

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Fiscal Year 2021 / ML 2020 Request for Funding



**Date:** May 31, 2019

**Program or Project Title:** Young Forest Conservation Phase III

**Funds Requested:** \$2,417,300

**Manager's Name:** Peter Dieser

**Title:** Minnesota Public Lands Coordinator

**Organization:** American Bird Conservancy

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**County Locations:** Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Carlton, Cass, Crow Wing, Itasca, and St. Louis.

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

- Northern Forest
- Forest / Prairie Transition

### Activity types:

- Enhance

### Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest

## Abstract:

Young Forest Conservation Phase III will continue American Bird Conservancy's successful, ongoing efforts to maintain, restore, and enhance Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse breeding habitat on publicly protected lands in Minnesota. This work also benefits a suite of associated deciduous forest habitat species within a diverse, contiguous landscape-level forest matrix. Through Phases I and II, ABC completed 5,535 acres of high-quality early successional habitat projects. Phase III will continue habitat treatments on an additional 6,000+ acres over a five-year period.

## Design and scope of work:

In Young Forest Conservation Phases I and II (2013-present), American Bird Conservancy (ABC) completed 5,535 acres of habitat projects to create breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA), American Woodcock (AMWO), Ruffed Grouse, and associated young forest species, exceeding project goals. To achieve this result, ABC partnered with 11 Minnesota DNR Offices, seven Minnesota Counties, two USFWS National Wildlife Refuges, Chippewa National Forest, and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa. In Phase III, ABC will continue to use science-based best management practices to build upon this success and implement 6,000+ acres of habitat projects over the next five years.

Minnesota is a key state in an international initiative to conserve AMWO and GWWA, Minnesota species of greatest conservation need, across their full life-cycle ranges. ABC also collaborates with international partners in Central and South America to conserve GWWA wintering habitat, while implementing a regional program to restore and enhance breeding habitat throughout the Great Lakes. ABC's Minnesota Private Lands Program implemented with funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service has completed similar work with private landowners, resulting in 5,760 acres in Minnesota since 2013.

In Phase III, habitat project work will be completed on sites adjacent to deciduous forest stands to accommodate the diverse habitat needs of target species. Mechanical operations concentrate on emulating natural disturbance by hiring local contractors to cut dense alder, willow, and mixed brushland species from 1-5" diameter on non-commercial forest stands to create nesting, brood rearing, and

browsing habitat. Mature trees and patchy, woody structure are retained during project operations. This retention provides site-level structural diversity to maintain song perches for male GWWAs to claim territory and attract females, while providing ground nesting and forage for associated young forest species. A limited number of complimentary planting projects will be implemented to create similar habitat and enhance forest continuity on some sites. All projects are completed using science-based GWWA and AMWO best management practices and are conducted within consensus focal regions.

ABC provides financial, technical, and project management assistance to public and tribal agency partners for all project phases. Collaborative assistance of cooperative agencies is encouraged but not required for partnership. Due to ABC's established partner network and technical experience restoring and enhancing early successional habitat, we are able to work across jurisdictional boundaries and address landscape-level priorities while meeting site-level goals. We propose to continue working with established public and tribal agency partners and will continue cultivating new partners in Phase III.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology recently finished a program to monitor pre- and post-treatment avian occupancy on Phase I and Phase II project sites. From 2015-2018, monitors evaluated project point locations within managed sites and observed a positive effect of treatment on GWWA and AMWO occupancy, resulting in 93% and 88.5%, respectively, on shrubland data points of managed sites in Minnesota by year three. The results showcase a very positive management response from focal species. GWWA density nearly doubled and AMWO density increased by approximately 45%.

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

- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- LU10 Support and expand sustainable practices on working forested lands

### **Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:**

- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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

MNWAP Goal #1: "Ensure long-term health and viability of Minnesota's wildlife, with a focus on species that are rare, declining, or vulnerable to decline."

Conservation Actions:

- Improve conditions of disturbance-dependent habitats through appropriate reintroduction or mimicking of natural disturbance
- Develop and promote implementation of BMPs for SGCN and their habitats (GWWA specifically mentioned priority species)

MFRC North Central Landscape Plan:

- Principle #3: Use best available science to inform decision making
- Principle #4: Work collaboratively to sustainably manage forest resources across the landscape
- Goal #1, Objective 3: Management activities should protect unique, rare, or sensitive species and ecological communities from development or degradation
- Goal #1, Objective 4: Manage for a full spectrum of wildlife species based on respective ecosystem carrying capacity and natural range of variation

### **Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:**

#### **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:**

- Restore and enhance habitat on existing protected properties, with preference to habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened species identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey

### **Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:**

Though GWWA, AMWO, and Ruffed Grouse require conservation support to maintain robust populations in Minnesota, ABC has been highly successful in establishing a legacy of education, outreach, and adaptive management for these species that will continue for years to come.

In the past decade, ABC has led a full life-cycle conservation initiative to provide the latest habitat research and BMPs to the conservation community. Through this process, ABC has increased awareness of the importance of landscape-level planning to maintain a dynamic mosaic of forest cover types and age classes, while providing project assistance implementing thousands of acres of habitat projects throughout the Great Lakes.

Since 2013, ABC has also worked with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to complete a pre- and post-treatment habitat monitoring program to further refine BMPs to benefit GWWA, AMWO and related species.

The growth of this initiative into a larger legacy benefitting wildlife throughout Minnesota is reflected in ABC's role as a founding member of the Minnesota Forest Habitat Collaborative, which brings together a community of more than 20 agency and NGO partners to identify, promote, and deliver collaborative conservation, outreach, and research programs that assist natural resource managers to maintain, enhance, and restore Minnesota's forest habitat to benefit resident and migratory wildlife species.

The success of ABC's Public Lands Program has resulted in a robust and still expanding number of partners across county, state, federal and tribal agencies and showcases an outreach, management, and educational success story for Minnesota residents and stakeholders.

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

The work in this project advances the scientifically-established goals set forth in the GWWA Status Review and Conservation Plan and the AMWO Conservation Plan. All work is completed within focal areas identified in these plans and using associated, science-based best management practices.

The Golden-winged Warbler Status Review and Conservation Plan, Regional Best Management Practices, and focal areas were developed and reviewed under the guidance of the Golden-winged Warbler Working Group, a consortium of more than 140 public agency and NGO biologists and natural resource managers engaged in research and conservation of this species, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Cornell Lab of Ornithology, ABC, and the Ruffed Grouse Society.

