



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2018 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 08/06/2021

Project Title: DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition, Phase X

Funds Recommended: \$2,786,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 2(a)

Appropriation Language: \$2,786,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire in fee and restore lands for wildlife management under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, and to acquire lands in fee for scientific and natural areas under Minnesota statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 5. Subject to evaluation criteria in Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority must be given to acquiring 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:

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Location Information

County Location(s): Murray, Yellow Medicine, Big Stone, Renville, Lincoln, Itasca, Clay, Chippewa, Martin, Brown, Cottonwood, Hubbard, Lac qui Parle, Kandiyohi, Becker, Cook, Rice, Norman, Stearns, Watonwan and Lyon.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie
- Forest

Narrative

Abstract

Acquire 470 acres of high priority habitat for designation as Wildlife Management Area (Prairie Planning Section) or Scientific and Natural Area (Prairie, and Northern Forest Planning Sections) emphasizing Prairie Conservation Plan implementation and coordination with partners. All lands will be open for public hunting and fishing (a limited number of SNA's are proposed for limited hunting for instance archery only or hunting but no trapping). Accomplishments are based on \$5,000 per acre average and should be considered a minimum estimate.

Design and Scope of Work

Approximately 470 acres of wildlife habitat will be protected through fee title acquisition and development as Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs, 350 acres) and Scientific & Natural Areas (SNAs, 120 acres). While no match is indicated in this proposal, Outdoor Heritage appropriations to DNR for WMA and SNA acquisitions have been matched by donations, Reinvest in Minnesota Critical Habitat Match, and Surcharge (a \$6.50 surcharge on small game license sales to be used in part for land acquisition) at approximately 25% (1 dollar of match to 4 dollars of OHF).

Wildlife Management Areas. WMAs protect lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and develop and manage these lands and waters for public hunting, fishing and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses such as wildlife watching and hiking. While highly successful, the current WMA system does not meet all present and future needs for wildlife habitat, wildlife population management, hunter access, and wildlife related recreation. This is notably true in the Prairie Ecological planning section where public ownership in many counties is 2 percent or less. DNR Section of Wildlife uses a GIS-based tool to identify the highest priority tracts for potential WMA acquisitions. This quantitative approach scores and ranks acquisition proposals based on a set of weighted criteria and creates a standardized method for evaluating proposed acquisitions on a statewide level.

Criteria and weights are periodically reviewed and adapted to changing conditions and priorities. This ensures that funds are used to acquire available lands consistent with the statutory purpose of WMAs. The WMA acquisition program is guided by the 2002 Citizens' Committee report developed with a diverse group of eleven major stakeholder groups. Potential acquisition opportunities from willing sellers are coordinated with stakeholders and partners to eliminate duplication and identify concerns and support. Coordinating with partners has been successful to ensure we are working cooperatively and on priority parcels.

Scientific & Natural Areas. The SNA Program will increase public hunting and fishing opportunities while protecting sites with outstanding natural values. Protection is targeted at high priority areas identified in the SNA

Strategic Land Protection Plan with emphasis on prairie core areas identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. A quantitative system scores and ranks acquisition proposals based on a weighted set of six criteria. Priority is given to sites of high and outstanding biodiversity significance by the Minnesota Biological Survey, high quality native plant communities and habitat for endangered and threatened species. Larger parcels which adjoin other conservation lands, improve habitat management, are under imminent threat and are partially donated are also rated highly.

Properties acquired through this appropriation require County Board of Commissioners' written approval in the county of acquisition, will be designated as WMA or SNA through a Commissioner's Designation Order, brought up to minimum DNR standards, and listed on the DNR website. Basic site improvements will include boundary and LSOHC acknowledgement signs and may include any necessary site cleanup and restoration of agricultural fields and minimal parking area development.

How does the plan address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species?

Potential acquisitions for WMAs and SNAs are objectively scored for their wildlife 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, in a pheasant habitat complex, presence of shallow lakes, and occurrence of deer wintering areas; candidates for WMAs and SNAs score higher which contain threatened, endangered, and other rare species and species in greatest conservation need and which are high quality native plant communities which support wildlife. As a focus on native prairie protection, parcels with native prairie are prioritized.

Native plant communities with exceptional value as wildlife habitat to be protected through this proposal include mesic prairie, dry hill prairie, northern wet prairie, rock outcrop (prairie), oak woodland/savanna, mesic hardwood forest, wet forest, forest and open rich peatlands, and northern jack pine/black spruce woodland.

