

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

2012 Accomplishment Plan

Date: 10/09/14 – Amendment Request

Program Title: Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program

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Funds Recommended: \$5,500,000

Legislative Citation: MN Laws 2011, First Special Session, Ch. 6, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(g)

(g) Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase III \$5,500,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Pheasants Forever to acquire prairie and other habitat areas for wildlife management area purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Abstract:

This proposal accelerates the protection of 1,275 acres of prairie grassland, wetland, and other wildlife habitat as State Wildlife Management Areas open to public hunting.

Program Narrative

Design and Scope of Work

The pressures from development, industry, and agriculture continue to mount on wildlife habitat within the farmland regions of Minnesota. In fact, despite our collective investments in conservation, it is believed that many of the agricultural counties in Minnesota are continuing to experience a net loss of wildlife habitat. This unfortunate reality is currently being exacerbated by conversion of lands expiring out of CRP. Now, more than ever, is the time to accelerate our investments in permanently protected high quality public habitat complexes that will protect, maintain, and increase Minnesota's wildlife populations. In addition, being able to provide public areas for Minnesotans to hunt, trap, fish and otherwise recreate in the outdoors are urgent needs and is fundamental to ensure Minnesota's outdoor heritage and appreciation of the outdoors is passed on to future generations.

To help slow and reverse the loss of habitat and declining wildlife populations, Pheasants Forever (PF) and our partners will protect (fee acquisition from willing sellers) 1,275 acres of high priority grassland (native prairie if available), wetland, and wildlife habitat as state Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) throughout the Pheasant Range of Minnesota. Striving to build landscape level habitat complexes that will protect and sustain wildlife populations, many of the potential projects are additions to existing WMAs or WPAs, of which some were originally acquired in partnership with MNDNR.

Projects were developed and selected in conjunction with local and regional DNR staff. All projects will meet standards and requirements for inclusion into the WMA system and DNR Commissioner approval will be received for any project funded under this proposal. In addition to meeting the minimum WMA standards, additional criteria were used to develop the potential project list including:

- Does the parcel contain habitat restoration potential that will result in an increase in wildlife populations?
- Does the parcel build upon existing investments in public and private land habitat (landscape scale significance)?
- Does the parcel contain significant natural communities or will it protect or buffer significant natural communities?
- Does the parcel have the potential and focus for habitat protection and restoration in the future?
- Does the parcel provide multiple benefits (recreation, access, water control, water quality, lakeshore, local community support etc.)?

All acquired lands will meet the minimum initial development standards for WMAs. In addition, providing high quality habitat and keeping future management concerns in mind, all acquisitions will be restored and/or enhanced to as high quality as practicable, with the belief that quality and comprehensive restorations utilizing native species result in lower management costs. Acquired croplands will be permanently retired and restored to diverse grasslands and wetlands to the fullest extent. Enhancement work may include undesirable woody vegetation removal, water control structure installation, inter-seeding to increase diversity and structure, managed grazing, invasive species control, or any other activity that improves the diversity and health of the prairie-wetland habitat complex.

Pheasants Forever's network of 76 Minnesota chapters and 24,000 members have been actively involved in protecting and restoring lands in partnership with the Minnesota DNR for 27 years and will continue to be a priority. WMA's are an integral component to the comprehensive conservation strategy within the prairie region of the state. The WMAs within this proposal will not only protect, increase, and sustain wildlife habitat and populations; they will provide access and recreational opportunities, including hunting, to ALL Minnesotans, so fundamentally important to our outdoor heritage.

Planning

This effort directly protects, restores or enhances prairie grasslands, wetlands and habitat for game and wildlife. In cooperation with DNR Managers & administrators, we use existing data (e.g. County Biological Survey, HAPET Thunderstorm maps, Restorable wetlands inventory, and protected lands GIS layers) and restoration potential, to identify, prioritize, and permanently protect prairie grassland and wetland habitats that improve habitat function for wildlife.

The work of this proposal is consistent with many of the strategies and objectives of existing plans including the *Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*, the *Long-range plan for the ring-necked*

pheasant in Minnesota, Long-range Duck Recovery Plan, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight Physiographic Area Plan for the Tallgrass Prairie. Accomplishments specifically addressing habitat recommendations in the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* include:

H1 – Protect priority land habitats (pg. 63) – This proposal contains priority grassland and wetland habitats important to waterfowl and other migratory birds, as well as resident game species. This proposal focuses on building habitat complexes through acquisition and restoration helping to improve connectivity and linkages between current habitat complexes.

