



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition - Phase IX

Laws of Minnesota 2017 Final Report

General Information

Date: 11/04/2022

Project Title: DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition - Phase IX

Funds Recommended: \$4,437,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 2(a)

Appropriation Language: \$3,064,000 in the first year and \$1,373,000 in the second year are to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire in fee and restore lands for wildlife management purposes under Minnesota Statutes 86A.05, subdivision 8 and to acquire land in fee for scientific and natural area purposes under Minnesota Statutes, sections 86A.05, subdivision 5. Subject to evaluation criteria in Minnesota Rules 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: Jay Johnson

Title: Division of Fish and Wildlife Land Acquisition Coordinator

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Location Information

County Location(s): Lincoln, Big Stone, Redwood, Murray and Chippewa.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie
- Southeast Forest

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie
- Forest

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

Work resulting from this appropriation resulted in the acquisition, development, and inclusion of 964 acres into the state Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system by way of five acquisitions. The acres acquired met the accomplishment plan goals of 960 acres, and spent 96% of the budget. The acquired acres compliment the WMA program by adding habitat function and natural resource ecosystem services.

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 964 acres are now permanently protected as a result of acquisitions funded by this program. This met 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.

The 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

One challenge is, we submit our initial proposals with proposed acquisition parcel lists in late May. We don't receive funding until a year after we submit the proposal. Often, parcels we planned our proposal and final accomplishment plans around, are no longer available by the time we have funding appropriated and can pursue the acquisition. As such it makes accurate forecasting, and budgeting for land costs, professional services costs, and IDP costs difficult. A second and ongoing challenge we have in acquiring land is, the difference between appraised value and a landowners expectations as to what their land is worth. Because of this, we do have a certain percentage of landowners that reject our offer. A third is the high turnover in available parcels. This is especially challenging in periods of high demand for land. We often cannot act fast enough, and miss opportunities.

What other fund may contribute to this program?

- Other : Other state land acquisition budgets such as Critical Habitat Private Sector Matching Account and Small Game Surcharge.

How were the funds used to advance the program?

Funds from these sources were used augment payments to land owners, and help cover professional services.

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
2023 and beyond	Game and Fish Fund; other dedicated 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	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$19,900	-	-	-	\$75,000	\$19,900
Contracts	\$260,000	\$100,000	\$87,700	-	-	-	\$260,000	\$87,700
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$3,900,000	\$3,900,000	\$3,867,000	-	\$212,000	Surcharge and RIM	\$3,900,000	\$4,079,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$9,000	\$29,000	\$2,200	-	-	-	\$9,000	\$2,200
Professional Services	\$125,000	\$205,000	\$172,800	-	\$15,900	Surcharge and RIM	\$125,000	\$188,700
Direct Support Services	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	-	-	-	\$20,000	\$20,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$48,000	\$108,000	\$78,400	-	-	-	\$48,000	\$78,400
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$4,437,000	\$4,437,000	\$4,248,000	-	\$227,900	-	\$4,437,000	\$4,475,900

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
FAW Land Acq Staff	0.33	3.0	\$19,900	-	-	\$19,900

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 uses a standardized spreadsheet that has been developed by our Office of Management and Budget Services.

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

We feel we were very successful in spending tis budget to accomplish the stated goals. One challenge that occurs with these appropriations is accurate budget forecasting in the face of parcel turnover. We submit our initial proposals with proposed acquisition parcel lists in late May. We don't receive funding until a year after we submit the proposal. Often, parcels we planned our proposal and final accomplishment plans around, are no longer available by the time we receive funding. This is a challenge, but we have been able to overcome it.

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	685	964	275	0	0	0	960	964
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	685	964	275	0	0	0	960	964

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	225	27
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0
Enhance	0	0
Total	225	27

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	-	-	\$3,665,000	\$4,248,000	\$772,000	-	-	-	\$4,437,000	\$4,248,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$3,665,000	\$4,248,000	\$772,000	-	-	-	\$4,437,000	\$4,248,000

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	275	0	685	964	0	0	960	964
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	275	0	685	964	0	0	960	964

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	-	-	-	-	\$772,000	-	\$3,665,000	\$4,248,000	-	-	\$4,437,000	\$4,248,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	\$772,000	-	\$3,665,000	\$4,248,000	-	-	\$4,437,000	\$4,248,000

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

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.*

Programs in southeast forest region:

- High priority riparian lands, forestlands, and savannas are protected from parcelization and fragmentation ~ *No acquisitions were completed in the SE Forest.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