Project work will be further informed by publications by the Northern Forest Woodcock Initiative, a collaboration of 34 wildlife conservation entities, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, USFWS, NFWF, and Wildlife Management Institute who worked collaboratively to design the American Woodcock Best Management Practices and Conservation Plan.

ABC has further refined Minnesota focal areas through the use of a combination of GIS data layers to emphasize a landscape level focus on locating project sites within contiguous deciduous forest and brushland complexes on public lands in Minnesota. We also utilize a species occupancy model developed by the Natural Resources Research Institute, monitoring data collected by agency partners and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas, and MN DNR's Natural Heritage Information System when determining priority habitat areas. This additional work is reflected in the ABC Minnesota North Woods BirdScape, which is a target investment area for conservation identified by ABC based on its importance to focal species and potential for landscape-scale impact. By relying on established science, ABC ensures that our work leverages existing complexes and produces habitat with the scope and distribution required to meet landscape goals that provide meaningful impact for target species.

### **How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species:**

The Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA) and American Woodcock (AMWO) breed in young forest and shrubland habitats within diverse, contiguous, deciduous forest landscapes of central and eastern North America. Minnesota is a key state for the conservation for these species and holds the largest remaining breeding population of GWWA of any U.S. state or Canadian province and the second largest population of AMWO.

GWWA and AMWO are identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Minnesota State Wildlife Action Plan. Rangewide habitat loss and degradation due to land use change and forest fragmentation has led to GWWA population declines of approximately 68% over the past 50 years. As a result, it has been considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act, which ABC and its partners are working to prevent.

Additionally, throughout its range, AMWO populations steadily declined over the last quarter century at a rate of 1-2% per year. AMWO is also on the 2016 North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) State of the Birds Watch List, which lists species most in danger of extinction without significant conservation action.

As identified in the GWWA Status Review and Conservation Plan and the AMWO Conservation Plan and associated best management practices (BMPs), at least 38 shrubland and young forest bird species of conservation concern are frequently or potentially associated

with GWWA and AMWO habitat, and thus will likely benefit from habitat operations associated with this proposal.

Where present on the landscape and given an appropriate forest matrix that fulfills additional habitat requirements, projects associated with this proposal will also provide habitat benefits for the following Minnesota Species of Greatest Conservation Need:

- Veery
- Black-billed Cuckoo
- White-throated Sparrow
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Sedge Wren
- Elk
- Moose
- Canada Lynx
- Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Willow Flycatcher
- Least Flycatcher
- Whip-poor-will
- Brown Thrasher

Additional Non-SGCN of note that also benefit from this work include:

- Ruffed Grouse
- Eastern Towhee
- Indigo Bunting
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- White-tailed Deer
- Snowshoe Hare
- Yellow Warbler

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

Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA)

Suggested by USFWS as representative of shrubland systems in the Upper Midwest, *Vermivora chrysoptera* is recognized as a Minnesota SGCN due to Minnesota's large percentage of the global breeding population. Associated with diverse shrublands and regenerating deciduous forests, research indicates GWWA require a matrix of shrubby wetlands and uplands, regenerating forests, and mature forests. The Minnesota GWWA range covers much of the LSOHC Northern Forest planning section. GWWA average 4 pairs per 10 hectares (6 pairs per 40 acres).

American Woodcock

*Scolopax minor* is a Minnesota SGCN that requires small clearings for courtship, dense young forest thickets for foraging, and young forests for nesting and brood rearing. Feeding/nesting areas are regenerating brushland or hardwood cuts between 3 and 15 years of age. Woodcock require young diverse woodland to provide ample cover and food resources. Areas as small as one acre may be used, although 5+ acre units are more ideal for nesting success.

White-tailed deer

*Odocoileus virginianus* use a variety of forested habitats and suggested as potential ecological indicators for forest systems. In 33 deer permit areas, covering most of the LSOHC Northern Forest section, the six-year average (2010-2015) for pre-fawn deer densities across all deer permit areas is 13 per square mile, or 0.02 per acre of forest habitat (roughly 1 per 50 acres). On average, densities within the Forest/Prairie Transition, Metropolitan Area, and Southeast Forest LSOHC planning sections are higher than in the Northern Forest.

## Outcomes:

### Programs in the northern forest region:

- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ABC, in partnership with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, recently finished a program to monitor pre- and post-treatment avian occupancy on Phase I and Phase II public lands project sites. From 2015-2018, monitors evaluated project point locations within managed sites in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Monitors observed a positive effect of treatment on GWWA and AMWO occupancy, resulting in 93% and 88.5%, respectively, on shrubland data points of managed sites in Minnesota by year three. GWWA density nearly doubled and AMWO density increased by approximately 45%. (Results are presently being peer-reviewed for publication.)

### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation

need A very small number of project acres fall within the Forest-Prairie Transition Region. In Phases I & II, there were project sites that fell directly on the boundary of the Forest-Prairie Transition/Northern Forest resulting in < 2% of the final acreage falling within the Forest-Prairie Transition region. This region is included to avoid revising this input to accommodate online reporting if a similar circumstance occurs in Phase III. It is likely that less than the 100 acres included in this proposal will ultimately fall in this region. Outcomes for this region are evaluated as described for the Northern Forest Region.

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

ABC has a mission to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. To realize this mission, we have built an organizational structure that continuously supports species of priority concern without relying exclusively on any single funding source. As such, this project is one aspect of a collaborative full life-cycle conservation initiative for GWWA and associated early successional habitat species. Due to the scope of this initiative, numerous state, federal, and private funding sources will continue to be used to maintain quality habitat in breeding, migratory, and wintering ranges now and in the future. Though the capacity to complete this vital work would be diminished if future MN OHF funding was not available, ABC would continue to seek alternate funding to maintain this program. Further, by continuing to engage a broad network of partners while promoting education and outreach of priority species BMPs, ABC's public and private lands work to promote young forest habitat has led directly to a greater awareness within the natural resources community of how to best utilize the most recent research and new funding sources to implement quality habitat treatments to benefit these focal species.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2019	Private Donations and Public Funding (MN OHF, RCPP, NFWF)	Complete 2,000+ Acres of Habitat Treatments on Public and Private Lands	Continue Outreach and Education Programs for Priority Species	
2020-2025	Private Donations and Public Funding (MN OHF, RCPP)	Complete 10,000+ Acres of Habitat Treatments on Public and Private Lands	Continue to Refine BMPs with Current Research and Monitoring	Continue to Expand Network of Partner Agencies and Organizations
2026-2030	Private Donations and Public Funding (TBD)	Continue Public and Private Lands Programs	Continue Outreach and Education Programs for Priority Species	Continue to Monitor and Evaluate Focal Species Response to Young Forest Conservation Program

### What is the degree of timing/opportunistic urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible:

The North American Breeding Bird Survey estimates a 68% GWWA population decline between 1966 and 2014. Though Minnesota contains only approximately 10% of the breeding range, 45% of the remaining population breeds here each year. GWWA is listed as a Partners in Flight Red Watch List Species in the 2016 Landbird Conservation Plan and has been considered for federal ESA listing.

