



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition, Phase VIII

Laws of Minnesota 2016 Final Report

General Information

Date: 10/25/2023

Project Title: DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition, Phase VIII

Funds Recommended: \$3,250,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2016, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(a)

Appropriation Language: \$3,250,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire land in fee for wildlife management purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, and to acquire land in fee for scientific and natural area purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 5. Subject to evaluation criteria in Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority must be given to acquisition of lands that are eligible for the native prairie bank under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands adjacent to protected native prairie. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Patrick Rivers

Title: Fish and Wildlife Land Acquisition Supervisor

Organization: MN Dept. of Natural Resources

Address: 500 Lafayette Road

City: St. Paul, MN 55155

Email: pat.rivers@state.mn.us

Office Number: 651-259-5209

Mobile Number:

Fax Number:

Website:

Location Information

County Location(s): Cottonwood, Stearns, Murray and Chippewa.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

Work resulting from this appropriation resulted in the acquisition, development, and inclusion of 662 acres into the state Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system by way of five acquisitions. The acres acquired exceeded the accomplishment plan goals of 600 acres, and spent 97% of the budget. The acquired acres compliment the WMA program by adding habitat function and natural resource ecosystem services. One of the acquisitions also leveraged \$300,000 in federal funding.

Process & Methods

Through this appropriation the MN DNR protected lands in the prairie ecological section. The MN DNR prioritized our acquisitions to focus on parcels with an existing habitat base, acquisition opportunities that provided connectivity and worked toward building habitat complexes, and opportunities that allowed us to maximize habitat benefits. All acquisitions were a result of a relationship with a willing seller. We scored them using a GIS tool that assigns points based on the natural resource attributes along with other ecological and management criteria. We then ranked them in importance based on their score and input from local DNR land managers. All acquisitions were then subject to County Board review and approval. Five WMA parcels totaling 662 acres are now permanently protected and developed up to minimum standards as a result of acquisitions funded by this program. This exceeded our Accomplishment Plan goal.

How did the program address habitats of significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, threatened or endangered species, and/or list targeted species?

Potential acquisitions for WMAs and SNAs are objectively scored for their habitat value. The DNR uses weighted criteria and prioritizes high scoring parcels for acquisition. For example, candidates for WMAs score higher with a prairie grouse lek, presence of shallow lakes, and occurrence of species in greatest conservation need; and candidates for SNAs score higher with high quality native plant communities and habitat for rare species. Both programs also give priority to parcels that adjoin existing units or other conservation lands.

How did the program use science-based targeting that leveraged or expanded corridors and complexes, reduced fragmentation, or protected areas in the MN County Biological Survey.

DNR uses GIS-based scoring systems to objectively rank potential acquisitions and develop statewide priority lists. These systems incorporate scientific data including native plant community mapping, rare species locations, and watershed/wetland qualities as well as habitat management considerations and suitability for public access, hunting and fishing. Sites of MCBS Biodiversity Significance are highly scored in these systems.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

Collaborative partnerships are an integral part of our work in strategic land acquisition. Partners that we consult and work with include local townships, watershed districts, and counties. In addition we work closely with acquisition partners such as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Trust for Public Lands, and the Nature Conservancy to ensure that we are coordinating our acquisition efforts in a way that maximizes conservation outcomes. We work very closely with counties as we seek resolutions of approval from the County Board of Commissioners for all MN DNR led acquisitions.

Exceptional challenges, expectations, failures, opportunities, or unique aspects of program

Although not unique to this appropriation, a challenge we face is being able to move as quickly as landowners would like us to. Because we submit proposals more than a year before funding is available, our parcel list can change substantially before we can start the acquisition process. Also factoring in is landowner expectation of value in a rapidly escalating market. They hear of sales that commanded very high prices and expect/hope their land is of equal value, but often their land is of inferior quality because we target marginal to poor crop ground for WMA acquisition.

What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this program?

- Other : For WMA acquisitions, DNR often relies on the Small Game Surcharge account. For both WMA and SNA, we often rely on the Critical Habitat Private Sector Matching Account. Also used to help acquire one these parcels was \$300,000 in federal money for pollinator protection.

How were the funds used to advance the program?

Funds from these sources were used augment payments to land owners.

What is the plan to sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

All acquisitions funded through this proposal are state lands, and are part of the state outdoor recreation system. Ongoing management will be accomplished through routine work duties by our network of DNR Area staff. Periodic enhancements will be accomplished by DNR staff, MCC crews, temporary project staffing or through vendor contract using traditional habitat funding, bonding, and future requests for funding from dedicated funding sources.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020 and beyond	Game and Fish funds, Critical Habitat funds	Manage habitats to maximize wildlife benefits consistent with management guidance documentation (e.g., burning, mowing/shearing, timber stand improvement, planting, invasive species control).	Maintain boundaries	Monitor and manage public use

Budget

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$44,000	-	-	-	\$50,000	\$44,000
Contracts	\$156,000	\$181,000	\$148,500	-	-	-	\$156,000	\$148,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$2,924,000	\$2,749,000	\$2,750,100	-	\$369,400	USFWS, Surcharge	\$2,924,000	\$3,119,500
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$152,800	-	-	-	\$100,000	\$152,800
Direct Support Services	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$9,900	-	-	-	\$10,000	\$9,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$10,000	\$110,000	\$59,600	-	-	-	\$10,000	\$59,600
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$3,250,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900	-	\$369,400	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,534,300

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Amount Spent	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Fish and Wildlife Acquisition Coordinator	0.5	2.0	\$44,000	-	-	\$44,000

Direct Support Services

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

DNR calculates the fair share to pay for support costs directly related to and necessary for the appropriation

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

We successfully spent 97% of this appropriation.