H2 – Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes (pg. 69) – A number of the proposed acquisitions (and resulting restoration) will directly protect shorelands of streams and lakes, including designated wildlife lakes.

H3 – Improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation (pg. 76) – All WMA tracts acquired through this proposal will be open to the public for outdoor recreational use, including hunting, as detailed in the WMA statute. The acquisition of tracts adjacent to existing public lands will increase connectivity and overall parcel size providing higher quality recreational opportunities and ensuring outdoor recreational opportunities in the future.

H4 – Restore and protect shallow lakes (pg. 78) – Multiple parcels within this proposal are located on shallow lakes, including a designated wildlife lake. Strategic acquisition of these parcels will result in the ability to manage the shallow lakes for wildlife, by installing water control structures.

H5 – Restore land, wetlands, and wetland-associated watersheds (pg. 80) – This proposal focuses efforts within the area of the state that has experienced the most dramatic habitat loss. Acquisition is focused on parcels with drained and converted wetland prairie complexes and watersheds. Parcels will be restored to their historic conditions to as much as practicable.

H7 – Keep water on the landscape (pg. 84) – The acquisition and restoration of these permanently protected lands will keep water on the landscape through wetland restoration and native vegetation restoration (both wetland and prairie). Drainage tile will be broken, earthen berms will be constructed, and water control structures will be installed to restore the hydrology of both permanent and seasonal wetlands. Restoration work will result in water storage and help to decrease peak flow events.

These WMAs will provide quality grassland/wetland habitat complexes that will benefit a myriad of game and non-game species and will provide public recreational opportunities for all citizens of Minnesota. This proposal directly addresses LSOHC prairie section priorities by:

1. Converts agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes
2. Converts agricultural land to wetland/upland to protect, enhance, or restore existing habitat complexes, such as existing WMA's.
3. Protects, restores, and enhances shallow lakes.
4. Protects expiring CRP lands
5. Protects, enhances, and restores migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species increasing migratory and breeding success.

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

This proposal stands alone and has no direct ties to other constitutional funds. Pheasants Forever has a long history and proven track record of public land acquisition within the state through RIM, NAWCA, and partnership with MN DNR. This request for Outdoor Heritage funds is part of an overall initiative to

increase and accelerate the acquisition, protection, and restoration of public lands that provide quality wildlife habitat that are open to the public for recreation. The intent of this proposal is to build upon past investments of both public and private land, thus would indirectly tie in to past funding sources from ENRTF, RIM Funding, other WMA acquisition funds. Non-state partner funds (local PF chapter funds, other non-state partner funds, documented donations of land value, and federal funds such as NAWCA) will be used to match OHF grant monies

Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

Before the passage of the OHF, PF would help acquire approximately 1,000 acres of land yearly that had been donated to a public agency. This grant significantly accelerates our ability to acquire priority parcels. We have assigned portions of positions to this project and directly deliver the outcomes outlined in this proposal. In addition, PF has added capacity to assist in the delivery of these types of projects. A new Director of Conservation Programs position was hired in December of 2009 to bring more capacity to deliver the Pheasants Forever habitat mission here in Minnesota. Only documented, direct to project costs will be reimbursed under this grant. Any dollars allocated under personnel that are unused will be moved to acquisition or restoration to accomplish more.

Sustainability and Maintenance

All lands will be enrolled into the state Wildlife Management Area system and will be managed in perpetuity by the Minnesota DNR. All acquired lands will meet the minimum initial development standards for WMAs. In addition, providing high quality habitat and keeping future management concerns in mind, all acquisitions will be restored and/or enhanced to as high quality as practicable, with the belief that quality and comprehensive restorations utilizing native species result in lower management costs. In addition, our local Pheasants Forever chapter members and volunteers maintain a high interest in seeing the habitat and productivity of acquired parcels are at high-quality levels. PF and partners including the DNR and USFWS will develop an ecological restoration and management for each parcel. Grant and partner dollars will be used to for the initial site development and restoration/enhancement work.

