



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection Program - Phase V
Laws of Minnesota 2016 Final Report

General Information

Date: 05/03/2022

Project Title: Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection Program - Phase V

Funds Recommended: \$5,801,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2016, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(b)

Appropriation Language: \$5,801,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Ducks Unlimited to acquire in fee and restore prairie lands, wetlands, and land buffering shallow lakes for wildlife management purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8. A list of proposed acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Jon Schneider

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Location Information

County Location(s): Cottonwood, Murray, Lac qui Parle, Blue Earth, Martin, Lincoln and Sibley.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

Ducks Unlimited acquired eight properties totaling 824 acres for restoration/transfer to the Minnesota DNR:

156 acres on Perch Creek WMA in Martin County;
59 acres on Stokman WMA in Blue Earth County;
96 acres on Indian Lake WMA in Sibley County;
96 acres on Hurricane Lake WMA in Cottonwood County;
40 acres on Altona WMA in Lincoln County;
137 acres on Badger Lakes WMA in Murray County;
80 acres on Shetek WMA in Murray County; and,
160 acres on Sweetwater WMA in Lac Qui Parle County.

Each was cropland except 40 acres on Altona WMA, and was fully restored.

Process & Methods

Ducks Unlimited (DU) worked with willing seller private landowners who had previously expressed interest in selling adjacent or very near existing state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) to the Minnesota DNR. Once we directly confirmed the interest of the private landowner in receiving a purchase offer, DU hired private consultant surveyors and appraisers to conduct legal land surveys and appraisals of the land, and made offers to private landowners. Most of these parcels were known by DU and Minnesota DNR in advance of the appropriation, and thus DU moved very quickly. After this ML2016 OHF grant was appropriated, DU closed five acquisitions in fall 2016 and the remaining three acquisitions in 2017. In total, eight parcels totaling 824 acres were acquired by DU, far exceeding our grant goal of 600 acres. As each of these eight parcels were largely cropland, with the exception of the 40-acre parcel on Altona WMA in Lincoln County which was intact wetland and native prairie grassland, significant restoration was required which took DU through June 2021 to fully complete.

DU biologists and engineers worked together with Minnesota DNR area wildlife managers to plan and implement restorations. DU engineers surveyed and designed wetland restorations, and hired private earthmoving construction firms (following state procurement procedures) to disrupt drainage ditches and subsurface drain tile, remove sediment, and install water control structures where needed. To restore upland areas back to native prairie grasslands, DU relied on the expertise of Minnesota DNR wildlife managers and prairie ecologists to select plant species seeds, which were installed by either Minnesota DNR field staff or by private restoration contractors using either native grass seed drills or broadcast seed spreaders, depending on the time of year and preference of the Minnesota DNR manager. Except for some native grass and forb seeding, all restoration work was done by private contractors.

DU used the state OHF expenditures for land acquisitions to leverage over \$200,000 in federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant funds to help pay for restoration costs.

All lands acquired by DU were subsequently transferred to the Minnesota DNR after a one-to-two year hold time, during which DU pay local county taxes due. All lands have been open for public use since acquisition by DU, and have been incorporated in the the state WMA system for long-term management by the Minnesota DNR and public use.

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?

Prairie grasslands with diverse plant species, including many flowering forbs, and prairie pothole wetlands are the limiting habitat for many wildlife species of greatest conservation need (SGCN), and threatened or endangered species. Our land acquisition and restoration work is not targeted at individual species, but at acquiring and restoring land adjacent to existing state-owned WMA lands to make these small patches larger and more functional as prairie-wetland complexes. Some of our land also bordered shallow lakes managed by the Minnesota DNR too, including the parcels acquired on Shetek WMA, Badger Lakes WMA, Stokman WMA, Indian Lake WMA, and Hurricane Lake WMA. As such, these parcels provided small breeding ponds and prairie upland nesting habitat adjacent to larger shallow lake "marshes" that function as brood habitat for both ducks and nongame wildlife. A good example SCGN that benefits from this work is the black tern, which requires prairie pothole wetlands and shallow lakes or marshes in which to feed and breed. This species of terns catch flying insects above wetlands and nest on floating vegetative mat nests in prairie wetlands surrounded by native grasslands, and are simply limited by the sheer loss of prairie wetland complexes in southwestern Minnesota - much the same as many species of ducks.

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.

Ducks Unlimited uses bird conservation science planning maps developed through the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Habitat & Population Evaluation Team (HAPET). Minnesota County Biological Survey information was incorporated in the development of these maps, as was a wide range of other considerations. In addition, the Minnesota DNR evaluates, scores, and ranks their land acquisitions internally, which considers Minnesota County Biological Survey information too, and provides a list of land tracts available to NGO partners from which to choose to pursue. DU considers these Minnesota DNR scores and ranks in choosing which parcels to pursue, within the stated goals and objectives of this OHF grant program which is to purchase and restore prairie lands with drained wetlands and lands on managed shallow lakes for waterfowl and other prairie wildlife species.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

Ducks Unlimited partnered with the Minnesota DNR Section of Wildlife to identify, purchase, and restore lands through this appropriation. In three acquisitions, the parcels were first acquired by The Conservation Fund prior to our appropriation due to short seller timelines. In addition, DU partnered with Pheasants Forever to leverage federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant funds to restore lands acquired. DU also received private philanthropic funds to support our "Living Lakes" conservation initiative that were also used to help acquire and restore lands through this OHF grant program, including Flint Hills Resources, Caterpillar Foundation, the Bame Foundation, the Fox Lake Conservation League, and the Cottonwood County Game & Fish League among others. Some opposition to DU's purchase of the Larson Tract at Sweetwater WMA was expressed by the Lac Qui Parle County Board when DU presented our plans to the County Board in person in 2016.