Throughout its range, AMWO populations steadily declined 1-2% annually over the last quarter century. Woodcock is on the 2016 NABCI State of the Birds Watch List. Minnesota is home to the second-largest AMWO breeding population in the country.

County, state, federal, and tribal agency partners throughout Minnesota continue to express their desire to maintain their collaborative partnership with ABC in Phase III to meet the habitat needs for these and related focal species. The MN OHF is critical to maintaining the momentum of this successful collaborative program.

### Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

Leveraged funds include \$370,000 of in-kind support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). In Phase III, Tamarac NWR is committed to providing office space, technical assistance, and use of a roller drum and other equipment to ABC staff for work completed in Phase III. They have also committed to provide limited leverage through USFWS complementary project work on habitat enhancement and restoration efforts on the Refuge and within the Wetland Management District.

ABC also employs two foresters to design and implement early successional habitat projects on private lands in Minnesota through grant funding provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partners Program (RCPP). ABC's existing agreement has provided \$5 million to this effort in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota since 2014 and will continue through FY2021. ABC is presently negotiating Phase II RCPP funding from NRCS to extend this program for an additional five years. Though this funding will not be in hand as this grant is evaluated, at a minimum, ABC is committed to retaining these MN private lands foresters through FY2023. ABC will provide \$38,000 in NRCS-RCPP funds already secured for these two foresters from July 2020 through April 2021,

with another \$450,000 through funds anticipated, but not yet secured, during the remainder of Phase III.

In October, 2019, ABC will also finish a Phase II grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for \$150,000 to complete complimentary young forest habitat management and pre and post treatment bird and vegetative monitoring on project sites throughout the Great Lakes Region. ABC plans to apply for additional NFWF funding once this grant is complete; however, this funding will not be in-hand upon submission of this proposal.

Finally, the ABC Minnesota Public and Private Lands Programs are implemented with project management and programmatic assistance by the ABC Great Lakes Region Vice President. ABC will provide \$38,875 as match from this position, equivalent to 5% in salary and benefits over five years.

### Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

### Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

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

This proposal only requests supplemental funds for planning and implementation of the habitat projects described herein and does not supplant any existing funds of public and tribal agency partners.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2014	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service -- Neomigratory Bird Conservation Act Grant funds	\$134,955
2014-2016	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Phase I	\$399,907
2017-2019	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Phase II	\$150,000
2014-2021	Natural Resources Conservation Service: Regional Conservation Partnership Program	\$5,000,000

## Activity Details

### Requirements:

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

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

Is the restoration and enhancement 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, WPA, Permanently Protected Conservation Easements County/Municipal, Refuge Lands, State Forests, Tribal Reservations)**

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

Are the funds confirmed - **Yes**

#### Documentation

What are the types of funds?

**In-Kind Match - \$370000**

### Land Use:

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

## Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Enhance 6000+ acres of Young Forest Habitat on Public/Tribal Lands (Avg. 1200 acres/yr)	July 2025

# Budget Spreadsheet

**Total Amount of Request: \$2,417,300**

## Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$824,900	\$324,900	USFWS Tamarac NWR, USFWS Tamarac NWR, American Bird Conservancy, American Bird Conservancy via NRCS RCPP	\$1,149,800
Contracts	\$1,500,000	\$0		\$1,500,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$40,000	\$5,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR	\$45,000
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$31,900	\$90,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR	\$121,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$2,500	\$25,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR	\$27,500
Supplies/Materials	\$18,000	\$0		\$18,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,417,300</b>	<b>\$444,900</b>		<b>-\$2,862,200</b>

## Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
ABC MN Coordinator	1.00	5.00	\$456,000	\$0		\$456,000
ABC MN Forester	1.00	5.00	\$368,900	\$0		\$368,900
Tamarac NWR Public Lands Program Support	0.00	5.00	\$0	\$175,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR	\$175,000
Tamarac NWR Private Lands Program Support	0.00	5.00	\$0	\$75,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR	\$75,000
ABC Great Lake Region Vice President	0.05	5.00	\$0	\$36,900	American Bird Conservancy	\$36,900
ABC Private Lands Foresters	0.50	0.50	\$0	\$38,000	American Bird Conservancy via NRCS RCPP	\$38,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>25.50</b>	<b>\$824,900</b>	<b>\$324,900</b>		<b>-\$1,149,800</b>

Amount of Request: \$2,417,300

Amount of Leverage: \$444,900

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 18.40%

DSS + Personnel: \$856,800

As a % of the total request: 35.44%

Easement Stewardship: \$0

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -%

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

The Direct Support Services budget was determined using timesheet data from MN OHF programmatic funding for grant implementation support requirements for Young Forest Conservation Phases I and II.

### What is included in the contracts line?

All allocated 'Contracts' funds are used to hire Minnesota contractors to complete habitat projects described herein. This work will concentrate on hiring local contractors for brush cutting projects and a limited number of complimentary planting projects. This proposal is designed to maximize funds spent directly on projects.



**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:**

No allocated travel funds will be used for purposes other than traditional travel costs: mileage, food, and lodging.

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

Secured: \$444875  
Anticipated: \$450000  
Total: \$894875

ABC confirms \$370000 in-kind leverage from Tamarac NWR for office space, equipment and habitat work, \$38000 from NRCS-RCPP for Minnesota forester salaries through April 2021, and \$36875 for ABC Great Lakes VP. Negotiating to renew RCPP funding 5yrs - \$450000.

**Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable? - Yes**

**Tell us how this project would be scaled and how administrative costs are affected, describe the “economy of scale” and how outputs would change with reduced funding, if applicable:**

Reduced funding would result in a reduction or removal of the second project forester position and also a reduction of project acres to be targeted with funding under this proposal. Comparatively small reductions may also occur in other budget items, such as DSS, Travel, Equipment/Tools, and Supplies/Materials.