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date
Identify priority acquisitions	20 tracts ranked and sellers contacted	12/01/2010
Contract appraisals ordered	10 appraisals ordered	12/01/2011
Purchase agreements	10 options signed	08/01/2012
Re-evaluate tract priority	10 tracts selected & ranked	08/15/2012
Contract appraisals ordered	5 appraisals ordered	09/01/2012
Purchase agreements	5 options signed	12/01/2012
Restoration actions initiated	Restored wetlands and uplands	12/01/2012
Close on optioned tracts	1,275 acres purchased	3/01/2013
Wetland restorations completed	320 acres restored	06/30/2014
<u>Wetland restorations completed</u>	<u>320 acres restored</u>	<u>12/31/2015</u>
Upland restorations completed	955 acres restored	06/30/2014
<u>Upland restorations completed</u>	<u>955 acres restored</u>	<u>12/31/2015</u>
Lands Donated	1,275 acres donated to DNR	10/01/2014
Lands Donated	1,275 acres donated to DNR	6/30/2015

Attachments (*on spreadsheet workbook – 3 separate tabs*):

- A. Budget
- B. Proposed Outcome Tables
- C. Parcel List

No Map is needed for the accomplishment plan

Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet

Name of Proposal:	Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase III
Date:	9-Oct-14
Legal Citation / Proposal Number:	

[Link Here to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

Total Amount of Request \$ 5,500,000 From page 1 on the funding form.

Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
PF Personnel	0	2	\$ 55,000			\$ 55,000
PF Personnel (Revised)	0	2	\$ 50,000			\$ 50,000
						-
Total	0		\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000

Budget and Cash Leverage (All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)

Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel - auto entered from above	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000
Contracts	\$ 241,000	\$ 142,000	PF	\$ 383,000
Contracts (Revised)	\$ 313,000	\$ 142,000	PF	\$ 455,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 6 & 7)	\$ 5,010,000	\$ 465,000	PF	\$ 5,475,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 6 & 7)				-
Easement Acquisition				-
Easement Stewardship				-
Travel (in-state)				-
Professional Services	\$ 144,000			\$ 144,000
Professional Services (Revised)	\$ 77,000			\$ 77,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$ 50,000			\$ 50,000
Other				-
Capital Equipment (auto entered from below)	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools				-
Supplies/Materials				-
	\$ 5,500,000	\$ 607,000		\$ 6,107,000

Capital Equipment (single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
Total	0	0

Attachment B. Outcome Tables

Name of Proposal:	Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase III
Date:	9-Oct-14
Legal Citation / Proposal Number:	

Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same

If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:

Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					0
Protect	255	1020			1275
Enhance					0
Total	255	1020	0	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

1275

These two cells should be the same figure.

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

1275

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					\$ -
Protect	\$ 1,100,000	\$ 4,400,000			\$ 5,500,000
Enhance					\$ -
Total	\$ 1,100,000	\$ 4,400,000	\$ -	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 5,500,000

These two cells should be the same figure.

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 5,500,000

Check to make sure this amount is the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						0
Protect	59			1216		1275
Enhance						0
Total	59	0	0	1216	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

1275

These three cells should be the same figure.

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

1275

Total Acres from Table 1.

1275

Attachment B. Outcome Tables

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						\$ -
Protect	\$ 275,000			\$ 5,225,000		\$ 5,500,000
Enhance						\$ -
Total	\$ 275,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,225,000	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 5,500,000

These two cells should

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 5,500,000

be the same figure.

Check to make sure these amounts are the same

as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	255	1020			1275
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement State PILT Liability					0
NO	255	1020	0	0	

Table 7. Estimated Value of Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$ 1,099,000	\$ 4,396,000			\$ 5,495,000
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					\$ -
Permanent Easement State PILT Liability					\$ -
NO	\$ 1,099,000	\$ 4,396,000	\$ -	\$ -	

FYI: should match total in budget table that is auto entered below

#REF!

