

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2011 Final Report



Date: October 30, 2014

Program or Project Title: La Salle Lake: Protecting Critical Mississippi Headwaters Habitat

Funds Recommended: \$5,632,000

Manager's Name: Bob McGillivray

Organization: The Trust for Public Land

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Legislative Citation: ML 2011, First Sp. Session, Ch. 6, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(b) AND ML 2012, Ch. 264, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(f)

Appropriation Language: \$4,632,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with The Trust for Public Land to acquire land adjacent to LaSalle Lake in Hubbard County. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan. If the acquisition is not completed by July 15, 2012, or if a balance remains after acquisition of land, the money under this paragraph is available for acquisition under subdivision 2, paragraph (a). ML 2012, Ch. 264, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd 3(f) \$1,000,000 in the second year is added to the appropriation in Laws 2011, First Special Session chapter 6, article 1, section 2, subdivision 3, paragraph (b). Special Session chapter 6, article 1, section 2, subdivision 3, paragraph (b).

County Locations: Hubbard

Regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest

Activity types:

- Restore
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest
- Habitat

Abstract:

Protecting 980-acre LaSalle Lake property adjacent to the Upper Mississippi River, with biologically-significant forest habitat and miles of deep-lake and coldwater stream shoreline, to be managed by multiple DNR divisions.

Design and scope of work:

This project seized a rare opportunity to protect a large area of habitat of regional and statewide significance that includes the entirety of Minnesota's second deepest lake, a coldwater stream, high-quality forest and wetlands, and over a half mile of Mississippi River shoreline. The property is ranked as having Outstanding Biodiversity Significance by the Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS). This unique and important habitat was at risk of development and was listed for sale until The Trust for Public Land (TPL) obtained an option to purchase the property. Protection of the La Salle Lake property was the number one priority for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Northwest Region, and had strong support from multiple DNR divisions and interested stakeholders.

La Salle Lake is one of the most pristine and deepest lakes in Minnesota. It is 221 acres in size, 213 feet deep, and lush with MCBS ranked 'Outstanding Quality' aquatic plant habitat. It is a quality fishery that regularly produces trophy walleye, as well as supporting

healthy populations of northern pike, largemouth bass, black crappie, and bluegill sunfish. Prior to protection, however, there was no public access to the lake. The DNR and the County had unsuccessfully attempted to obtain public access to this fishery for a number of years.

The property also contains over half a mile of La Salle Creek and key access to its upper stretches. The crystal clear creek originates in Itasca State Park approximately 8 miles to the southwest and meanders north along the narrow floor of a glacial tunnel valley with many seeps and springs, and eventually joins the Mississippi River on the property near a popular canoe landing. Portions of La Salle Creek are a designated trout stream because of high water quality, cold water temperatures, and ability to support coldwater fish species like trout. Little fisheries management work had been done here, however, because of limited access. This project improved public access to the creek and will allow a more intensively managed trout fishery.

This land also provides excellent hunting opportunities. Eight and ten point bucks are regularly harvested on the property and ruffed grouse are abundant. The forested uplands and lowlands are characterized by a mixed deciduous-coniferous forest with many fruit and nut-bearing varieties of trees and shrubs. There is also an old-growth northern white cedar forest north of the lake. Rugged terrain sloping steeply to the basin typifies the topography surrounding the lake and the upstream portions of La Salle Creek. Perhaps most importantly, the property serves to connect large parcels of land already in public ownership (Mississippi Headwaters State Forest, Itasca State Park, and county land) guaranteeing wildlife large landscapes in which to roam. Conservation of this land threatened with development greatly helped prevent forest fragmentation and natural resource degradation.

With respect to biodiversity, the property is "Outstanding." Over 90 species of trees and shrubs and more than 140 species of herbaceous plants, including 12 species of orchids, have been surveyed and recorded growing in the area. MCBS has also identified numerous rare, threatened, endangered, and special concern species of plants and animals such as ram's head lady slipper, hair-like sedge, northern oak fern, two species of caddisfly, and trumpeter swan. The property's abundant and diverse landscapes also provide quality habitat for gray wolf, least weasel, fisher, river otter, bald eagle, osprey, common loon and many species of woodland warblers.

The original landowner required that a substantial portion of the property be acquired in the 2010 tax year. Accordingly, the project was structured in two phases. Phase I was acquired in December 2010 consisting of the 269 acres north of Scenic Byway Highway #9. DNR SNA acquired this property with existing funding and it is open to public hunting.