## 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	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	6,000	0	6,000
Total	0	0	6,000	0	6,000

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

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$2,417,300	\$0	\$2,417,300
Total	\$0	\$0	\$2,417,300	\$0	\$2,417,300

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	100	0	0	5,900	6,000
Total	0	100	0	0	5,900	6,000

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,392,300	\$2,417,300
Total	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,392,300	\$2,417,300

**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	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$403	\$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	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$250	\$0	\$0	\$405

*Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers*

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

0

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

# Parcel List

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

Prospective project sites are evaluated in partnership with public and tribal agency foresters and biologists using AMWO and GWWA BMPs. Landscape and site-level factors include:

### Landscape-level:

- $\geq 50\%$  forest cover within 0.5 mi of prospective restoration or harvest site ( $\geq 70\%$  optimal)
- Deciduous cover types (E.g. aspen-paper birch; northern hardwoods)
- Conifer component no greater than  $\sim 30\%$
- Mix of mature and early successional forest age classes
- Created habitat is  $\leq 5$  mi (preferably  $\leq 1$  mi) from other breeding habitat patches

### Project Site-level:

- Adjacent mature deciduous forest (preferably multiple ages)
- Deciduous Overstory: Conifer component within site no greater than  $\sim 20\%$
- Ground Cover Evaluation: Includes mixed forbs/sedge/ferns and suitable microsites for nesting
- Site located on publicly protected land
- Courtship areas for singing AMWO

Note: ABC and its present and new partners will continue to evaluate additional project sites using this sign-up criteria throughout Phase III.

## Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

### Aitkin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Aitkin Co. #1	04722215	100	\$25,000	Yes
Aitkin Co. #2	04324235	75	\$18,750	Yes
Aitkin Co. #5	04924222	25	\$6,250	Yes
Aitkin Co./Aitkin DNR #1	04922215	75	\$18,750	Yes
Aitkin Co. #3	04322205	50	\$12,500	Yes
Aitkin Co. #4	05127213	100	\$25,000	Yes
Aitkin DNR #1	04623219	75	\$18,750	Yes
Aitkin DNR #2	04925207	100	\$25,000	Yes
Aitkin DNR #3	05026217	100	\$25,000	Yes

### Becker

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Tamarac NWR #1	14039204	150	\$37,500	Yes
Tamarac NWR #2	14139223	150	\$37,500	Yes

**Beltrami**

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Baudette DNR #1	15531225	125	\$31,250	Yes
Beltrami Co. #1	14832213	75	\$18,750	Yes
Beltrami Co. #2	14930202	150	\$37,500	Yes
Beltrami Co. #3	15131230	125	\$31,250	Yes
Beltrami Co. #4	15031206	150	\$37,500	Yes
Beltrami Co./Bemidji DNR #1	15030214	100	\$25,000	Yes
Beltrami Co./Bemidji DNR #2	15130215	100	\$25,000	Yes
Bemidji DNR #1	15231224	200	\$50,000	Yes
Bemidji DNR #2	15331222	125	\$31,250	Yes
Bemidji DNR #3	14832216	75	\$18,750	Yes
Bemidji DNR #4	15331212	100	\$25,000	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #1	15531236	150	\$37,500	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #2	15332222	300	\$75,000	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #3	15332219	250	\$62,500	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #4	15332230	125	\$31,250	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #5	15335209	150	\$37,500	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #6	15232210	75	\$18,750	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #7	15838219	50	\$12,500	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #8	15736227	100	\$25,000	Yes
Red Lake WMA #1	15736218	125	\$31,250	Yes
Red Lake WMA #2	15837232	100	\$25,000	Yes
Wapati WMA #1	15838229	200	\$50,000	Yes
Wapati WMA #2	15738211	100	\$25,000	Yes
Wapati WMA #3	15838230	150	\$37,500	Yes
Wapati WMA #4	15738204	50	\$12,500	Yes

**Carlton**

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Carlton Co. #1	04716227	200	\$50,000	Yes
Carlton Co. #2	04618224	100	\$25,000	Yes
Cloquet DNR #1	04717225	100	\$25,000	Yes

**Cass**

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Brainerd DNR #1	13831222	50	\$12,500	Yes
Cass Co. #1	14025211	100	\$25,000	Yes
Cass Co. #2	14029206	50	\$12,500	Yes
Cass Co. #3	14027217	50	\$12,500	Yes
Cass Co. #4	13928201	75	\$18,750	Yes

**Crow Wing**

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Brainerd DNR #2	04528235	50	\$12,500	Yes

**Itasca**

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Grand Rapids DNR #1	14928208	75	\$18,750	Yes
Grand Rapids DNR #2	14626211	50	\$12,500	Yes
Grand Rapids DNR #3	15027229	50	\$12,500	Yes
Itasca Co. #1	05427202	125	\$31,250	Yes
Itasca Co. #2	05923213	75	\$18,750	Yes
Itasca Co. #3	05424201	50	\$12,500	Yes

## St. Louis

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
St. Louis Co. #1	05416215	125	\$31,250	Yes
St. Louis Co. #2	05219229	150	\$37,500	Yes
St. Louis Co. #3	05118227	175	\$43,750	Yes
St. Louis Co. #4	05216202	50	\$12,500	Yes
St. Louis Co. #5	05020222	50	\$12,500	Yes

### Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

### Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

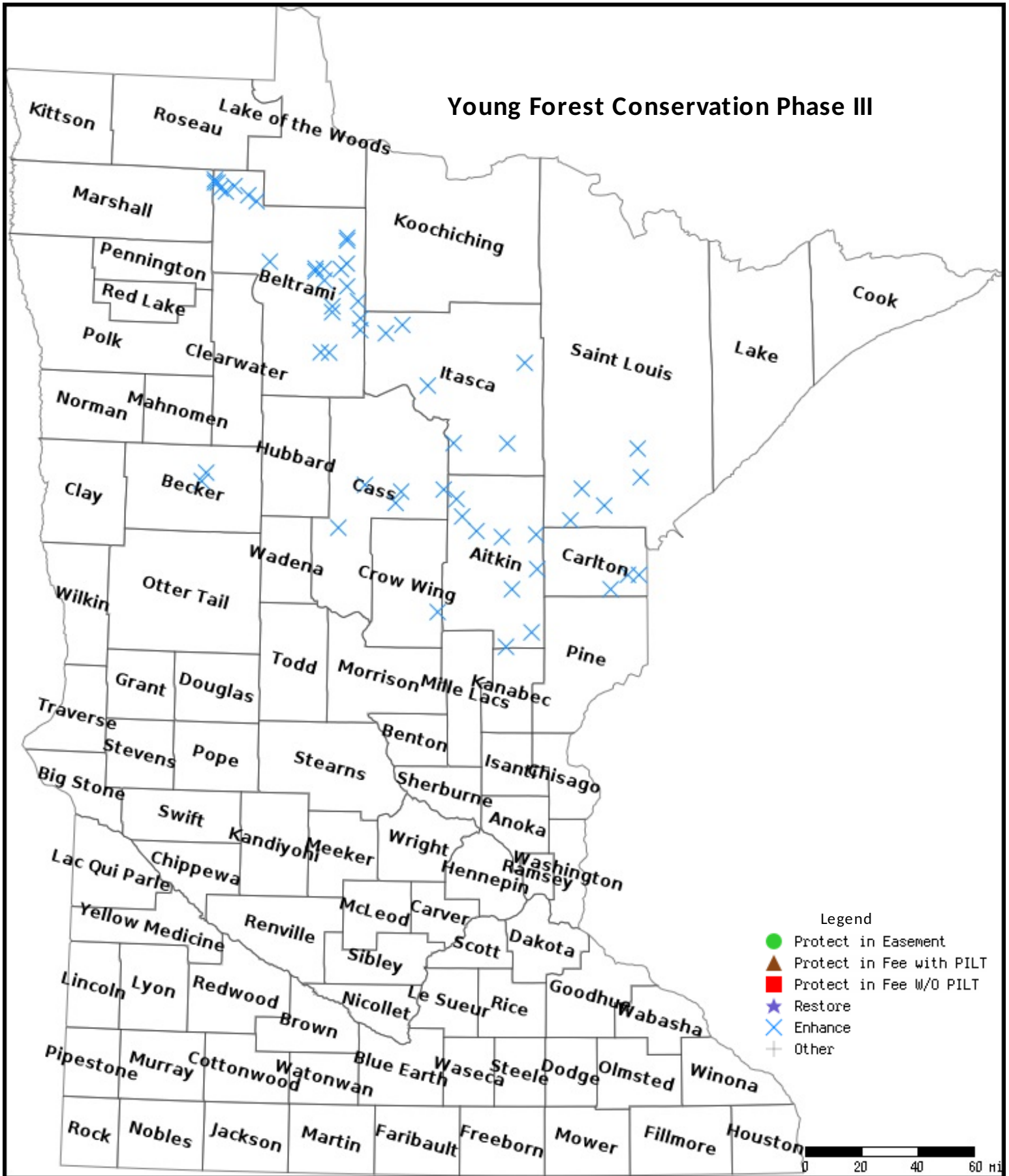
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

### Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

# Parcel Map

## Young Forest Conservation Phase III



Data Generated From Parcel List

# American Bird Conservancy: Young Forest Conservation Phase III

## ***Summary:***

Since 2013, as a part of a full life-cycle conservation initiative, American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has partnered with private landowners and public agencies throughout northern Minnesota to complete 11,388 acres of high quality young forest habitat projects to restore and enhance breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA), American Woodcock (AMWO), Ruffed Grouse (RUGR), and associated early successional habitat species. This initiative has included two phases of grant funding via the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF), as well as additional funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and numerous private donations. In MN OHF Young Forest Conservation Phase I and Phase II, the ABC Public Lands Program completed 5,535 acres in partnership with 11 Minnesota DNR Offices, seven Minnesota Counties, two USFWS National Wildlife Refuges, Chippewa National Forest, and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa. In Phase III, ABC plans to continue to use science-based best management practices within consensus focal regions to build upon this success and implement an additional 6,000+ acres of habitat projects over the next five years.

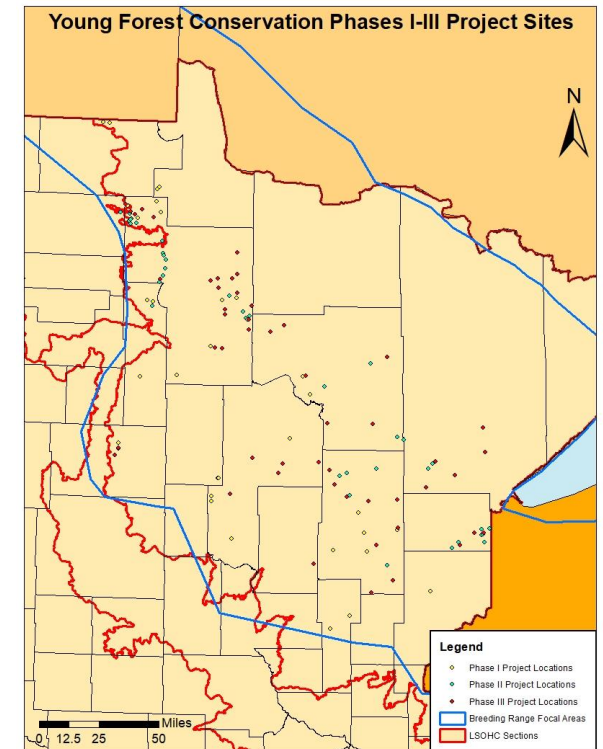
## ***Description of Need:***

The GWWA, AMWO, and RUGR breed in young forest and shrubland habitats within diverse, contiguous, deciduous forest landscapes of central and eastern North America. A range-wide loss of breeding habitat has led to GWWA population declines of approximately 68% over the past 50 years. As a result, it has been considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act, which ABC and its partners are working to prevent. GWWA is also listed on the Partners in Flight Continental Watchlist. Minnesota is estimated to be home to approximately 50% of the remaining GWWA population from early May through mid-August despite representing only approximately 10-12% of its summer range, making it one of the state's premier conservation species. Additionally, throughout its range, AMWO populations have also steadily declined over the last quarter century at a rate of 1-2 percent per year. AMWO is on the 2016 NABCI State of the Birds Watch List, which lists species in danger of extinction without significant conservation action. Minnesota is a key state for the conservation for these species and holds the largest remaining breeding population of GWWA of any U.S. state or Canadian province and the second highest population of AMWO. The GWWA and AMWO are identified as Species in Greatest Conservation Need in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

GWWAs and AMWOs are habitat specialists, requiring diverse early-successional breeding habitat adjacent to mature deciduous forest. ABC natural resource managers utilize regional science-based Best Management Practices (BMPs) in order to implement habitat treatments that result in high quality habitat for breeding and brood rearing. These BMPs are designed not only to create high quality breeding habitat for GWWAs and AMWOs through strategic cutting and retention of woody vegetation, but also to be a sustainable approach to forest habitat management for a diverse array of forest birds and associated wildlife species.