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

The extensive restoration of seven of the eight parcels acquired presented some challenges in terms of prolonged timelines resulting from complex drainage systems that required extensive drain tile investigations and elevation topographical surveys, engineering design, and consultation with County drainage engineers before work could be conducted. Similarly, restoration of cropland back to native prairie upland vegetation was prolonged by previous farmer use of some herbicides that had multiple year carryover effects, which would have inhibited germination and growth of native seeds planted and required DU and DNR to wait to restore them until those chemicals were

no longer active. Finally, one unique aspect of three of these acquisitions was that, due to short landowner seller timelines that required lands to be sold in 2015 before this appropriation was available, The Conservation Fund first purchased and held three of the land tracts in 2015 for DU to later appraise and purchase.

What other fund may contribute to this program?

- Other : Federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act

How were the funds used to advance the program?

DU partnered with Pheasants Forever to leverage federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant funds to help restore some of the parcels acquired through this OHF appropriation.

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

All eight land tracts have been fully restored and transferred to the Minnesota DNR for long-term management and public use.

Budget

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$250,000	\$230,000	\$223,900	-	\$159,100	-	\$250,000	\$383,000
Contracts	\$500,000	\$520,000	\$523,300	-	\$113,800	Private DU funding and federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant funds leveraged using OHF land acquisition expense	\$500,000	\$637,100
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$4,400,000	\$4,610,000	\$4,585,000	-	\$113,800	Landowner Bargain Sale Land Donations	\$4,400,000	\$4,698,800
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$19,900	-	\$6,700	Private DU funding and federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant funds leveraged using OHF land acquisition expense	\$30,000	\$26,600
Professional Services	\$75,000	\$90,000	\$112,100	-	\$500	Private DU funding and federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant funds leveraged using OHF land acquisition expense	\$75,000	\$112,600
Direct Support Services	\$26,000	\$20,000	\$19,000	\$25,000	-	-	\$51,000	\$19,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$45,200	-	-	-	\$45,000	\$45,200
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$700	-	-	-	\$5,000	\$700
Supplies/Materials	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$97,700	-	\$26,500	Private DU funding and federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant funds leveraged using OHF land	\$400,000	\$124,200

						acquisition expense		
DNR IDP	\$70,000	\$150,000	\$146,900	-	-	-	\$70,000	\$146,900
Grand Total	\$5,801,000	\$5,801,000	\$5,773,700	\$25,000	\$420,400	-	\$5,826,000	\$6,194,100

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Conservation biologist and engineering staff to appraise, purchase, and restore land and wetlands.	2.0	5.0	\$168,900	\$159,100	Private DU funding and federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant funds leveraged using OHF land acquisition expense	\$328,000
Conservation manager to administer and coordinate grant activities and reporting.	0.5	5.0	\$55,000	-	-	\$55,000

Direct Support Services

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

DU DSS costs amount to approximately 10% of our staff personnel costs according to accounting methodology previously reviewed and approved by DNR and LSOHC staff.

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

Ducks Unlimited successfully exceeded our goals, \$12,175 under budget, providing 16 times the amount of private/federal "leverage" anticipated, including bargain sale land value donations on each of the eight parcels acquired totaling \$113,800. This was largely achieved by successfully using the OHF grant funds spent on land acquisition to help leverage federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant funds to help restore those lands in subsequent years. As NAWCA grant funds take 1-2 years to propose and receive, this fit well with our grassland and wetland restoration timelines that often take 3-5 years to fully restore.

Total Revenue: \$0

Revenue Spent: \$0

Revenue Balance: \$0

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

- E. This is not applicable as there was no revenue generated.

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	100	167	500	657	0	0	0	0	600	824
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	100	167	500	657	0	0	0	0	600	824

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	0	30
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0
Enhance	0	0
Total	0	30

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	\$801,000	\$1,173,200	\$5,000,000	\$4,615,600	-	-	-	-	\$5,801,000	\$5,788,800
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$801,000	\$1,173,200	\$5,000,000	\$4,615,600	-	-	-	-	\$5,801,000	\$5,788,800

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	824	0	0	600	824
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	600	824	0	0	600	824

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	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,801,000	\$5,788,800	-	-	\$5,801,000	\$5,788,800
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,801,000	\$5,788,800	-	-	\$5,801,000	\$5,788,800

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species ~ *Prairie grasslands with diverse plant species, including many flowering forbs, and prairie pothole wetlands are the limiting habitat for many wildlife species. Our land acquisition and restoration work is managed by Minnesota DNR*

wildlife managers who monitor wildlife use and response by migratory birds and other species during routine habitat management activities.

