Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Fiscal Year 2021 / ML 2020 Request for Funding

Date: May 28, 2019

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

Funds Requested: $4,070,800

Manager's Name: Courtney Phillips
Title: Project Manager
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County Locations: Freeborn

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Restore
- Enhance
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Habitat

Abstract:

The Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) Phase IX Habitat Restoration Program will restore, enhance, and protect 628 acres of essential prairie upland, wetland, and streambank habitat across the watershed. As a result of strategic projects, key biological functioning parcels will be permanently protected, streambank habitat will be enhanced, vegetation and feeding sources will be restored for migratory fowl habitat and wetlands will be restored from row crop agriculture. Projects in Phase IX are critical for the benefit of fish, waterfowl, and wildlife populations, reversing the trend of wetland loss and habitat degradation.

Design and scope of work:

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

- Create wetlands to improve waterfowl breeding and migratory success
- Remove rough fish species and restore desirable fish, waterfowl and wildlife populations aiming at critical species of concern
- Increase fish habitat, spawning areas and waterfowl nesting areas
- Restore streambanks and increase wildlife habitat and its natural prairie
- Increase and improve the use of restored public natural resources
- Enhance native aquatic rooted vegetation and protect the watershed from invasive species

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

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

• Acquire 207 acres of key targeted acquisitions to protect land along the Shell Rock River, establish upland prairie, and improve nesting habitat and waterfowl food sources
• Enhance 26 acres of streambank habitat for fish, amphibian, and waterfowl benefit
• Reestablish 95 acres of wetland basins from row crop agriculture, reversing wetland loss and habitat degradation
• Enhance 300 acres of vegetation in Panicum Prairie, an important flyway that is critical to nesting waterfowl, upland game, and other wading bird species

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

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

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

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

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

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

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

The Habitat Restoration Program accelerates the efforts of the Conservation and Preservation Plan, H2, with the restoration of critical shoreline habitat to protect from degradation and ensure public access for fishing and natural resource management. The Habitat Restoration Program also applies the Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management by accelerating the core function of conserving, maintaining, or rehabilitating Minnesota's aquatic resources to serve environmental purposes with streambank land acquisitions and shoreline restorations.

The Habitat Restoration Program advances H5 by investing in prioritized wetlands that were drained for agricultural use and converting them back into wetland complexes to improve breeding success and migratory habitat. The multiple wetland restorations and 300 acres of wetland vegetation enhancement will also follow Goal 2 in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan for increasing wetland habitat sufficient to sustain waterfowl population levels.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

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

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:

In Minnesota's prairie region, shallow lake and wetland ecosystems are vital components to a productive landscape for a wide array of animals including waterfowl, furbearers, reptiles, amphibians and fish. It is imperative to recognize the loss of small wetlands and native prairie in the prairie region of Minnesota. The SRRWD is proposing to reverse wetland loss by turning agricultural land into wetlands to

provide habitat and food sources for migratory birds.

Three streambank restoration projects will create spawning habitat, cover, and refuge for fish, habitat for wildlife, and will restore the growth of healthy aquatic vegetation. The project also demonstrates a permanent conservation legacy by restoring habitat on public lands, increasing public access to fishing, improving native fish reproduction and provides protection from long term endangerment from invasive plant species by incorporating vegetation management. Key targeted habitat acquisitions comprising of 207 acres will be protected to provide long term habitat for wildlife.

Phase IX also plans to enhance 300 acres of vegetation in a currently protected, critical, flyway habitat complex. Currently dominated by invasives, vegetation will be restored to include bulrush, smartweed, and marsh milkweed species to provide habitat and food sources for migratory birds. Enhancement efforts to this large scale degree provides habitat for both spring and fall migration of waterfowl, overall increase the use days by migratory birds, and provides nesting habitat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Common Moorhen is listed as special concern in the Oak Savanna habitat and can be attributed to the loss of well-vegetated ponds and wetlands. With projects proposed by Phase IX, wetland creation and vegetation enhancement of 395 acres can provide restored habitat for both the Common Moorhen and Marsh Wren. Blanding's turtles are listed as being a threatened species and creating streambank restorations that include habitats such as turtle hibernaculums and restoring wetland with marshy areas will provide habitat for this threatened species.

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

The Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture (UMRGLRJV) states for Mallard breeding habitat requirements at least a minimum of one hectare (2.47 acres) is required for each breeding pair. Optimal habitat includes a complex of shallow herbaceous wetland and grasslands. Phase IX is proposing 395 acres of shallow wetland restorations that could provide new habitat niches for over 155 nesting pairs. The additional wetland or marsh conditions could provide an additional 1,200 use days for lesser scaup, northern pintail, American bittern and other waterfowl, and provide feeding and nesting ground for the concerned Marsh Wren and Common Moorhen.