## ***Project Design:***

Project sites contain a mix of brush and mature trees and are adjacent to mature deciduous forest stands. Site-level mechanical operations concentrate on reducing the density and age of brush species dominated by alder and willow through brush cutting, while retaining mature trees and scattered brush clumps to create nesting and brood rearing sites on the forest floor for ground nesting species within the project area. When project areas do not have sufficient tree cover to retain 10-15 trees per acre, well distributed clumps of brush will be retained instead. Project managers may also retain additional shrub clumps and/or larger undisturbed legacy patches within the project sites to enhance the structural diversity of a site. Retention of internal structure also helps provide the greatest benefit to the largest suite of species possible. This project is designed to produce early successional habitat within a mosaic of forest age classes at the landscape level. Complimentary treatments may include planting of mixed deciduous tree species on some sites to improve forest continuity.







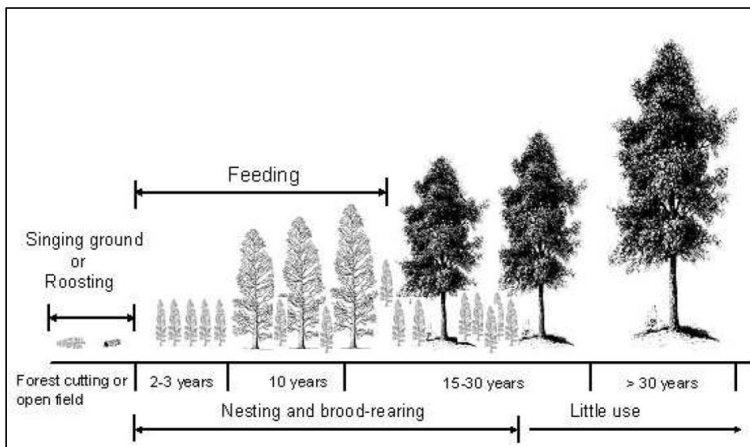
Satellite imagery of before and after habitat treatment at a project site located at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. Treatments were completed in the winter 2016.



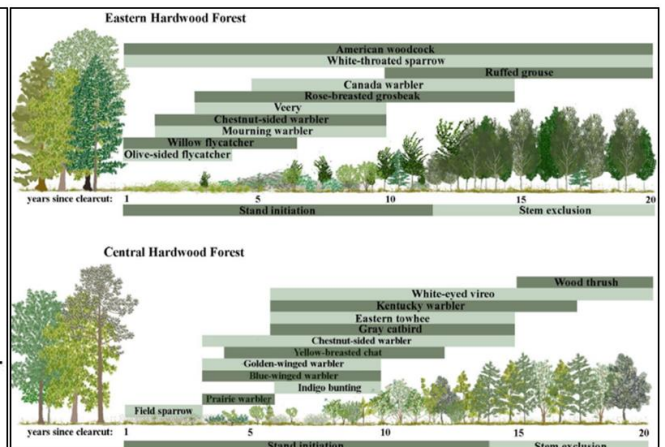
Before



After



Key habitat components required by American Woodcock in relation to forest succession.



Avian site occupation following forest treatment for Eastern and Central Hardwoods.



## Aitkin County Land Department

502 Minnesota Ave N  
Aitkin, MN 56431

218-927-7364  
aclid@co.aitkin.mn.us

May 14, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr, President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of Aitkin County Land Department, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. I have confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Rich Courtemanche  
Land Commissioner  
Aitkin County Land Dept.



# Beltrami County

Natural Resource Management

701 Minnesota Ave NW, Suite 234 – Bemidji MN 56601-3178

---

May 15, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Beltrami County Natural Resource Management (NRM) Department, I am writing in support of the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MNOHF) titled "*Young Forest Conservation Phase III*", which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from these grants through successful implementation of Phase I and II of its Public Lands Program. The NRM Department has been privileged to collaborate with the ABC on many wildlife habitat projects since 2013.

The Beltrami County NRM Department is responsible for the sustainable natural resource management on 146,500 acres of tax-forfeited lands. The Department is committed to multiple use management of its lands including forest management, wildlife habitat management, and recreation. Our goal for habitat projects is the same as the ABC's goal of providing young forests and young wetland shrubs to benefit a wide variety of wildlife species. An avenue such as the ABC and the programs provided are vital to the regeneration of wetland shrubs. These species have little or no commercial value and, without financial support, the regeneration of these species and habitat would be difficult.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in ABC's proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future. This proposal recognizes that many wildlife species depend not only on young upland forest, but also on quality shrub wetlands. This project recognizes that the creation of young forest habitat needs to be done in the broader context of sustainable forest management plans that embrace the importance of sustaining a complex patchwork of upland and lowland forest types.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard A. Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" at the beginning.

Richard A. Moore  
Beltrami County  
Natural Resource Management Department Director

# LAND DEPARTMENT



218 Washburn Ave E  
PO Box 25  
Backus, MN 56435

Phone: 218-947-7501  
Fax: 218-947-3230  
kirk.titus@co.cass.mn.us  
www.co.cass.mn.us

**Land Commissioner**  
Kirk Titus 218-947-7501

**Forest Resource Managers**  
Pat Bundy 218-947-7502  
Erik Lindquist 218-947-7505  
Amy Rand 218-947-7508  
Kim Frame 218-947-7507  
Kevin Dahlman 218-947-7503

May 17, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President, American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Cass County Land Department, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species.

ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. I have confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kirk Titus'.

Kirk Titus Cass County Land Commissioner

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Crookston • Duluth • Morris • Rochester • Twin Cities

**Natural Resources Research Institute**

**Duluth Laboratory/Admin**  
5013 Miller Trunk Highway  
Duluth, Minnesota 55811  
218-788-2694

**Coleraine Laboratory**  
One Gayley Ave, Box 188  
Coleraine, Minnesota 55722  
218-667-4201

May 21, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Avian Conservation and Wildlife Ecology Research Lab at the Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota Duluth, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*. ABC has been a terrific partner in restoring and enhancing forest habitat across Minnesota with the successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program from MN OHF. I have confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III that will benefit Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse along with many additional bird species that depend on early-successional habitat.