This proposal addressed Phase II, the remaining 721 acres of the property including all of the lake, which needed to close by December 31, 2011. Although DNR plans to manage this property as an integrated resource, some of the portions of the property are more appropriate for different uses than others. There is a small area (less than 100 acres) at the north end of the lake by the highway that has some improvements, such as cabins and an RV campground, which is most appropriately be managed by DNR Parks. (The remaining 621 acres are unimproved). Funding from the Parks and Trails Fund was provided for this park resource area. The East side of the lake contains some of the most environmentally sensitive and rare features most amenable to SNA management. Funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund was provided for this approximately 95 acre area. The West side of the lake has some of the best hunting land and sensitive shoreline and it is for this resource area that funding was sought from L-SOHC. This approximately 528-acre resource area will be managed as WMA/AMA/SNA, although the entire property has been designated as a state recreation area.

The appraised fair market value of this highly developable lakeshore property was \$10,500 per acre. (There was some additional value in some of the improvements at the north end of the lake by the highway, but no funding was sought from L-SOHC for these improvements). The WMA/AMA/SNA resource area consists of approximately 528 acres. Accordingly, for this area, \$5,547,000 Outdoor Heritage Fund funding was provided for land acquisition capital, as well as \$20,000 for DNR land acquisition costs and \$65,000 for initial site development/restoration.

Crops:

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **Not Listed**

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams
- LU8 Protect large blocks of forest land

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Minnesota DNR AMA Acquisition Plan
- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan
- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Which LSOHC state-wide priorities are addressed in this proposal:

- Address conservation opportunities that will be lost if not immediately acted on
- Address wildlife species of greatest conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions, as well as permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species
- Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately equal
- Are able to leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation
- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- Restore or enhance habitat on state-owned WMAs, AMAs, SNAs, and state forests
- Target unique Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Northern Forest:

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas
- Protect forestland through acquisition or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties

Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Parks and Trails Fund

This proposal received funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund for the WMA/AMA/SNA resource portions of this property. The Environment and Natural Resource Trust fund provided funding for acquisition of the SNA resource portion of the property. Funding for acquisition and development costs of the Park portion of the property was provided by the Parks and Trails Fund.

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

La Salle Lake provides nearly one thousand acres of rare habitat and unique terrain for hunters, anglers, and other visitors to enjoy for generations to come. This land provides a connection to Itasca State Park, the Mississippi Headwaters State Forest as well as other publicly owned lands surrounding the property. An innovative management plan coordinated across multiple divisions of the Minnesota DNR was developed and is being implemented. La Salle Lake is the first project to implement this type of cross-division plan in the DNR Northwest Region and will serve as a model for future state land management plans. Management divisions include: Parks and Recreation Division (State Park/ Recreation Area), Division of Ecological Resources (SNA), and Division of Wildlife and Fisheries (WMA & AMA). The plan identifies potential future sources of funding to help ensure the La Salle Lake area will be a well-managed, viable resource for Minnesota. Costs for initial site development of the WMA/AMA/SNA area and restoration of two small fields are included in the budget for this proposal.

Federal Funding:

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **Not Listed**

Outcomes:

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Not Listed

How will they be measured and evaluated?

A large block of forested public land is connected reducing fragmentation, ensuring wildlife a large landscape in which to roam, and providing hunters greater hunting satisfaction. The shoreline of a major lake and stream is protected enhancing water quality, aquatic habitat and angler satisfaction.

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount: \$5,632,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	Request	Spent	Cash Leverage (anticipated)	Cash Leverage (received)	Leverage Source	Total (original)	Total (final)
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Contracts	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$0	\$0		\$65,000	\$65,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$4,547,000	\$5,547,000	\$3,943,000	\$2,943,000	ENRTF & Parks & Trails	\$8,490,000	\$8,490,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$0		\$20,000	\$20,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Total	\$4,632,000	\$5,632,000	\$3,943,000	\$2,943,000		\$8,575,000	\$8,575,000

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	84	84	0	0	84	84
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	217	264	217	264	434	528
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	301	348	217	264	518	612

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$0	\$0	\$65,000	\$65,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,283,500	\$2,783,500	\$2,283,500	\$2,783,500	\$4,567,000	\$5,567,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,348,500	\$2,848,500	\$2,283,500	\$2,783,500	\$4,632,000	\$5,632,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	ForestPrairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	84	84	84	84
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	433	528	433	528
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	517	612	517	612

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	ForestPrairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,567,000	\$5,567,000	\$4,567,000	\$5,567,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,632,000	\$5,632,000	\$4,632,000	\$5,632,000

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles (original)

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles (final)

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Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Hubbard

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
La Salle Lake	14535230	528	\$5,632,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