With the increased return of the Trumpeter Swan to southern Minnesota, local staff expects to see the increase of 3 breeding pairs of swans as a result of the restored wetland restorations. Bobolinks population will also increase as a result of associated upland plantings.

The shoreline restorations will provide habitat structures resulting in a proposed 40% increase in the breeding success and overall biomass of fish and amphibians that can be supported. One additional pair of river otters is expected as a result of the streambank restorations as well. The key targeted property acquisitions will also support a variety of species including the threatened Blanding's turtle and Round Pigtoe mussel by providing protected shoreline and streambank habitat.

Outcomes:

Programs in prairie region:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With extensive wetland, streambank, and in-lake habitat loss in Minnesota, restoration efforts are an issue that need immediate attention. Degraded habitat and impairments remain in the SRRWD that require action to restore and enhance native habitat for many species. Science and resource based planning have been utilized to strategically select projects that will advance restoration goals specified in the Habitat Restoration Program.

LSOHC funds accelerate ongoing conservation efforts by increasing the number of successful projects the District is able to complete each year in the watershed. Projects selected in the program contribute to the success of long-term management plans, key biological functioning parcels will be permanently protected, lakeshores and streambanks will be enhanced, in-lake habitat structures will be created, and new and improved access to public lands and vegetation will be restored for migratory fowl habitat.

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

The Habitat Restoration Program, Phase IX, builds and expands upon previous LSOHC funding including the Wedge Creek, White Lake

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

Relationship to other funds:

- Clean Water Fund

Describe the relationship of the funds:

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

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

Not applicable to the SRRWD at this time.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2012	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching	$180,000
2013	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching	$230,000
2014	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching	$804,750
2015	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching	$200,000
2016	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching	$750,000
2017	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching	$500,000
2018	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching	$400,000

Activity Details

Requirements:

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

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

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

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, Public Waters)**

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

Land Use:

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

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

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

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

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**

Accomplishment Timeline

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

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: $4,070,800

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$45,000	$25,000	Local Option Sales Tax, Local Option Sales Tax	$70,000
Contracts	$1,554,200	$0		$1,554,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$1,457,800	$0		$1,457,800
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$0	$0		$0
Easement Acquisition	$0	$0		$0
Easement Stewardship	$0	$0		$0
Travel	$0	$0		$0
Professional Services	$520,600	$175,000	Local Option Sales Tax	$695,600
Direct Support Services	$0	$0		$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$15,000	$0		$15,000
Capital Equipment	$0	$0		$0
Other Equipment/Tools	$0	$0		$0
Supplies/Materials	$478,200	$0		$478,200
DNR IDP	$0	$0		$0
Total	$4,070,800	$200,000	-	$4,270,800

Personnel

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

Amount of Request:	$4,070,800
Amount of Leverage:	$200,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request:	4.91%
DSS + Personnel:	$45,000
As a % of the total request:	1.11%
Easement Stewardship:	$0
As a % of the Easement Acquisition:	-%

What is included in the contracts line?

All of the work in the contract line is centered on paying contractors for restoration and enhancement projects.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The SRRWD is an agency that has a local option sales tax in place that will be used to leverage funds.

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:

Yes, Phase IX has scaleable projects, however, a reduction in funds would lead to a decrease in potential projects that the SRRWD could complete.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	95	0	0	0	95
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	207	207
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	326	326
Total	95	0	0	533	628

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	$748,400	$0	$0	$0	$748,400
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$1,649,700	$1,649,700
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	$1,672,700	$1,672,700
Total	$748,400	$0	$0	$3,322,400	$4,070,800

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	95	0	95
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	207	0	207
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	326	0	326
Total	0	0	0	628	0	628

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	$0	$0	$0	$748,400	$0	$748,400
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$1,649,700	$0	$1,649,700
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	$1,672,700	$0	$1,672,700
Total	$0	$0	$0	$4,070,800	$0	$4,070,800

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	$7,878	$0	$0	$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$7,970
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$0
Protect in Easement	$0	$0	$0	$0
Enhance	$0	$0	$0	$5,131

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	$0	$0	$0	$7,878	$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$0	$0	$0	$7,970	$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	$5,131	$0

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

44,575 Feet

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:

Parcels are selected using the Property Management Zones (PMZs). The PMZs are identified using precision conservation modeling, along with monitoring, and science based targeting. Parcels are then prioritized and ranked based on the degree of habitat degradation, restoration potential, and landowner interest and support.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

