

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2012 Accomplishment Plan



Date: February 18, 2016

Program or Project Title: Enhanced Public Grasslands

Funds Recommended: \$ 1,320,000

Manager's Name: Eran Sandquist

Organization: MN Prairie Chicken Society

Email: esandquist@pheasantsforever.org

Legislative Citation: ML 2012, Ch. 264, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(j)

Appropriation Language: \$1,320,000 in the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Pheasants Forever in cooperation with the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society to restore and enhance habitat on public lands. The criteria for selection of projects must be included in the accomplishment plan. A list of proposed restorations and enhancements must be provided as part of the final report.

County Locations: Not Listed

Regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie

Abstract:

This project will use a combination of invasive tree removal, grazing, seeding, and fire, to improve habitat quality, diversity, and productivity on public lands in Minnesota.

Design and scope of work:

Greater than 95% of Minnesota's prairies have been lost to the plow and development. Many of the remaining acres of native and restored grasslands have been degraded from lack of fire and the spread of invasive trees. Many of these acres have low plant diversity from 1) lack of grazing, a natural and fundamental process in grasslands, or 2) when the grasslands were restored a low diversity or grass only seed mix was used.

Research from across the tallgrass prairie region has shown that trees are almost always detrimental to prairie/grassland wildlife, for several reasons. Tree branches provide perches for hawks, owls, crows, and magpies, while the bases of the trees provide dens for foxes, raccoons, skunks, all of which can prey on eggs or nesting hens.

Carefully managed grazing for conservation almost always increases plant diversity. Several SGCN bird species in the state prefer grazed to ungrazed grasslands. The increase in plant diversity increases invertebrate abundance, providing a food base for grassland birds, while the increase in structural diversity among the plants increases habitat diversity and therefore abundance of many species of grassland birds.

Several candidate species for state or federal listing as endangered are dependent on moderate grazing.

Along with grazing, fire is the primary management tool for managing grassland habitat for waterfowl, gamebirds, and songbirds. This project will increase capabilities of DNR and USFWS to conduct prescribed fires on public lands, including DNR Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA).

Many public hunting areas were purchased as brome fields or were restored using low diversity seed mixes, often only grasses. At these sites, we will overseed into the ash after a fire with a diverse native seed mix.

Each year woody vegetation and invasive species increase on our public hunting lands. Every year we delay management action, the problem becomes larger and the cost increases. The duration of the benefits of this program is ongoing. The goal of this program is to get all WPAs and WMAs into a state where we no longer need mechanical or chemical treatments and high quality habitat can be sustained with maintenance burns.

We have developed an RFP process to solicit enhancement projects for lands open to public hunting lands owned and managed by the DNR and USFWS. MPCS and PF board members, along with staff from these agencies will review and prioritize the projects.

Based on previous projects conducted on DNR and USFWS lands, we anticipate costs as below. The exact acreage and ratios of dollars spent on each category each year will vary depending on proposals.

Prescribed Fire – \$3500/burn
Invasive Tree Removal –\$1200/acre
Conservation Grazing – \$0.80/foot of fencing
Diversity Seeding – \$250/acre

Planning

This project addresses the following conservation plans:

Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare – This plan lists prairie chickens as well as at least twenty-six other bird, invertebrate, and plant species as SGCN. This project will enhance the habitat quality for all these species.

Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan – This project addresses several recommendations. Under Habitat Recommendations, we address 1) protect priority land habitats, 3) improve connectivity, 5) restore land, wetland, and wetland-associated watersheds, 9) overall research on land and aquatic habitats, and 13) habitat and landscape conservation and training programs for all citizens.

Our work directly addresses the Management Option to Support Prairie SGCN species, “prevent the invasion of grassland by trees and shrubs”.

Partners in Flight – This project will improve habitat for all nine of the grassland obligate species in the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Plan (Physiographic Area 40)

Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan – This project will increase habitat quality for at least seventeen species in Bird Conservation Region 11.

Grassland Bird Conservation Areas (GBCA) – This project will improve the habitat quality for all grassland species within these areas.

National Audubon Society 20 Common Birds in Decline – Seven of the twenty birds on this list will benefit from this project.

Ecological Section Vision and Priorities – The project will improve condition of habitats on public lands and restore and enhance upland habitat (priority #1), increase wildlife productivity (#4), and restore and enhance habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species (#7). We will accomplish this by using multiple tools to enhance grassland habitats increasing the quality, diversity, and productivity of our public land grasslands.

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
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Grassland Bird Conservation Area
- National Audubon Society Top 20 Common Birds in Decline
- Partners in Flight Grassland Bird Plan
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare
- U.S. Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan

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

- Not Listed

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

- Not Listed

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

How does this proposal accelerate or supplement your current efforts in this area:

MPCS and PF do not have specific, existing budgets for enhancing of critical prairie chicken habitat within the prairie chicken range of Minnesota. This proposal is the start of a new partnership between the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society, Pheasants Forever, USFWS, and MN DNR focused on managing grassland habitat for gamebirds, waterfowl, and all other species of grassland wildlife.

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

The goal is to accelerate grassland habitat enhancements on our public lands in the prairie region of Minnesota so that we can ensure the long-term productivity and sustainability of wildlife populations.

