancements will be accomplished by staff, CCM crews, temporary project staffing, through vendor contract or by volunteers if appropriate.

Long-term management costs (e.g., invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to the Game and Fish Fund, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund, federal grants, and small game surcharge, as appropriate.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2022	Outdoor Heritage, ML 2020	Boundary survey, parking area development, boundary signs and other sign posting	Other initial site development	
2024	Outdoor Heritage, ML 2020	Initial habitat development, native vegetation established, wetlands restored (as needed)		
2025 and beyond	Game and Fish Fund, Surcharge, other	Ongoing management to DNR standards for WMA and SNA units		

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 - **Yes**

Explain

The primary purposes of WMAs are to develop and manage for the production of wildlife and for compatible outdoor recreation. To fulfill those goals, the DNR may use limited farming specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife.

Lands proposed to be acquired as WMAs may include initial development plans to utilize farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is a standard practice across the Midwest to prepare the seedbed for native seed planting. On a small percentage of WMAs (less than 2.5%), DNR uses farming to provide a winter food source for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture-dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources.

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 - **No**

Some lands proposed for acquisition may contain a portion of protected land. In these cases, we will appraise protected acres separately and seek to have that value donated or pay for them using non- OHF funds.

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

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

All WMA lands to be acquired will be open for hunting and fishing with no variations from State of Minnesota regulations.

All SNAs acquired with this funding would be open to the most appropriate types of hunting for the particular parcels. Priority will be given to acquiring lands to be open to all hunting, trapping and fishing.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA, SNA

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

4-8

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**

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

We will use funds from this appropriation to complete initial habitat development on acquired parcels. The initial habitat development needs will vary with each parcel but in the case of WMA's could include restoration or enhancement of upland grassland habitat and restoration and enhancement of wetlands.

Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Acquire in fee 375 acres for designation as Wildlife Management Areas or Scientific and Natural Areas	6/30/2023
Develop acquired lands to minimum WMA/SNA standards including signage, parking areas, and native vegetation planting if necessary	6/30/2025

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 prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *Acres of prairie acquired. Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*

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

We will scale our Accomplishment Plan activity, outputs, and budget in proportion to the reduction in funding. We will acquire fewer acres than originally proposed, and will focus on the highest priority parcels.

Total Amount of Request: \$ 2410000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$105,000	\$0		\$105,000
Contracts	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,875,000	\$0		\$1,875,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$13,700	\$0		\$13,700
Professional Services	\$210,000	\$0		\$210,000
Direct Support Services	\$16,300	\$0		\$16,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$140,000	\$0		\$140,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$2,410,000	\$0		\$2,410,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
WMA Acquisition Coordinator	0.25	3.00	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
SNA Acquisition Coordinator	0.08	3.00	\$22,500	\$0		\$22,500
Regional SNA Specialist	0.11	3.00	\$22,500	\$0		\$22,500
Total	0.44	9.00	\$105,000	\$0		\$105,000

Amount of Request: \$2,410,000

Amount of Leverage: \$0

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.00%

DSS + Personnel: \$121,300

As a % of the total request: 5.03%

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

The MN DNR uses a standardized DSS calculator that has been developed by our Office of Management and Budget Services.

What is included in the contacts line?

Expenditures for contracted services related to the initial development and restoration of parcels acquired with this appropriation. For instance it could include (but not be limited to) activities/expenditures for; restoring existing bare ground to native vegetation, wetland restoration, access development, site clean-up, etc.

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:

Approximately 90% is fleet charges for equipment such as tractors, mowers, etc needed for initial site development of acquired parcels.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

While no match/leverage is indicated in this proposal, OHF appropriations to DNR for WMA/SNA acquisitions have been matched by donations, Reinvest in Minnesota Critical Habitat Match, and Surcharge (a \$6.50 surcharge on small game license sales).

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	38	337	0	0	375
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	0	0
Total	38	337	0	0	375

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	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	0

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	\$242,500	\$2,167,500	\$0	\$0	\$2,410,000
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	\$0	\$0
Total	\$242,500	\$2,167,500	\$0	\$0	\$2,410,000

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	375	0	375
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	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	375	0	375

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	\$2,410,000	\$0	\$2,410,000
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	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,410,000	\$0	\$2,410,000

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	\$6382	\$6432	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$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	\$6427	\$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	\$0	\$0

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

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

Clay

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Flowing Prairie WMA Tr9	14146223	159	\$500,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Regal Meadows Tr3	12233206	62	\$225,000	No	Full	Not Applicable
Ringo-Nest WMA tr4B	12134231	36	\$61,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Lincoln