Freeborn

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Bancroft Stream Enhancement	10321229	20	$788,200	No
Bancroft Wetland Restoration	10321221	50	$400,500	No
Manchester Wetland Restoration	10322213	45	$332,900	No
Panicum Prairie Enhancement	10121235	300	$522,500	No
Shoff Streambank Enhancement	10221207	6	$347,000	No

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Freeborn

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Bancroft Property	10321221	112	$857,900	No	No	No
Manchester Property	10322213	74	$624,300	No	No	No
SRR Glenville Property	10120206	21	$137,600	No	No	Full

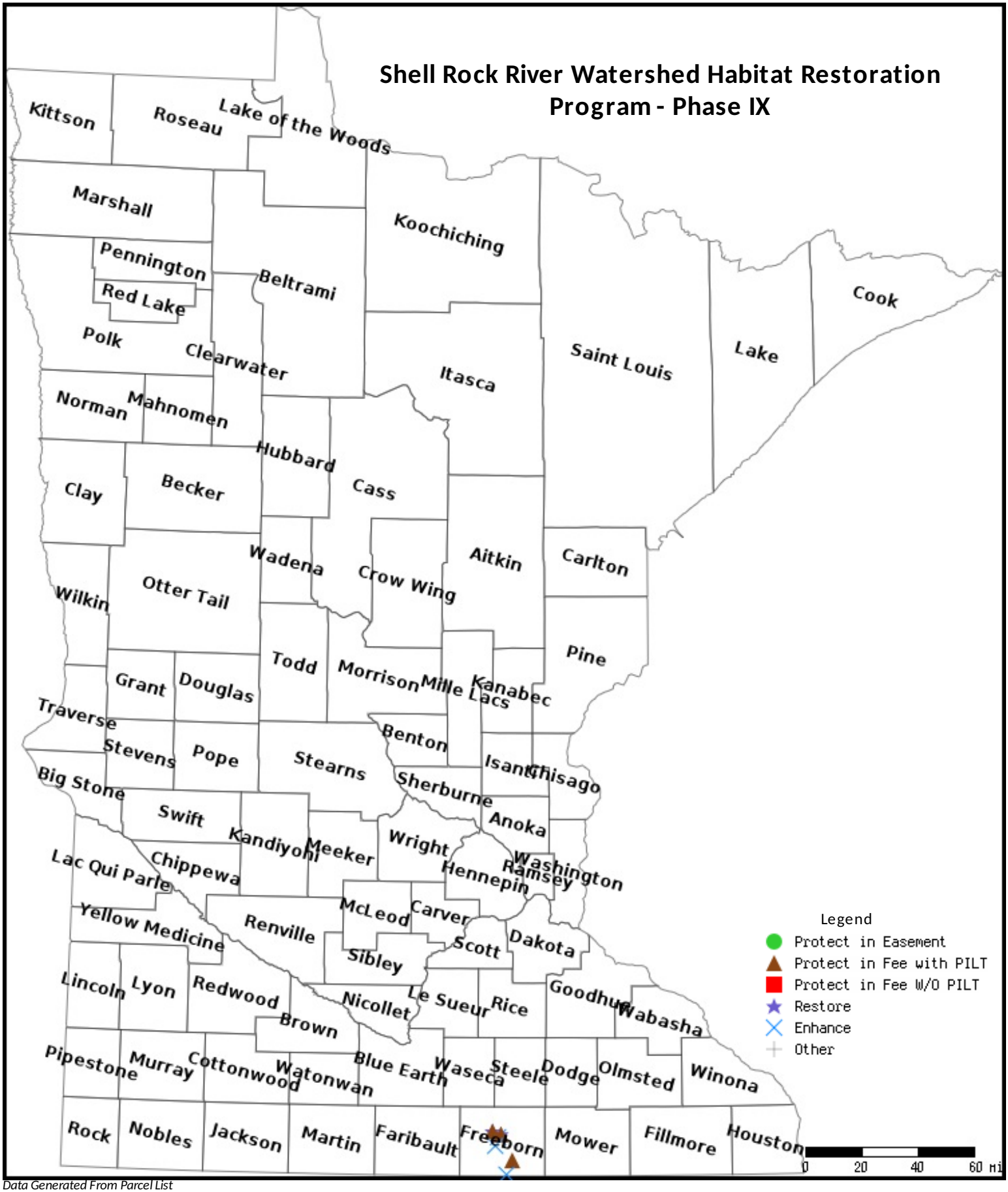
Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List

Pictured Left: Previously LSOHC Funded Albert Lea Lake Dam and Fish Barrier.