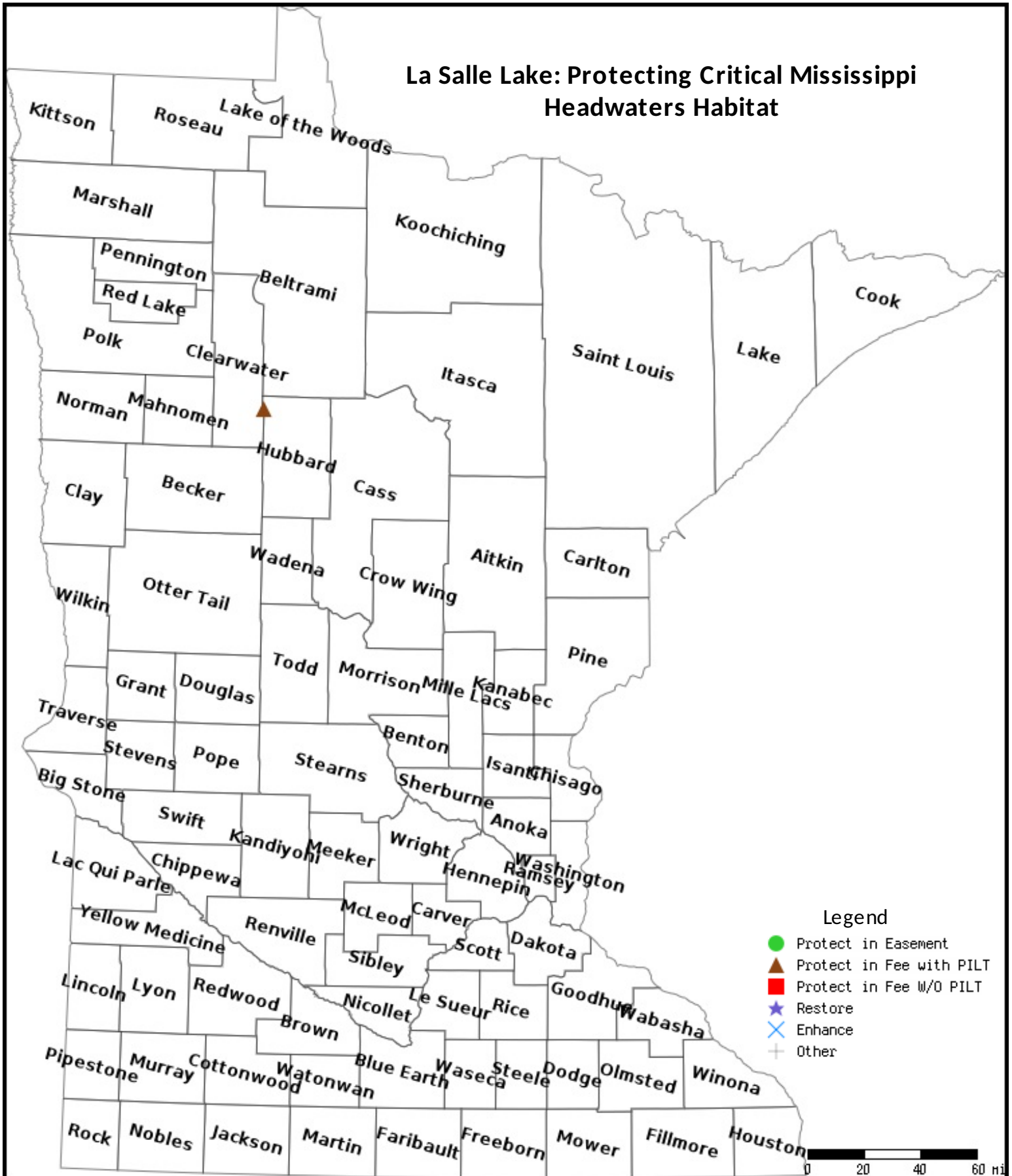
No parcels with an other activity type.

Completed Parcel: La Salle Lake

# of Total Acres:	528
County:	Hubbard
Township:	145
Range:	35
Direction:	2
Section:	30
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	0
# of Acres: Forest:	528
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	0
Amount of Shoreline:	18600 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	La Salle Lake
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	MN DNR
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Chris Weir-Koetter
Annual Reporting Address:	2115 Birchmont Beach Rd. NW
Annual Reporting City:	Bemidji
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56601
Annual Reporting Email:	christine.weir-koetter@state.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	218-308-2679
Purchase Date:	October 27, 2011
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$8,490,000
Appraised Value:	\$8,490,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$282,484
Assessed Value:	\$4,813,200
Total Project Cost:	\$8,490,000
Fees Received:	\$551,850
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	Option Holder
Property Managed By:	Other -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Itasca State Park

Parcel Map

La Salle Lake: Protecting Critical Mississippi Headwaters Habitat



Data Generated From Parcel List