

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2016 Final Report



Date: July 27, 2018

Program or Project Title: Protect (Acquire) Key Forest Habitat Lands in Cass County - Phase VII

Funds Recommended: \$500,000

Manager's Name: Kirk Titus
Title: Land Commissioner
Organization: Cass County
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Legislative Citation: ML 2016, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(f)

Appropriation Language: \$500,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Cass County to acquire land in fee in Cass County for forest wildlife habitat or to prevent forest fragmentation. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

County Locations: Cass

Regions in which work was completed:

- Northern Forest

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest

Summary of Accomplishments:

This project protected 277 acres of forest wildlife habitat in central Minnesota through fee title acquisition of key forest tracts. The title of the acquired lands will be held in fee by Cass County without a PILT obligation.

Process & Methods:

The central Minnesota region, especially areas in Cass County from Brainerd-Baxter to Walker, has and will continue to see some of the fastest population growth in the state. This growth has led to increased demands from use of this area, its natural resources and related public land base is needed to support this growth. Development of these private industrial parcels has resulted in the loss of Jack Pine Barrens in the landscape of Cass County. Industrial forest tracts held by Potlatch are currently being sold to private developers. These lands often provide access to existing public lands for resource management, are in-holdings in otherwise unfragmented landscapes, create contiguous wildlife corridors, and protect larger blocks of land especially useful for stand level management of habitat.

These key industrial forest tracts (i.e. in-holdings in large public land tracts, management access issues) are being considered or currently being offered for sale by a large industrial forest owner (Potlatch Corp) in this area. Market conditions and a willingness by this industrial forest owner to sell at this time is an opportunity that should be addressed now since it is narrow and may close at any time. The strategy is to acquire land that completes existing habitat corridors. The land acquired has existing forest access roads that have been used for management access for years. The sale of these lands to private individuals has already resulted in the loss of access for resource management on public lands and conversion from forest to agricultural use. The acquired lands were not being

pursued for convenience of management.

The acquired parcels play a key role in future management plans of the Jack Pine Barrens including the role of fire as a management tool. The loss of these parcels to private ownership would have resulted in lost access and possibly loss of forest land. Management of adjacent public lands would have been limited to frozen ground conditions which eliminates management tools such as site preparation, aerial seeding and prescribed burning for Jack Pine regeneration. This type of management requires year round access to existing public lands in the Jack Pine barrens landscape as well as protecting habitat in and around the surrounding areas.

The Cass County Forest Resource Management Plan directs the County to acquire land of this nature whenever possible to protect the management access. The Cass County Comprehensive plan requires no net loss of acres of public land and local unit of government input on all purchases and land sales. This project met the requirements of both plans and required stakeholder's input as part of the project. All purchases in this project were supported by both the County and Townships.

The Carder 160 parcel adjoins approximately 8,500 acres public land that provides a large contiguous block of wildlife corridor and habitat. This acquisition also permanently protects over 1,200 feet of undeveloped shoreline on the Boy River. This parcels adjoins other county managed lands at the Deep Portage Reserve where a recent bird count study was completed. From Dr. Gerald Niemi's report, "the results of the counts in 2016 reveal a diverse avifauna at Deep Portage, including five species defined by Audubon Minnesota as stewardship species in Minnesota and four species identified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as Species of Greatest Conservation Need". Study results included 47 different bird species and nearly a thousand individuals were observed during a 3 day period on the one square mile plot. Niemi also reports that "Forest management at the site should be reviewed to determine how this management has facilitated or maintained such a high population of Golden-winged Warbler as well as several other species of concern in Minnesota". This acquisition supports the habitat needs of 47 different bird species.

Likewise, the Powers 40 acquisition adjoins the same 8,500 acres of public land as described above.

The May Potlatch 40 is a located less than 10 miles away from the rapidly developing area of Brainerd-Baxter. This key acquisition consolidates a 640 acre block of wildlife habitat while guaranteeing a permanent public access for hunting and forest management purposes.

The Bullmoose 40 parcel is surrounded by county managed land on 3 sides and is located in the middle of a 16,000 block of public managed land in Bull Moose Township. This parcel provides wildlife habitat for species like black bear, timberwolf, bobcat and pine martin.

The Cass County Land Department has been in business for over 60 years. The staff of professional foresters over 140 years of natural resource management experience. The County managed forest lands have been certified to the Forest Stewardship Council forest certification standard since 2000. This certification is a rigorous third-party audit of the counties forest management practices and operations and insures to residents, taxpayer and visitors that these forest lands are managed in a sustainable manner.

Cass County continues to show a proven record of success. Since the county was awarded its first grant in 2010, this final report marks the seventh closed Outdoor Heritage Fund grant. This is a program that performs because of our accountability to the local taxpayers.

How does the request address MN habitats that have: historical value to fish and wildlife, wildlife species of greatest conservation need, MN County Biological Survey data, and/or rare, threatened and endangered species inventories:

This request is targeting land that has been historically open to public hunting and fishing or land that has been used to access public land that has been open to public hunting and fishing. The request also targets lands with a high potential for rare, threatened and endangered species. These species include but are not limited to the Northern Long Eared Bat and the Blanding's Turtle.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

The science based planning and evaluation model used for selecting parcels comes from the Forest Resource Management Plan. Parcels are selected based on location, access, habitat, and the support of local units of government.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition:

All of the acquisitions had the support from the local township boards.

Additional Comments:

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

Not Listed.