Species in greatest conservation need and rare (endangered, threatened, and special concern) species that have documented occurrences on or near parcels targeted in WMA and SNA acquisition through this appropriation include (but are not limited to): mammals – moose, white-tailed jack-rabbit, and Canada lynx; birds – greater prairie chicken, sharp-tailed grouse, bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, ovenbird, upland sandpiper, trumpeter swan, osprey, veery, and bay-breasted warbler.

Describe how the plan uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified 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 giving priority to locations within: 1) an important habitat corridor or complex (such as identified by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, Pheasant Action Plan, SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan, and the new Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan), 2) native plant communities and sites of outstanding and high biodiversity significance mapped by Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS), and 3) parcels that adjoin existing units or other conservation lands. In addition, scoring takes into account habitat containing

endangered, threatened, and other rare species, watershed/wetland qualities as well as habitat management considerations and suitability for public access, hunting and fishing.

Which two sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are most applicable to this project?

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation

Which two other plans are addressed in this program?

- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Northern Forest

- Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement

Prairie

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

Does this program include leveraged funding?

-

Non-OHF Appropriations

Year	Source	Amount
2008	WMA Bonding	5,000,000
2010	WMA Bonding	500,000
2011	SNA ENRTF	403,000
2011	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	824,259
2011	WMA Surcharge	1,830,000
2012	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	864,750
2012	SNA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	720,000
2013	SNA ENRTF	1,500,000
2013	WMA Surcharge	1,968,000
2014	WMA Bonding Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	2,000,000
2014	SNA ENRTF	1,115,450
2008	SNA Bonding	2,700,000
2014	WMA Surcharge	1,860,000
2015	SNA ENRTF	2,440,800
2015	WMA ENRTF	400,000
2015	WMA Surcharge	1,615,000
2016	WMA Surcharge	1,561,913
2016	SNA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	400,000
2008	WMA ENRTF	1,000,000
2008	SNA ENRTF	1,000,000

2008	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	1,684,262
2009	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	3,072,138
2009	SNA ENRTF	102,600
2010	SNA ENRTF	1,096,400
2010	WMA Reinvest in MN Critical Habitat Match	2,308,358

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

According to WMA/AMA Directive on development standards, WMAs are developed to at least minimum standards within two years of acquisition for facility and habitat development that will provide basic asset preservation, public access and safety, environmental and cultural resource protection and soil and water resource conservation. Often restoration efforts can extend 2-3 years beyond the “minimum standard” time table to establish high quality native plant community restorations. All new WMA acquisitions require a WMA Initial Development Plan (IDP) be completed by the Area Wildlife Supervisor responsible for land management and approved by the Region. SNAs have similar standards with site specific work being directed by each site’s Adaptive Management Plan. As part of the state outdoor recreation system, ongoing maintenance will be accomplished through routine management activities accomplished by our network of DNR offices. Periodic enhancements will be accomplished by existing staff, CCM crews, temporary project staffing, through vendor contract or by volunteers if appropriate.

Long-term management costs (e.g., invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to the Game and Fish Fund, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund, federal grants, and small game surcharge, as appropriate.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020	Outdoor Heritage, ML 2018	Boundary Survey, parking lot development, boundary sign and other sign posting	Other Initial Site Development	-
2022	Outdoor Heritage, ML 2018	Habitat development, native vegetation established, wetlands restored (as needed)	-	-
2023 and beyond	Game and Fish Fund, Surcharge, other	Ongoing management to DNR standards for WMA and SNA units	-	-

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?

Yes

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition?

Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?

No

Describe the permanent protection and justification for additional protection:

Some lands proposed for acquisition may contain a portion of protected land. In these cases, we will appraise protected acres separately and seek to have that value donated or pay for them using non- OHF funds.

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program?

Yes

Explain what will be planted:

The primary purposes of WMAs are to develop and manage for the production of wildlife and for compatible outdoor recreation. To fulfill those goals, the DNR may use limited farming specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife.

Lands proposed to be acquired as WMAs may include initial development plans to utilize farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is a standard practice across the Midwest to prepare the seedbed for native seed planting. On a small percentage of WMAs (less than 2.5%), DNR uses farming to provide a winter food source for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture-dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources.

Are any of the crop types planted GMO treated?

True

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?

No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?

Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:

All WMA lands to be acquired will be open for hunting and fishing with no variations from State of Minnesota regulations . All SNAs acquired with this funding would be open to the most appropriate types of hunting for the particular parcels. Priority will be given to acquiring lands to be open to full hunting. However, some parcels may have limited hunting in order to best protect its resources and/or for additions to existing SNAs to match existing hunting allowed. Specifically, the parcel list has the Myhr Creek Ridge SNA which is proposed to continue the existing SNA's allowance of all hunting but no trapping.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

The State of Minnesota as part of either the Wildlife Management Area system or the Scientific and Natural Area system.

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the proposed acquisitions?

No

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?

No

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Acquire in fee 350 acres for designation as Wildlife Management Area	6/30/2020
Acquire in fee 120 acres for designation as Scientific and Natural Area	6/30/2020
Prepare acquired lands to minimum standards including signage, parking areas, and native vegetation planting if necessary	6/30/2022

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2021

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$51,700	-	-	\$51,700
Contracts	\$100,000	-	-	\$100,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$2,346,700	-	-	\$2,346,700
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$5,600	-	-	\$5,600
Professional Services	\$152,500	-	-	\$152,500
Direct Support Services	\$12,100	-	-	\$12,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$117,400	-	-	\$117,400
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$2,786,000	-	-	\$2,786,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
SNA Coordinator & Specialists	0.14	3.0	\$25,000	-	-	\$25,000
WMA Coordinator & Specialists	0.1	3.0	\$26,700	-	-	\$26,700

Amount of Request: \$2,786,000

Amount of Leverage: -

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%

DSS + Personnel: \$63,800

As a % of the total request: 2.29%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?

We will acquire fewer acres than originally proposed, and will focus on the highest priority parcels.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

Some of the contract money is used to develop the lands acquired to minimum standards. For instance, this could include activities/expenses for "restoring" bare ground to native vegetation or temporary ground cover. The acres

are not counted as restoration, but rather are considered a necessary initial development in the protected acres. Acres are only reported once as protected, and not a second time when restored or brought to minimum DNR standards for a WMA.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?

-

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:

No

Direct Support Services

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

The MN DNR uses a standardized DSS calculator that has been developed by our Office of Management and Budget Services.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?

No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	350	120	0	470
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	350	120	0	470

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

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	130
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	130

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	\$2,193,100	\$592,900	-	\$2,786,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	\$2,193,100	\$592,900	-	\$2,786,000

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	350	120	470
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	350	120	470

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$2,193,100	\$592,900	\$2,786,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	\$2,193,100	\$592,900	\$2,786,000

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	\$6,266	\$4,940	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$6,266	\$4,940
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ~ *Acres of habitat acquired that support 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 prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Acres of prairie acquired. Acres of habitat acquired that support upland gamebirds, 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

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?