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Hopeful WMA Tr1	10944212	260	\$1,300,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Clifton WMA tr5a	11140207	75	\$450,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Martin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Perch Creek tr19	10530231	160	\$650,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Chanarambie Creek SNA	10543202	100	\$700,000	No	Full	Full
Talcot Lake WMA tr 31	10539231	80	\$625,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Faith WMA Tr7	14443226	160	\$350,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Pipestone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Prairie Coteau SNA Addition	10844228	200	\$1,400,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Stearns

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Edward Raymond Mohs WMA Tr5	12335209	40	\$127,400	No	Full	Not Applicable

Watonwan

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
W.R. Taylor WMA tr4	10630219	71	\$490,000	No	Full	Not Applicable

Yellow Medicine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Mound Spring Prairie SNA Addition	11546218	160	\$800,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

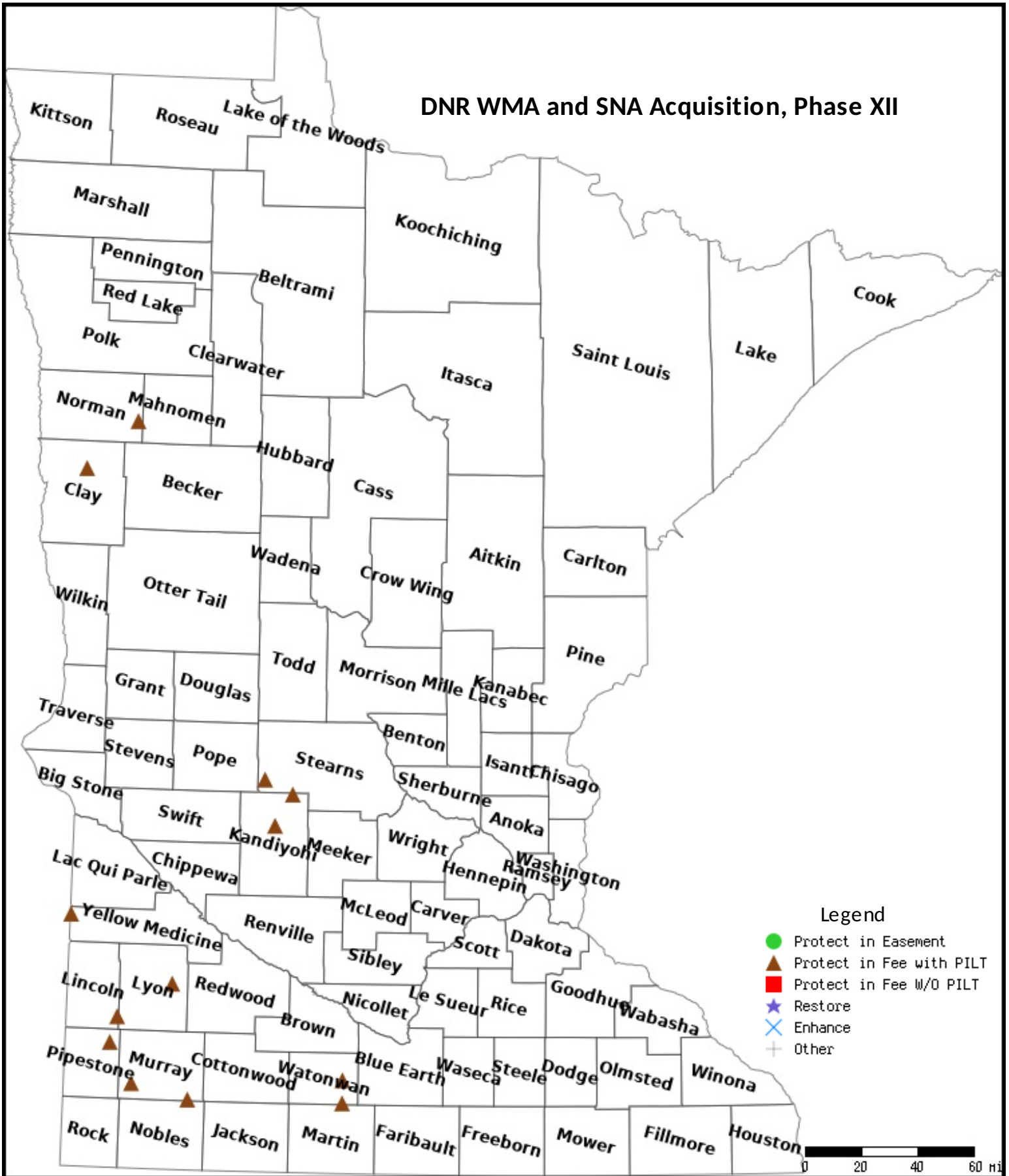
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition, Phase XII



Data Generated From Parcel List