Other Funds Received:

- Not Listed

How were the funds used to advanced the program:

Not Listed

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

The Cass County Land Department manages all County Administered lands under our Forest Resource Management Plan. This management plan requires that operations are maintained from revenue generated from timber sales. Cass County has a long history of covering our operation costs with timber revenue. The lands acquired will be managed under this same plan. These lands are not eligible for PILT payments. MN Statute 477A.11 defines lands that are eligible as being held by the state in fee or tax forfeited. The acquired lands for this project will be held in fee by Cass County and therefore are not eligible for PILT payments. There will be no ongoing cost to the State of MN for the acquisition of these lands. Based on 2017 operating costs, future maintenance costs will be approximately \$5.06 per acre per year.

Explain the things you will do in the future to maintain project outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2019	Cass County	Incorporated parcels into County geographic information system		
2020	Cass County	Complete forest inventory	Update forest work plan	
2021	Cass County	Manage timber resource as plan directs		
2022	Cass County	Plant trees as needed		

Outcomes:

The original accomplishment plan stated the program would

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Landlocked public properties have increased access for land managers *We measure this outcome by the number of miles of public property line that are eliminated, the number of land locked public land acres that are opened to the public, and the number of acres of public land that are opened for year round management access.*

How will the outcomes be measured and evaluated?

Forest habitat protection is measured by acres of land purchased, acres of existing public land made accessible, miles of waterfront habitat protected, and miles of property line eliminated. This project has provided permanent protection to over 277 acres of forest habitat land, year round forest management access to an existing 600 acres, protected 1,200 feet of shoreline habitat, and eliminated 1.5 miles of public property line. The projected also provided habitat corridors for numerous endangered and threatened species including Northern Long Eared Bat, Blanding's Turtle, and the Golden Winged Warbler.

Budget Spreadsheet

Final Budget line item reallocations are allowed up to 10% and do not need require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

Total Amount: \$500,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	Request	Spent	Cash Leverage (anticipated)	Cash Leverage (received)	Leverage Source	Total (original)	Total (final)
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$18,000	Cass County	\$18,000	\$18,000
Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$16,300	Cass County	\$500,000	\$516,300
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	\$12,000	Cass County	\$0	\$12,000
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
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	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$18,000	\$46,300		\$518,000	\$546,300

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	Spent	Cash Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Land Commissioner	0.25	7.00	\$0	\$18,000	Cass County	\$18,000
Total	0.25	7.00	\$0	\$18,000		\$18,000

Amount of Request: \$500,000
 Amount of Leverage: \$18,000
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 3.60%
 DSS + Personnel: \$0
 As a % of the total request: 0.00%

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

One hundred percent of the grant dollars went to the fee acquisition. Personnel and professional service costs were covered by Cass Co Land Dept.

All revenues received by the recipient that have been generated from activities on land with money from the OHF:

Total Revenue: \$0
 Revenue Spent: \$0
 Revenue Balance: \$0

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	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	377	277	0	0	377	277
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	377	277	0	0	377	277

Table 2. Total 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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000
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	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000

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	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	377	277	377	277
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	377	277	377	277

Table 4. Total 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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
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	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre 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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,326	\$1,805	\$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

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by 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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,326	\$1,805	\$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

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

.15

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

.28

Explain the success/shortage of acre goals:

The shortage on the acreage goal was caused by a rising real estate market.

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Cass

Name	TRDS	Acres	OHF Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?	Description
Bullmoose 40	13831228	40	\$30,050	No	Full	Full	NESW
Carder 160	14030235	157	\$347,300	No	Full	Full	N½ of N½
May Potlatch 40	13431236	40	\$63,000	No	Full	Full	SESW
Powers 40	13930215	40	\$55,000	No	Full	Full	NENE

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: Bullmoose 40

# of Total Acres:	40
County:	Cass
Township:	138
Range:	31
Direction:	2
Section:	28
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	40
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Kirk Titus
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	kirk.titus@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	218-947-7501
Purchase Date:	June 19, 2018
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$46,300
Appraised Value:	\$46,300
Professional Service Costs:	\$5,600
Assessed Value:	\$46,600
Total Project Cost:	\$46,300
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Local Unit of Government - Cass County Land Dept
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County Land Dept

Completed Parcel: Carder 160

# of Total Acres:	157
County:	Cass
Township:	140
Range:	30
Direction:	2
Section:	35
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	157
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	1220 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	Boy River
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Kirk Titus
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	kirk.titus@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	218-947-7501
Purchase Date:	January 05, 2018
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$347,300
Appraised Value:	\$347,300
Professional Service Costs:	\$3,142
Assessed Value:	\$188,900
Total Project Cost:	\$347,300
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Local Unit of Government - Cass County Land Dept.
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass Co Land Dept.

Completed Parcel: May Potlatch 40

# of Total Acres:	40
County:	Cass
Township:	134
Range:	31
Direction:	2
Section:	36
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	40
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Kirk Titus
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	kirk.titus@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	218-947-7501
Purchase Date:	December 14, 2016
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$63,000
Appraised Value:	\$63,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$1,366
Assessed Value:	\$62,100
Total Project Cost:	\$63,000
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Local Unit of Government - Cass County Land Dept.
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County Land Dept

Completed Parcel: Powers 40

# of Total Acres:	40
County:	Cass
Township:	139
Range:	30
Direction:	2
Section:	15
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	40
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	
Amount of Shoreline:	
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	Cass County
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Kirk Titus
Annual Reporting Address:	PO Box 25
Annual Reporting City:	Backus
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	56435
Annual Reporting Email:	kirk.titus@co.cass.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	218-947-7501
Purchase Date:	January 03, 2017
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$55,000
Appraised Value:	\$55,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$1,416
Assessed Value:	\$66,000
Total Project Cost:	\$55,000
Fees Received:	\$0
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	Other (Explain) -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Cass County Land Dept.

Parcel Map

Protect (Acquire) Key Forest Habitat Lands in Cass County - Phase VII