Activity Details:

Is the activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f) and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 - **Yes**

Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Distribute RFP - Proposals Received	Fall 2012
Present selected projects to LSOHC - Develop final list of projects	Winter 2012-13
Enhancement Work Begins - Award proposals (75)	Winter 2012-13
Enhancement Completed - Completed Projects (75)	June 30, 2017

Date of Final Report Submission: 8/15/2017

Federal Funding:

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

Outcomes:

Programs in prairie region:

- The immediate results will be measured in acres of trees removed, acres reseeded, acres fenced for grazing, and acres burned. The goals of these actions are to improve habitat for grassland game and other wildlife and ultimately increase grassland wildlife productivity. The results of this proposal specifically address several items in the results management framework including 1) improved habitat conditions on public lands, 2) enhanced upland habitat, increased wildlife productivity, 3) enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species, and ultimately 4) healthy, resilient ecosystems that provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and other grassland species.

Budget Spreadsheet

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount

Not Listed

Total Amount of Request: \$ 1320000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Contracts	\$1,270,000	\$0		\$1,270,000
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	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$1,320,000	\$0		\$1,320,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
PF Director of Conservation	0.03	3.00	\$10,000	\$0		\$10,000
PF Regional Staff (2)	0.08	3.00	\$25,000	\$0		\$25,000
PF Grants Staff	0.08	3.00	\$15,000	\$0		\$15,000
Total	0.19	9.00	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000

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	18,500	0	0	18,500
Total	0	18,500	0	0	18,500

Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	0

Table 2. Total 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	\$1,320,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,320,000
Total	\$0	\$1,320,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,320,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	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	0	0	18,500	0	18,500
Total	0	0	0	18,500	0	18,500

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$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	\$0	\$0	\$1,320,000	\$0	\$1,320,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,320,000	\$0	\$1,320,000

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

Parcel List

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

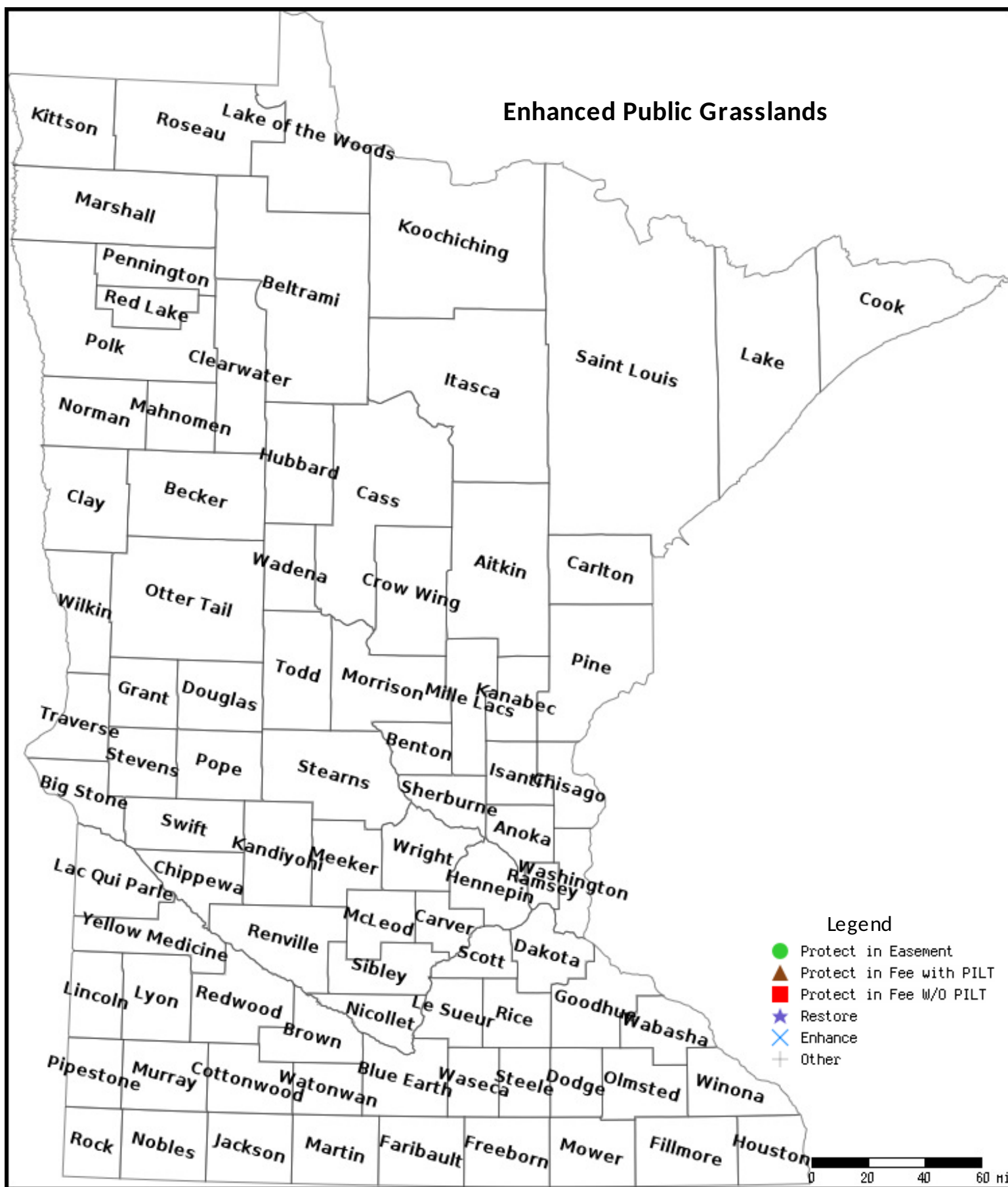
Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List