No

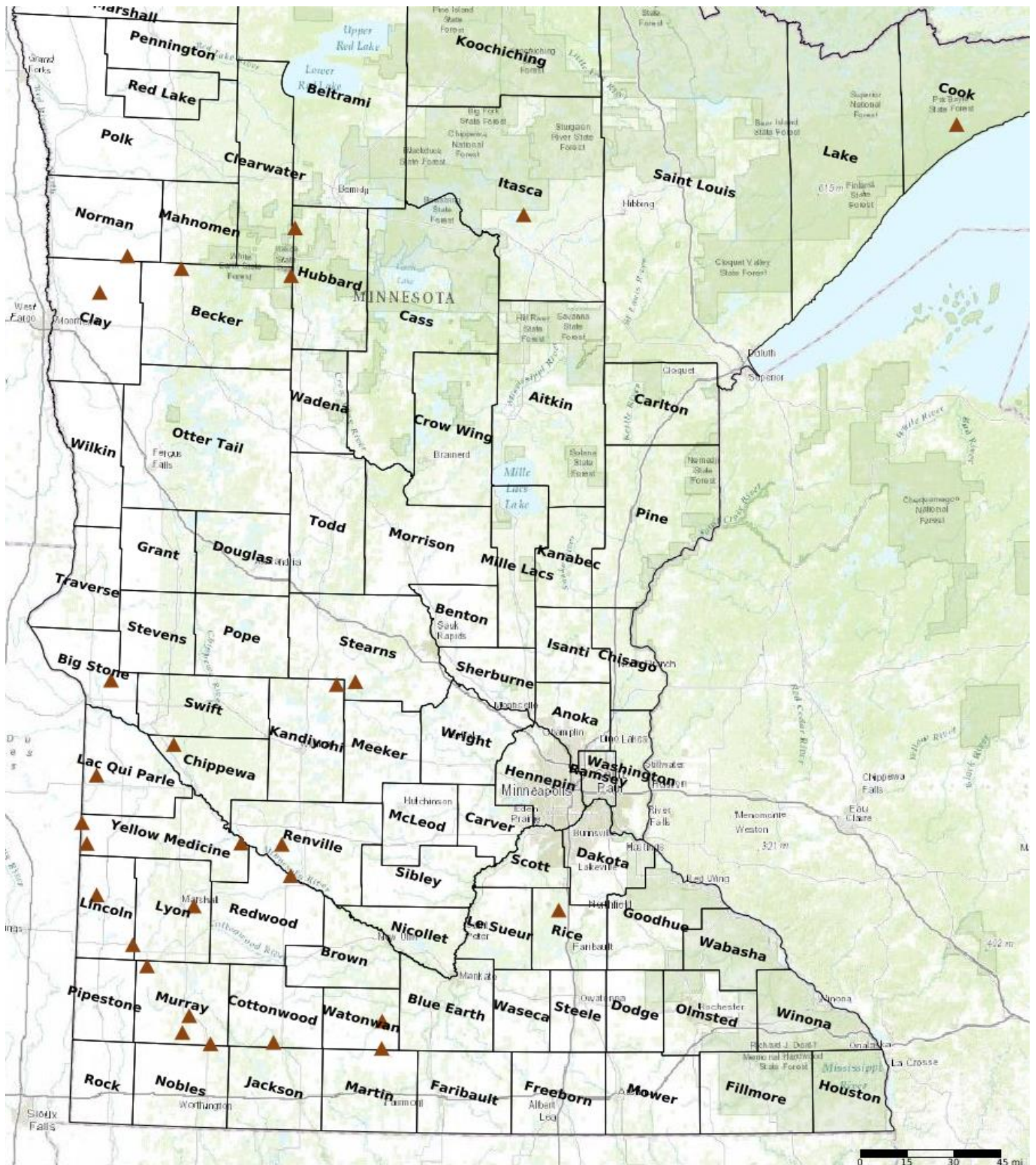
Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Spring Creek WMA Tr4A, 4B	Becker	14241207	292	\$730,000	No
Little Mantrap Lake SNA	Becker	14236213	220	\$480,000	No
Otrey WMA tr3,3A,12	Big Stone	12245215	247	\$1,000,000	No
Badger Track WMA Tr3&4	Brown	11436202	229	\$1,000,000	No
Benderberg WMA tr20	Chippewa	11942213	160	\$532,000	No
Flowing Prairie tr9	Clay	14146223	159	\$500,000	No
Myhr Ridge SNA	Cook	06103224	80	\$80,000	No
String Lakes WMA Tr11	Cottonwood	10536228	305	\$1,300,000	No
LaSalle Creek SNA	Hubbard	14435206	680	\$1,360,000	No
Wabu Woods SNA	Itasca	05726226	62	\$325,000	No
Regal Flats WMA Tr2	Kandiyohi	12233210	196	\$412,700	No
Gollnick WMA Tr11	Lac qui Parle	11746201	160	\$416,000	Yes
Blue Wing WMA Tr2	Lincoln	11246236	53	\$212,000	No
Clifton WMA tr5A	Lyon	11140207	75	\$450,000	No
Perch Creek WMA tr19	Martin	10530231	160	\$650,000	No
Talcot Lake WMA tr31	Murray	10539231	80	\$625,000	No
Hiram C. Southwick WMA Tr15	Murray	10641224	146	\$850,000	No
Hovno WMA Tr2A	Murray	10541215	90	\$511,000	No
Hjermstad WMA Tr40	Murray	10843210	130	\$782,000	No
Twin Valley WMA Tr2A	Norman	14344229	40	\$80,000	No
Beaver Falls Rock Outcrop SNA	Renville	11335220	20	\$80,000	No
Milest WMA Tr6	Rice	11121204	73	\$260,000	No
Partners WMA Tr3	Stearns	12232203	40	\$120,000	No
W.R. Taylor WMA tr4	Watsonwan	10630219	71	\$490,000	No
Sioux Agency Prairie SNA	Yellow Medicine	11438203	130	\$780,000	No
Penthole WMA tr 5&7	Yellow Medicine	11446216	155	\$425,000	Yes
Mound Spring Prairie SNA	Yellow Medicine	11546218	160	\$800,000	No

Protect Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
Hopeful WMA Tr3	Lincoln	10944212	317	\$1,268,000	No	1	\$0



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

Parcel Map
DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition, Phase X
(Data Generated From Parcel List)