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Attachment C. Parcel List

Name of Proposal: Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase III
 Date: 10/9/2014
 Legal Citation / Proposal Number:

County	Township	Range	Direction	Section	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)	Description	Activity R=Restore P=Protect E=Enhance	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)	Number of buildings or other improvements	Description of buildings	Estimated value of improvements	Disposition of improvements (S= sell; D= demolish; R= remove)
Parcel Name															
Pat's Pasture WMA Tr. 5	Cottonwood	105	37	2	29	105370229	182	\$837,200	P	No	Yes				
Graham WMA	Benton	138	30	2	1	138300201	120	\$552,000	P	No	Yes				
Panicum Prairie WMA Tr. 21	Freeborn	101	20	2	31,32	101200231	46	\$211,600	P	No	Yes				
Warsaw WMA Tract 2	Goodhue	111	18	2	5	111180205	20	\$92,000	P	No	Yes				
Teal Lake WMA Tr. 2	Jackson	104	36	2	30	104360230	62	\$285,200	P	No	Yes				
Timber Lake WMA Tr. 14	Jackson	104	36	2	19	104360219	100	\$460,000	P	No	Yes				
Minnkota WMA	Lincoln	113	46	2	6	113460206	220	\$1,012,000	P	No	Yes				
Kvermmo WMA	Lincoln	112	46	2	22	112460222	160	\$736,000	P	No	Yes				
Sanborn Lake WMA Tr. 1	LeSueur	112	23	2	26	112230226	200	\$920,000	P	No	Yes				
Winter WMA	Pipestone	108	46	2	22	108460222	160	\$736,000	P	No	Yes				
Nelson WMA	Pope	123	36	2	28	123360228	80	\$368,000	P	No	Yes				
Voosen WMA	Redwood	112	38	2	19	112380219	640	\$2,944,000	P	No	Yes				
Middlefork Meadows	Stearns	123	34	2	31	123340231	229	\$1,053,400	P	No	Yes				
Prairie Heritage	Stearns	123	34	2	36	123350233	44	\$202,400	P	No	Yes				
Mel Roerhl Tr. 1	Stearns	124,125	35	2	33,5	124350233	197	\$906,200	P	No	Yes				
Platte Lake WMA	Todd	128	35	2	3	128350203	160	\$736,000	P	No	Yes				
Pelican Lake WMA	Wright	120	24	2	16	120240216	59	\$271,400	P	No	Yes				
Beaver Falls	Renville	113	35	2	25	113350225	80	\$368,000	P	No	Yes				
Wild Wings WMA	Lac Qui Parle	116	43	2	22	116430222	55	\$253,000	P	No	Yes				
Byholt Marsh WMA	Chippewa	118	40	2	5	118400205	73	\$335,800	P	No	Yes				
Prairie Heritage WMA Addition Tr. 2	Stearns	123	34	2	26	123340226	160	\$736,000	P	No	Yes				
Ereaux WMA Addition	Morrison	41	31	2	30	41310230	202	\$929,200	P	No	Yes				
Sweetwater WMA Addition	Lac Qui Parle	116	46	2	2	116460202	64.16	\$295,136	P	No	Yes				
Corner WMA	Lac Qui Parle	118	45	2	30	118450230	109	\$501,400	P	No	Yes				
Goehle WMA	Rock	102	45	2	12	102450212	65	\$299,000	P	No	Yes				
Milan WMA Addition	Chippewa	119	42	2	4	119420204	100	\$460,000	P	No	Yes				
Ward Lake Tr. 3	Sibley	113	30	2	4	113300204	38	\$174,800	P	No	Yes				
Teal Scurry WMA Addition	Meeker	121	31	2	6	121310206	66	\$303,600	P	No	Yes				
Mel Roerhl Tr. 2	Stearns	124,125	35	2	33,5	124350233	197	\$1,034,250	P	No	Yes				
Coal Mine Creek WMA	Brown	109	35	2	7	103350207	160	\$840,000	P	No	Yes				
Farhagen WMA	Cottonwood	105	36	2	11	105360211	104	\$840,000	P	No	Yes				
Dennis Haaland WMA Addition	Yellow Medicine	115	43	2	36	115430236	80	\$320,000	P	No	Yes				
Rich Valley WMA Tr. 2	McLeod	116	28	2	20	116280220	114	\$640,000	P	No	Yes				

*This list is dynamic and certain to change and be amended during the grant period. Projects often fall off the list due to landowner interest and other priorities will certainly arise and be added

**We would request the ability to transition viable, unfunded projects from previous PF WMA Prairie Heritage grants.