Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2017 Final Report

General Information

Date: 11/02/2020

Project Title: Minnesota Forests for the Future - Phase V

Funds Recommended: $2,291,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 3(d)

Appropriation Language: $2,291,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire land in easements for forest, wetland, and shoreline habitat through working forest permanent conservation easements under the Minnesota forests for the future program pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 84.66. A conservation easement acquired with money appropriated under this paragraph must comply with Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 13. The accomplishment plan must include an easement monitoring and enforcement plan. Of this amount, up to $72,000 is for establishing a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of permanent conservation easements must be provided as part of the final report.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Christine Ostern
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Location Information

County Location(s): Crow Wing.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

This Minnesota Forests for the Future project protected 178 acres of forest, forested wetlands, shoreline, shoreland wetland and other riparian areas with a perpetual working forest conservation easement in Crow Wing County ensuring public benefits, management access and sustainably managed forests.

Process & Methods

The current project targeted the first of a two-phased project on one property: a large privately owned publicly accessible property with lake shoreland and other riparian areas adjacent to already permanently conserved easement property located in an area of high forest conversion threat in Crow Wing County.

LSOHC appropriations target priority projects as determined by the scoring criteria developed in consultation with the Minnesota Forests for the Future Advisory Committee (stakeholder group). Projects may need to be scaled back or phased to accommodate the available funding. The project included in this report was located within a program priority area as identified by a GIS model that integrates recreational, ecological and economic data.

This project addressed forest fragmentation, habitat degradation, recreational and management access and sustainable forestry through a perpetual conservation easement that will protect the forest, riparian and wetland habitats in perpetuity, restrict forest parcelization and development, provide for public management access and promote sustainable forest management practices.

The Minnesota Forests for the Future and Federal Forest Legacy Programs have proven to be cost effective programs for protecting private forest land habitat in Minnesota, while also providing public recreational and agency management access and ensuring sustainable forestry. These programs have protected over 358,000 acres to date at an average cost of less than $300/acre. Over $24 million in non-state funds have been leveraged for these protection efforts over the past 10 years.

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?

The project area provides a wide diversity of habitats to many fish, game and non-game wildlife species found in north-central Minnesota including gray wolf, black bear, Canada lynx, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, spruce grouse, waterfowl, forest songbirds, and trout and other fish. With over 100 feet of high quality lake shoreline, 20 acres of shoreland wetland and other wetland and riparian areas the project area provides the critical shoreland habitats that are essential to many fish and wildlife populations. The project area lies in the transition area between the conifer dominated boreal forests of the north and deciduous forest to the south that together with the array of streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands provides a rich mosaic of habitats that support these species. The project area is identified by the MCBS as high/moderate sites of biodiversity significance.

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.

Land proposed for protection has been identified through GIS modeling analysis that incorporated multiple criteria to identify the highest priority private forest lands for permanent conservation. The criteria focus on conserving

lands that provide habitat and other environmental benefits, outdoor recreation opportunities including hunting & fishing, and which support sustainable forestry.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

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

The Minnesota Forests for the Future and Federal Forest Legacy Programs have proven to be cost effective programs for protecting private forest land habitat in Minnesota, while also providing public recreational and agency management access and ensuring sustainable forestry. These programs have protected over 358,000 acres to date at an average cost of less than $300/acre. Over $24 million in non-state funds have been leveraged for these protection efforts over the past 10 years.

Exceptional challenges with this appropriation were: 1) extraordinary delay in receiving the executed planned federal match for which an extension in the appropriation was requested and denied; and 2) a hold on spending the appropriation for the "claw back" of funding due to the Covid-19 crisis.

What other funds contributed to this program?

- Other : U.S. Forest Service

How were the funds used to advance the program?

Forest Legacy Program matching funds were received from the U.S. Forest Service but were unable to be used for this appropriation because of the delay in receiving them and the denial of an extension request. However, federal funds for administrative costs were obtained and used to further program and project development.

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

All lands protected through permanent conservation easements will be sustained through standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship that have been developed and implemented in the forest easement program over the past 15 years. Our easement stewardship program incorporates annual landowner meetings, annual on-site monitoring of all properties, records management, responding to landowner inquiries , tracking ownership changes and addressing and resolving easement violations. Funding for the easement stewardship is included in the current proposal. Stewardship funds will be transferred to the designated easement stewardship account and interest earned from the account will fund the annual stewardship and monitoring work for the easement. All easements will have baseline property reports, forest stewardship plans and easement monitoring plans prepared prior to closing of the project.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
June 30, 2020	OHF	Ensure funding is available in dedicated stewardship account per OHF appropriation and accomplishment plan.	Develop Forest Stewardship Plan prior to closing.	Develop Baseline Property Report and Easement Monitoring Plan prior to closing.
Annually, Perpetually	OHF - Easement Monitoring Account	Monitor easements annually and enforce easement terms.	Annual landowner meetings and on-site visits to easement property.	Review forest management activities annually and review and update Forest

				Stewardship Plans periodically.