Since the inception of the Young Forest Habitat Initiative in 2013, ABC has developed partnerships with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies to establish science-based, collaborative landscape-level plans and site-level management best practices that promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota. Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC has also implemented Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners create quality habitat on their property. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,



Alexis Grinde, PhD  
Wildlife Ecologist  
Research Program Manager  
Avian Conservation and Wildlife Ecology Research Lab  
Natural Resources Research Institute  
University of Minnesota Duluth

**RED LAKE BAND**  
**of CHIPPEWA INDIANS**  
**RED LAKE NATION HEADQUARTERS**



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SAMUEL R. STRONG, Secretary  
ANNETTE JOHNSON, Treasurer

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ADRIAN BEAULIEU  
MICHELLE (BARRETT) COBENAIS

**ADVISORY COUNCIL:**  
7 HEREDITARY CHIEFS

PO Box 550, Red Lake, MN 56671

Phone 218-679-3341 • Fax 218-679-3378

May 20, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, I am writing in support of the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC's) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF): "*Young Forest Conservation, Phase III*". This ongoing project has played an integral role in maintaining a healthy and dynamic balance of forest and brushland age classes throughout Minnesota's forests. This proposal would ensure that critical wildlife habitat continues to be maintained for multiple species of conservation need and concern, such as the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Bobcat, Canada Lynx, Elk, and White-tailed Deer.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create important habitats, for a number of wildlife species, by promoting a healthy and diverse mosaic of cover types on the landscape. The American Bird Conservancy and its partners have developed a successful "Young Forest Initiative" in Minnesota that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitats since its inception in 2013.

With funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complimentary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. It is this integrated approach, landscape-level awareness and ability to manage projects across jurisdictional boundaries that has lead the ABC and this program to become an essential partner in the ongoing efforts to manage Minnesota's natural resources.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal to restore and maintain a dynamic mosaic of habitats across Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Darrell G. Seki, Sr.  
Chairman  
Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians  
Red Lake Nation Headquarters  
P.O. Box 550  
Red Lake, MN 56671





# Saint Louis County

Land and Minerals Dept. • [www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov) • [landdept@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:landdept@stlouiscountymn.gov)

**Mark Weber**  
Land Commissioner

May 30, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

The St. Louis County Land and Minerals Department supports the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled Young Forest Conservation Phase III, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. I have confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

The Department has successfully worked with ABC in the past on projects and found the organization very professional, knowledgeable and easy to work with. We fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Jason Meyer  
Deputy Land and Minerals Director  
St. Louis County Land and Minerals Department

Land Commissioner's Office  
320 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, GSC 302  
Duluth, MN 55802  
(218) 726-2606  
Fax: (218) 726-2600

Pike Lake Area Office  
5713 Old Miller Trunk Hwy  
Duluth, MN 55811  
(218) 625-3700  
Fax: (218) 625-3733

Virginia Area Office  
7820 Highway 135  
Virginia, MN 55792  
(218) 742-9898  
Fax: (218) 742-9870



May 29, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. I have confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

The Nature Conservancy is particularly interested in this aspect—how do we work together to understand habitat conditions at multiple scales, and prioritize those habitats and species that most need attention? Young forest habitat and species form just a part of a larger issue. I have enjoyed working with ABC on addressing these questions under the auspices of the Minnesota Forest Habitat Collaborative and look forward additional partnering with ABC in the future.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal.

Sincerely,



Jim Manolis, Ph.D.  
Forest Conservation Program Director  
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota



## United States Department of the Interior



**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**  
5600 American Blvd West — Suite 990  
Bloomington, MN 55437-1458

IN REPLY REFER TO: MBSP

612-713-5362  
email: tom\_will@fws.gov

20 May 2019

T0: Mr. Mike Parr, President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

On behalf of the Division of Migratory Birds in the USFWS Midwest Region, I am indeed pleased to be writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC's) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF)—*Young Forest Conservation Phase III (YFC)*—which will continue ABC's work to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, and associated young forest habitat species. For a number of reasons, I view this project as a paradigm-setting effort, as important to the evolving future of forest ecosystem conservation as it is to the conservation of a flagship Minnesota stewardship species, Golden-winged Warbler.

I have chaired working groups and authored publications on Golden-winged Warbler since the inception of the Golden-winged Warbler Working Group in 2003. ABC has been an active conservation partner from the outset, helping to sponsor workshops and contributing to the science foundation on both the breeding and wintering grounds of this long-distance Neotropical migrant. Solid evidence-based research replicated across the breeding range underlies the management recommendations which have served as the underpinnings for ABC's successful Phase I and Phase II habitat implementation work in Minnesota, supported in large part by the Minnesota OHF. That underlying research has demonstrated that young forest habitat created or enhanced for Golden-winged Warbler also increases reproductive success for an entire suite of forested landscape species—not just those that have been often associated with early successional habitat, but also species like Ovenbird, Wood Thrush, and Scarlet Tanager that have been conventionally associated with more mature interior forest. I have confidence that ABC's Phase III will add thousands more acres of high-quality young forest habitat to the more than 5.5 thousand acres it has already produced in its public lands Young Forest Habitat Initiative.

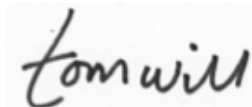
Which brings me to my second point: ABC's project is ground-breaking and forward-thinking in its effort, not just to advocate for, but also to implement the concept of a dynamic forested landscape comprised of a mosaic of habitats and age classes that support many species throughout the different phases of their respective breeding cycles. Several years ago, I visited sites at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge which had implemented Public Lands Coordinator Peter Dieser's forest enhancement prescriptions. I was impressed by the attention to detail in the diversity of treatments that were artfully integrated with surrounding habitats, both in lowland shrub and upland contexts. Forests are increasingly fragmented, parcels are smaller, and the number and types of landowners, both public and private, keep increasing. Creating healthy and dynamic forested *landscapes* capable of sustaining a diversity of wildlife species, including priority focal species, thus becomes a huge conservation challenge—both biologically and sociologically. With its innovative vision of managing for dynamic forested landscapes and its emphasis on collaboration, outreach, training, and education, ABC's *YFC* project meets the challenge head-on and

creates a standard that I believe future projects will seek to emulate. The USFWS Division of Migratory Birds fully supports the importance for birds of carefully managed young forest and attention to the overall health of a dynamic, diverse, and potentially resilient forested landscape.