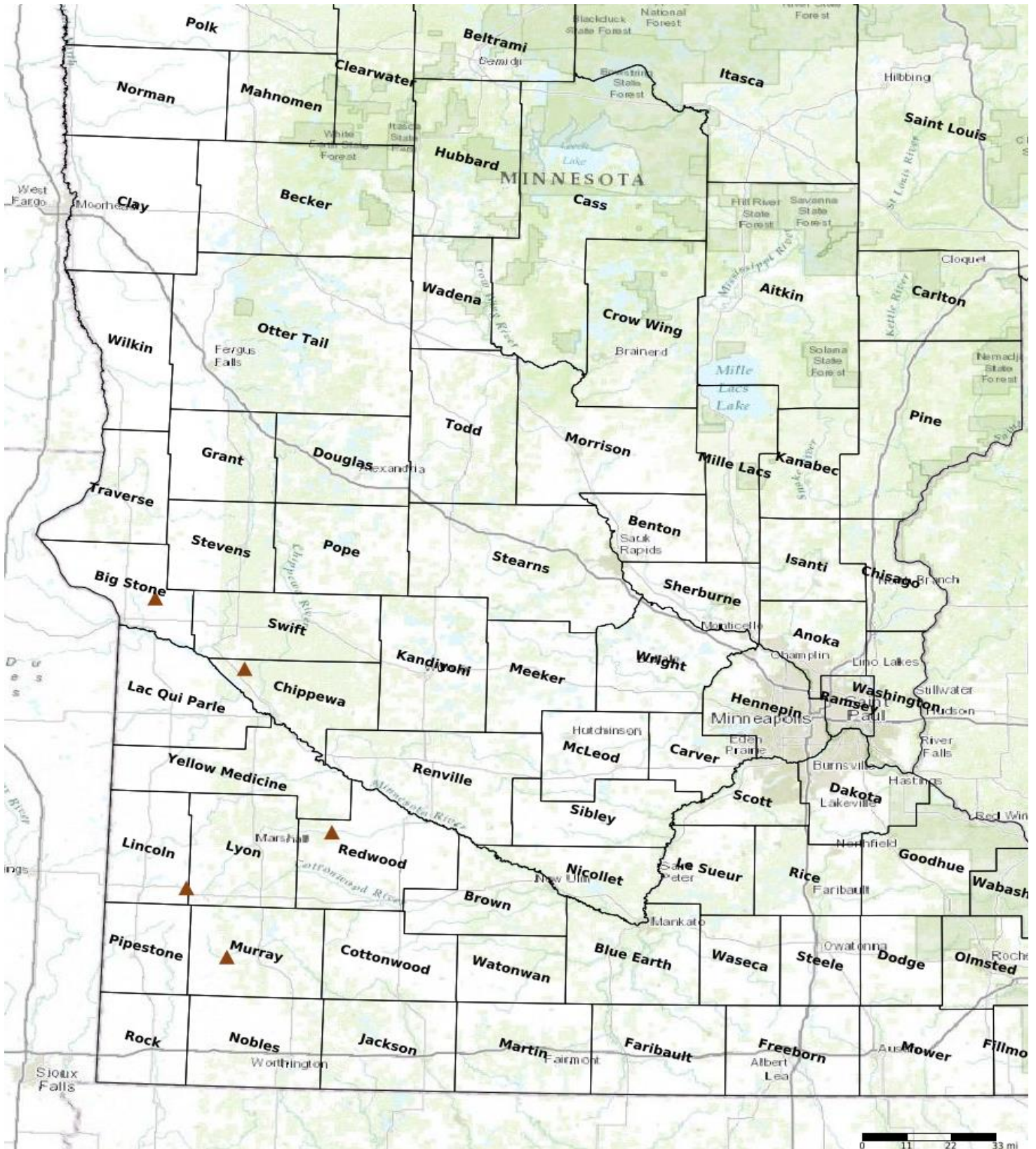
Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Otrey WMA Tr3,3A &12	Big Stone	12245215	50	\$1,000,000	No
Benderberg WMA tr20	Chippewa	11942213	160	\$532,000	No
Peters WMA Tr2 & 2a	Murray	10642209	126	\$620,000	No
Phyllis Voosen WMA	Redwood	11238220	311	\$1,048,000	Yes

Protect Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
Hopeful WMA Tr3	Lincoln	10944212	320	\$1,268,000	No	1	\$0

Parcel Map



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