Budget

Totals

Item	Request	Spent	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	$15,000	$800	-	$20,000	-	$15,000	$20,800
Contracts	$10,000	$6,700	-	-	-	$10,000	$6,700
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$2,135,000	$920,200	$1,130,000	-	TNC and U.S. Forest Service	$3,265,000	$920,200
Easement Stewardship	$72,000	$47,000	-	-	-	$72,000	$47,000
Travel	$2,000	-	-	-	-	$2,000	-
Professional Services	$50,000	$10,800	-	-	-	$50,000	$10,800
Direct Support Services	$6,000	-	-	-	-	$6,000	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$1,000	-	-	-	-	$1,000	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$2,291,000**	**$985,500**	**$1,130,000**	**$20,000**	**-**	**$3,421,000**	**$1,005,500**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Project Coordinator	0.1	2.0	$800	$20,000	USFS	$20,800

Explain any budget challenges or successes:
Exceptional challenges with this appropriation were: 1) extraordinary delay in receiving the executed planned federal match for which an extension in the appropriation was requested and denied; and 2) a hold on spending the appropriation for the "claw back" of funding due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Total Revenue: $0

Revenue Spent: $0

Revenue Balance: $0

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

- D. This is not applicable because the recipient is a state agency or department.
- 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	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	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	4,000	178	0	0	4,000	178
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4,000**	**178**	**0**	**0**	**4,000**	**178**

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	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	$2,291,000	$985,500	-	-	$2,291,000	$985,500
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,291,000**	**$985,500**	**-**	**-**	**$2,291,000**	**$985,500**

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	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

State PILT Liability												
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,000	178	4,000	178
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4,000**	**178**	**4,000**	**178**

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	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	$2,291,000	$985,500	$2,291,000	$985,500
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,291,000**	**$985,500**	**$2,291,000**	**$985,500**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	$572	$5,536	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

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)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Liability										
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	$572	$5,536
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

100

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

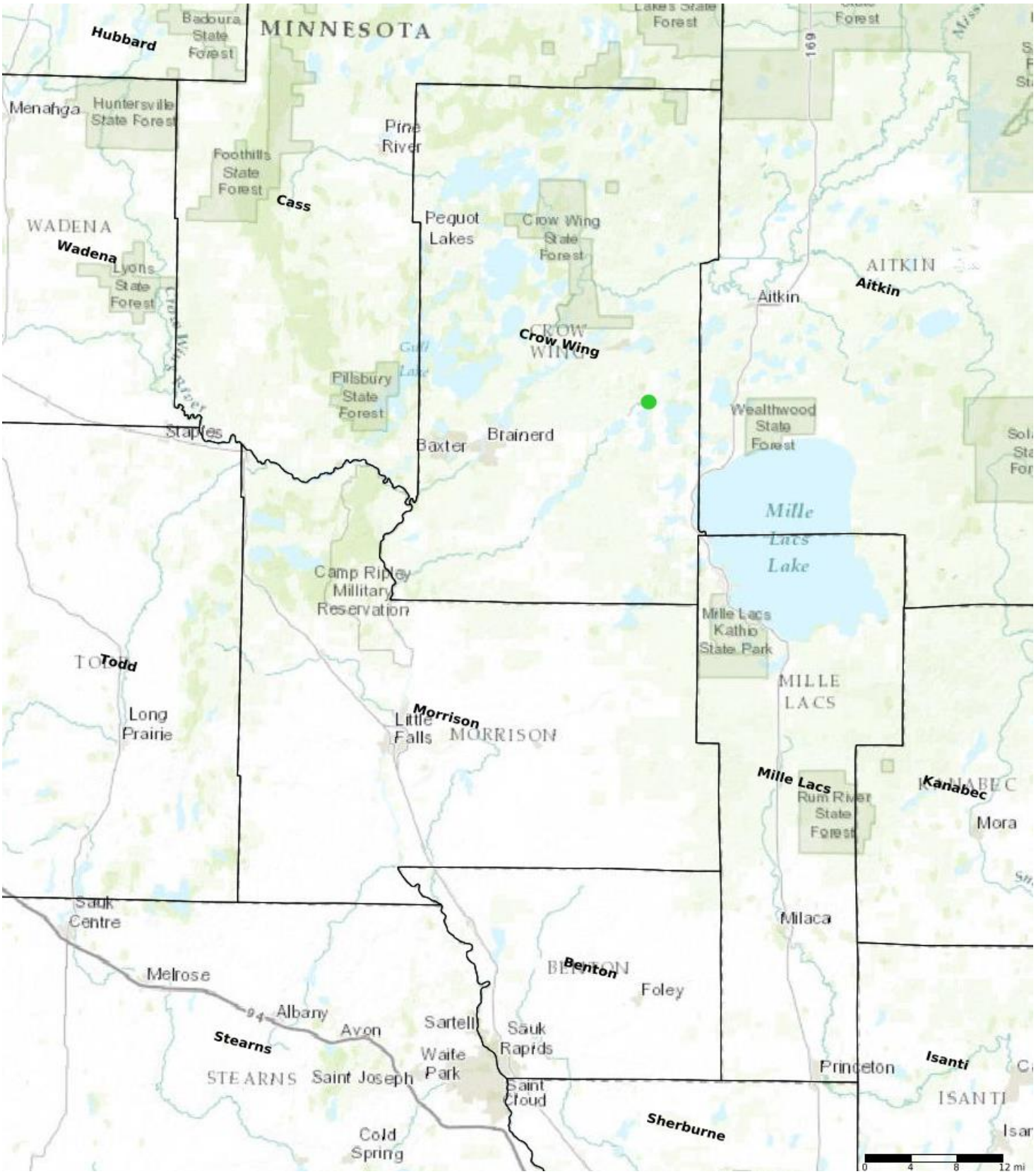
- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ Forestlands were protected from development and fragmentation; forestlands were permanently protected from conversion to non-forest uses by permanent working forest conservation easements which will reduce potential development and fragmentation and consolidate public ownership in larger blocks that are sustainably managed by the Department of Natural Resources.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?
No

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Parcel 11 Clearwater	Crow Wing	04528205	178	$985,500	No



- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- Restore
- Enhance
- Other

Parcel Map
Minnesota Forests for the Future - Phase V
(Data Generated From Parcel List)