Third, the Minnesota Golden-winged Warbler project is one of the best examples there is of stewardship conservation. From the outset, Golden-winged Warbler conservation was largely focused in regions where the species was rare, and initiatives such as FWS/NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife targeted portions of the range in the East where the species was disappearing. From a strategic, rangewide perspective, it makes good business sense to manage creatively where populations are still relatively abundant and capable of increasing. ABC was one of the first conservation actors to recognize and promote this stewardship perspective and to actively champion conservation implementation in the core of the species range in Minnesota. The *YFC* project is a wise investment; it is far more likely to result in significant population-level impacts than is work underway or targeted in any other portion of the species' range.

Finally, I would like to commend the comprehensive approach that ABC has taken in its work. Funding secured from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has allowed ABC to complement its public lands work with a Minnesota Private Lands Program, reaching out to assist private landowners in creating compatible habitat on their properties. Thus ABC's landscape vision not only includes attention to a mosaic of forest habitats but also includes a diversity of forest landowners as well. Additionally, ABC has been a leader in working across the full annual cycle of migratory birds—Golden-winged Warbler and others—fully recognizing that effective conservation for these species must also include migratory stopover and wintering habitat. ABC was instrumental in bringing Central and South American partners together to develop and distribute a Spanish-language non-breeding season plan for Golden-winged Warbler and associated Neotropical species

In summary, I enthusiastically support ABC's visionary and paradigm-setting Minnesota forest project in its Phase III iteration. It creatively incorporates a strong science base, acknowledgement of the diversity of habitats needed by suites of species throughout the full breeding cycle from nesting to post-fledging, emphasis on a dynamic and healthy forested landscape, innovation in working educationally with diverse partners, and a strategic stewardship focus.



Dr. Tom Will

Midwest Regional Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Division of Migratory Birds  
& Midwest Regional Coordinator, Partners in Flight



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge  
36289 State Hwy 65  
McGregor, MN 55760  
218-768-2402

May 16, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of Rice Lake NWR, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. Having worked with ABC previously on a habitat restoration project, I confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Walt Ford  
National Wildlife Refuge Manager  
Rice Lake NWR, FWS



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 95  
St Paul, MN 55155

May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dear Members of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

On behalf of the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), I am writing in support of the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 LSOHC proposal: *Young Forest Conservation, Phase 3*.

This project will continue ongoing efforts on the part of ABC and its partners, including WMI, to restore a healthy and diverse balance of forest and brush land age classes on Minnesota public and lands. This is especially important in Minnesota given the significant decline in harvest related forest disturbances in the last decade or more. Creating early successional forest stands will help ensure more complete habitat requirements for a wide range of young forest and forest interior wildlife species of conservation concern, including American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, and the Golden-winged Warbler.

Since 2008, the volume of timber harvested across all ownerships in the state has declined by over 1 million cords per year. Estimates suggest that this decline in harvested volumes equates to between 40 and 50 thousand acres of forest land that is *not* being treated commercially each year, and *not* providing the early successional forest habitat necessary for a variety of wildlife species. **Given the significant decline in early successional forest habitat created through commercial means, the ABC proposal is especially important at this time.** This project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse.

ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. I have confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Sincerely,

Robert Tomlinson, MN Contractor  
The Wildlife Management Institute  
(651) 387-4060  
bobstomlinson@gmail.com



May 22, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr, President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of Woodcock Minnesota, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, Oven Bird, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. We have confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC has used science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, Oven Bird, American Woodcock and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest age classes and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help land owners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

Woodcock Minnesota recommends continued education and encouragement of public land managers to harvest over mature aspen stands as a very effective way to increase the acreage of early succession habitat for the myriad of bird species benefitting from this habitat type. Additionally harvest of smaller acreage plots can and will maximize the benefits of a diverse mosaic of forest age classes to support all of these birds and critters.

Woodcock Minnesota fully supports the work outlined in this proposal and looks forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Koehler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Koehler, President  
Woodcock Minnesota





# United States Department of the Interior



## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge  
35704 County Highway 26  
Rochert, Minnesota 56578-9638  
Phone: 218/847-2641 Fax: 218/847-9141

May 21, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. I have confidence that ABC will continue to produce thousands of acres of high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Alisha Haken  
Acting Project Leader  
Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



# RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY

**Benjamin C.  
Jones**

President and  
Chief Executive  
Officer

May 14, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President, American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

The Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society support your 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*. I am confident ABC will continue improving thousands of acres of high-quality forest habitat in Phase III.

Working with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, this project will continue to support efforts by ABC and partners to promote a healthy and diverse forest throughout Minnesota.

By integrating landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 5,535 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help land owners complete similar work. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

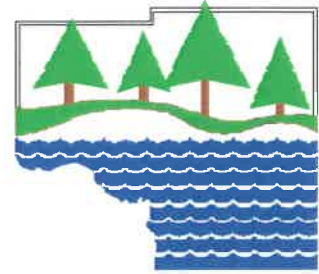
Benjamin C. Jones, PhD

President, RGS/AWS

**Ruffed Grouse Society**  
**American Woodcock Society**  
451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108  
412-262-4044  
Toll Free 888-564-6747  
Fax 412-262-9207  
RuffedGrouseSociety.org



# ITASCA COUNTY LAND DEPARTMENT



1177 LaPrairie Avenue  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3322  
218-327-2855 • Fax: 218-327-4160

May 30, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Itasca County Land Department, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase III*, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species.

The Land Department has worked with ABC on habitat improvement projects on county managed lands for 3 years. Itasca County manages 297,000 acres of tax forfeited trust land primarily for the forestry economic benefit to the local taxing districts. By working with organizations such as ABC we can provide high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse on lands that aren't particularly well suited for high quality tree growth.

We support the work outlined in this proposal and would look forward to working with ABC in the future. We are confident ABC will use the funds to its fullest capability to provide as many acres as possible for early successional habitat species.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Olson".

Adam Olson  
Forest Wildlife Conservationist

Equal Opportunity Employer



May 24, 2019

Mr. Mike Parr, President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Forest Stewards Guild, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2019 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled Young Forest Conservation Phase III, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phase I and Phase II of its Public Lands Program. I have confidence that ABC will continue to produce this high-quality young forest habitat in Phase III.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal, and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

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Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Michael Lynch, Lake States Coordinator  
Forest Stewards Guild

2019 Galisteo St., Suite N7  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

phone 505-983-8992  
fax 505-986-0798

[www.ForestStewardsGuild.org](http://www.ForestStewardsGuild.org)