SRRWD
Shell Rock River Watershed District

Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program - Phase IX

2019 LSOHC Fund Request: $4,070,800

About the Watershed Habitat Restoration Program

The District's Phase IX Habitat Restoration Program will restore, enhance and protect 628 acres of essential shallow lake, wetland and streambank habitat across the watershed. As a result of the projects, key biological functioning parcels will be permanently protected, lakeshore and streambanks will be enhanced, vegetation and feeding sources will be restored for migratory fowl habitat, and wetlands will be restored from row crop agriculture.

Projects in Phase IX are critical for the benefit of fish, waterfowl and wildlife populations, reversing the trend of wetland loss and habitat degradation.

The SRRWD Habitat Restoration Program is a phased, $20 million, watershed-wide effort to restore, protect and enhance degraded habitat conditions through implementation of projects on a lake-shed basis. This Phase IX proposal is the latest effort that builds on and complements previously funded LSOHC Projects.

Project Highlights

Restore

Reestablish 95 acres of wetland basins from row crop agriculture, reversing wetland loss and habitat degradation.

Protect

Acquire 207 acres of key targeted lands to protect land along the Shell Rock River, establish upland prairie, and improve nesting habitat and waterfowl food sources.

Above: Previously LSOHC Funded Pickerel Lake Dam and Fish Passage

Enhance

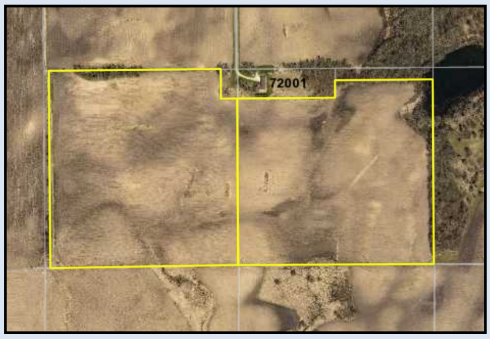
- Enhance 300 acres of vegetation in Panicum Prairie, an important flyway that is critical to nesting waterfowl, upland game, and other wading bird species.
- Enhance 26 acres of streambank habitat for fish, amphibian, and waterfowl benefit.

Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program - Phase IX

2018 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund Request: $4,070,800

Protect

Phase IX of the Watershed Habitat Restoration Program includes the acquisition of 3 properties whose existing native vegetation and wetlands will be protected, continuing to provide habitat for wildlife and waterfowl.



Manchester property

Shell Rock River Glenville property

Bancroft property

Restore

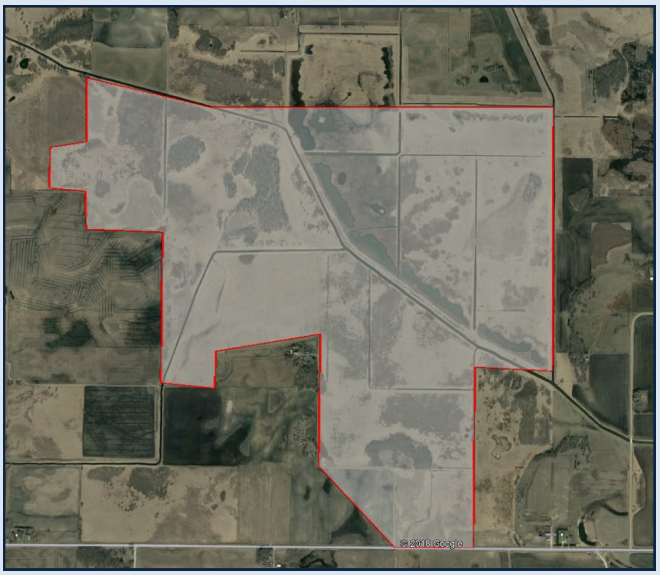
In addition to maintaining existing habitat, areas of the Manchester and Bancroft properties will undergo restorations to convert cropland to native prairie and wetlands.

Left: Existing native prairie at nearby Myre-Big Island State Park

Overall Benefits

The Watershed Habitat Restoration Program will restore desirable fish, waterfowl and wildlife populations, enhance native aquatic rooted vegetation, increase fish habitat and spawning areas, waterfowl nesting areas, improve waterfowl breeding and migratory success, restore streambanks, and protect the watershed from invasive species.

Enhance



Panicum Prairie WMA

Panicum Prairie Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is the largest WMA in Freeborn County. This area was once home to Grass Lake and provided habitat benefits to waterfowl, however it is now dominated by invasive plant species and is not reaching its full potential in habitat benefits. The District's enhancement project is focused on using moist soil management to mimic natural seasonal wetlands.

This 300 acre restoration will provide optimal feeding locations for dabbling ducks and shorebirds while also providing habitat for species of concern in our area including the Marsh Wren and Common Moorhen.

Marsh Wren

Habitat Restoration Program Project Locations