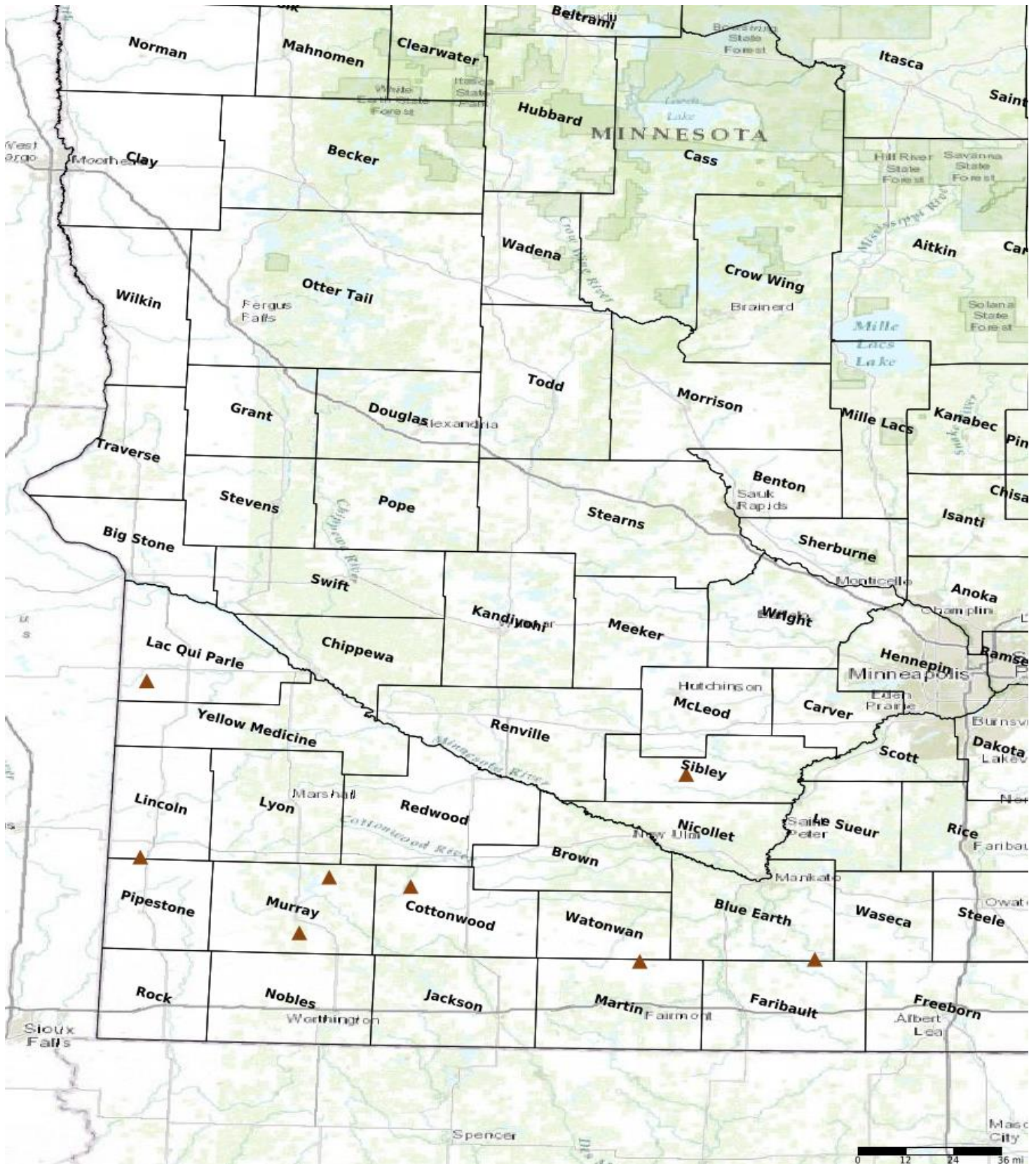
Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Stokman WMA - Tract 10 Yonkey/TCF	Blue Earth	10525233	59	\$500,000	No
Hurricane Lake WMA - Tract 2&2A Bell/TCF	Cottonwood	10837231	96	\$680,000	No
Sweetwater WMA - Tract 13 Larson	Lac qui Parle	11646201	160	\$500,000	Yes
Altona WMA - Tract 7 Peterson	Lincoln	10946236	40	\$100,000	No
Perch Creek WMA - Tract 12A Shoen/TCF	Martin	10430206	156	\$990,000	No
Badger WMA - Tract 2C/D Christensen	Murray	10541202	137	\$980,000	No
Shetek WMA - Richardson Tract 5	Murray	10840222	80	\$500,000	No
Indian Lake WMA - Tract 8 Muchow	Sibley	11329228	96	\$800,000	No



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

Parcel Map
Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection Program -
Phase V
 (Data Generated From Parcel List)