Total Revenue: \$0

Revenue Spent: \$0

Revenue Balance: \$0

Of the money disclosed above, what are the appropriate uses of the money:

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Acres (AP)	Total Acres (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	600	662	0	0	0	0	600	662
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	600	662	0	0	0	0	600	662

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

Type	Native Prairie (AP)	Native Prairie (Final)
Restore	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	144	219
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0
Enhance	0	0
Total	144	219

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Funding (AP)	Total Funding (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900	-	-	-	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900	-	-	-	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	600	662	0	0	600	662
Protect in	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Fee w/o State PILT Liability												
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	600	662	0	0	600	662

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900	-	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900	-	-	\$3,250,000	\$3,164,900

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

4235

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Acres of prairie acquired. Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

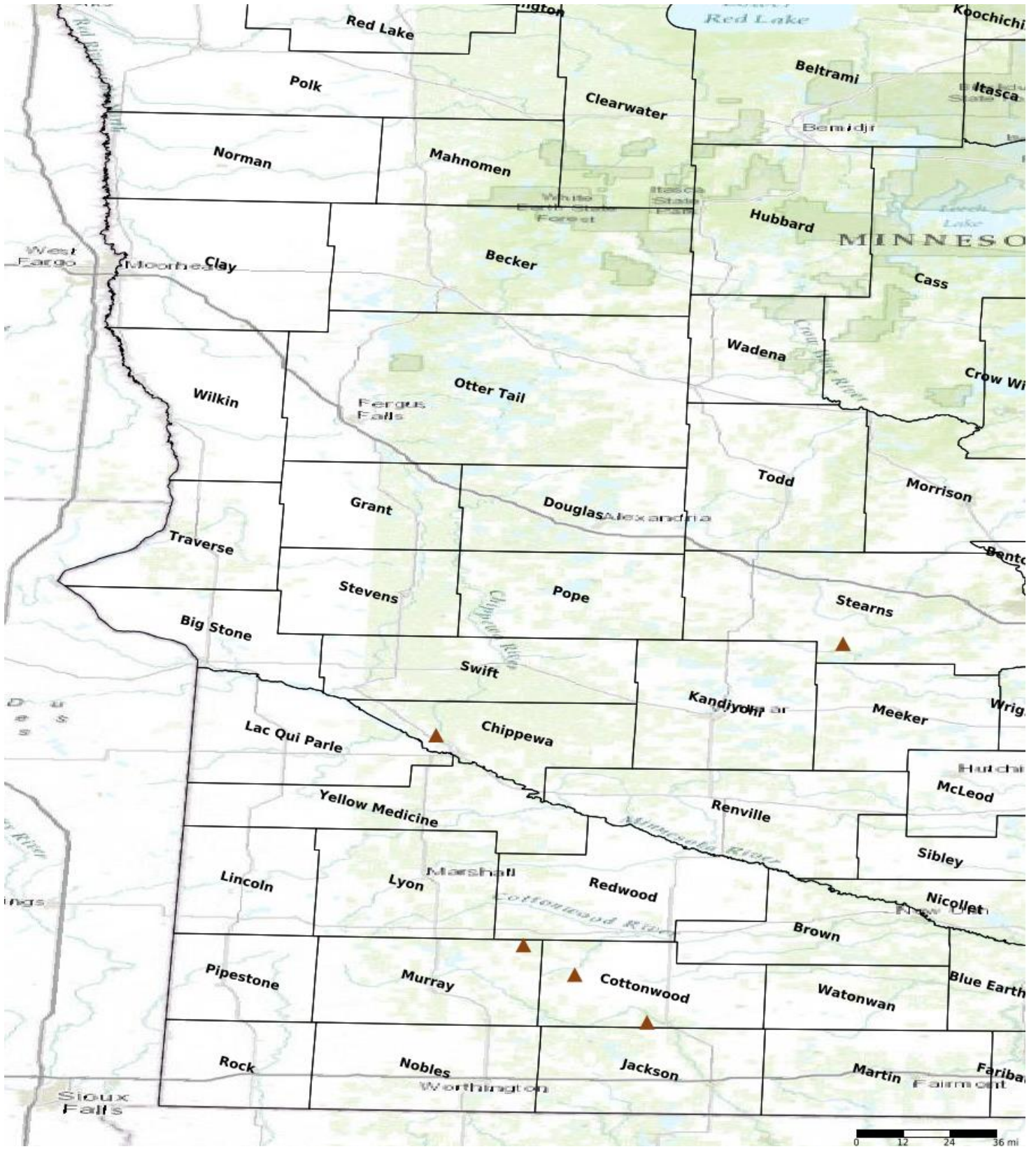
Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Budolfson WMA 10, 10A, 10B	Cottonwood	10738223	128	\$750,000	No
String Lakes WMA Tr11	Cottonwood	10536228	289	\$1,300,000	No
Plum Creek WMA 3	Murray	10839210	56	\$1,006,000	No
Partners WMA tr3	Stearns	12232203	39	\$120,000	No

Fee Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
Bergo WMA 7, 10, 11	Chippewa	11841222	146	\$419,400	No	6	\$96,300

Parcel Map



- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✦ Enhance
- ⊕ Other