



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

---

### Laws of Minnesota 2018 Accomplishment Plan

#### General Information

**Date:** 07/29/2021

**Project Title:** Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection-Phase VII

**Funds Recommended:** \$1,490,000

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

**Appropriation Language:** \$1,490,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire permanent conservation easements to protect and restore native prairie according to Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. Of this amount, up to \$176,000 is for establishing monitoring and enforcement funds as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. 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 permanent conservation easements must be provided as part of the final report.

**Additional Legislative Changes:** ML 2021, First Sp Session, Ch. 1, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 10 Carryforwards (b) The availability of the appropriations for the following projects is extended to June 30, 2023: (6) Laws 2018, chapter 208, article 1, section 2, subdivision 2, paragraph (f), for Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection - Phase VII;

#### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Judy Schulte

**Title:**

**Organization:** MN DNR

**Address:** 1241 E Bridge Street

**City:** Redwood Falls, MN 56283

**Email:** judy.schulte@state.mn.us

**Office Number:** 507-637-6016

**Mobile Number:**

**Fax Number:**

**Website:** www.dnr.state.mn.us

#### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Wilkin, Kittson and Swift.

**Eco regions in which work will take place:**

- Forest / Prairie Transition

- Prairie

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Easement

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Prairie

**Narrative**

**Abstract**

Native Prairie Bank will work with willing landowners to permanently protect 380 acres of native prairie and supporting habitat through perpetual conservation easements. Easement acquisition will focus on Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan identified landscapes and target Minnesota Biological Survey identified threatened and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, and key habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and other wildlife species.

**Design and Scope of Work**

The loss of native prairie and associated grassland habitat is arguably the greatest conservation challenge facing western and southern Minnesota. Through accelerated acquisition of Native Prairie Bank conservation easements, this proposal aims to permanently protect 380 acres of native prairie habitat.

Acceleration is necessary to address today's rapid loss of native prairie and associated grasslands. Today, only about 1.3% of Minnesota's original 18 million acres of prairie remains. The few remaining acres of native prairie once were thought of as unsuitable for crop production, however with advancements in technology and equipment, in addition to growing competition for tillable acres, this is no longer the case. Unfortunately, grassland-to-cropland conversion is not the only impact to native prairie, significant degradation and loss is also occurring due to property development, mineral extraction and lack of prairie-oriented management. If the current trajectory of grassland and prairie loss continues it will be devastating to grassland dependent wildlife populations.

Recognizing that protecting grassland and wetland habitat is one of the most critical conservation challenges facing Minnesota, over a dozen leading conservation organizations developed the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. Several outcomes are identified in the plan, one being the protection of all remaining native prairie, largely through conservation easements. One of the primary easement tools for native prairie protection in Minnesota is the DNR administered Native Prairie Bank easement. Native Prairie Bank was established by the 1987 legislature to protect native prairie by authorizing the state to acquire conservation easements from willing landowners. To date 128 Native Prairie Banks protect over 11,000 acres. Native Prairie Bank targets the protection of native prairie tracts, but can also include adjoining lands as buffers and additional habitat.

Eligible tracts are prioritized based on several scientific factors including:

- 1) Size and quality of habitat, focusing on diverse native prairie communities identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey
- 2) Occurrence of threatened and endangered species or suitability of habitat for Species in Greatest Conservation Need
- 3) Lands that are part of a larger habitat complex

Native Prairie Bank easements provide enduring, long-term protection by placing restrictions on future land use, including, but not limited to:

- 1) No topographic changes or alterations to the natural landscape (plow, drain, fill, etc.)
- 2) No dumping trash or garbage
- 3) Motor vehicle use limited to management purposes (weed control, prescribed burning, etc.)
- 4) No drawing of water for irrigation or other uses
- 5) No building or placing structures on the protected property
- 6) No subdivision of the parcel
- 7) No introduction of invasive species
- 8) No pesticide use without DNR approval

Additionally, Native Prairie Bank easements grant the DNR the right to monitor and manage the prairie.

Native Prairie Bank coordinates with Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan partners and utilizes the network of established Local Technical Teams (local staff from SWCDs, NRCS, DNR, USFWS, The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, etc.) to reach out to landowners and increase enrollment. Currently, there is a waiting list of willing landowners wishing to enroll in Native Prairie Bank.

## **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?**

Native Prairie Bank gives priority to sites identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey and targets, threatened, endangered, and other rare plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, and key habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). According to Minnesota Biological Survey staff, based on information gathered during the updating of the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan (formally known as Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare), there are 89 Species of Greatest Conservation Need that occur in the prairie region of the state.

Each native prairie being targeted and protected through this proposal will typically support several Species in Greatest Conservation Need. SGCNs found on native prairies include but are not limited to white-tailed jackrabbit, American badger, northern pintail, short-eared owl, Henslow's sparrow, upland sandpiper, sedge wren, marbled godwit, western meadowlark, greater-prairie chicken, Blanding's turtle, Great Plains toad, plains hog-nosed snake, gophersnake, common five-lined skink, and multiple spiders, dragonflies, butterflies, moths, beetles and bees.

## **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:**

Native Prairie Bank scores and selects easements based on criteria including, the diversity and quality of native prairie habitat as ranked by the Minnesota Biological Survey, size of the prairie, occurrence of or suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need, location relative to other native prairie or protected lands (includes Prairie Plan target landscapes), potential for long-term management and other factors that would insure long-term benefits and sustainability for Minnesota's critical wildlife species. Native Prairie Bank's numerical scoring and selection process prioritizes parcels that build on existing habitat complexes, avoids fragmentation and targets Minnesota Biological Survey priority plant communities and areas of biodiversity significance. Please see the Native Prairie Bank scoring criteria uploaded as part of this proposal.

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

## **Which two other plans are addressed in this program?**

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

## **Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?**

### **Forest / Prairie Transition**

- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

### **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
2015	Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$2,750,000
2013	Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$472,000
2011	Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$521,000
2010	Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$94,500
2008	Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$475,000
2008	Bonding-State	\$1,600,000
2006	Bonding-State	\$900,000
2005	Bonding-State	\$950,000
2003	Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$191,600

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

DNR's Conservation Easement Stewardship policy is to protect both the conservation values of the protected property and the state's investment in those interests. Stewardship elements include baseline property report creation, enforcement protocols, regular compliance monitoring, effective record keeping and reporting, and maintaining good working relationships with the easement landowners. Native Prairie Bank implements this policy by following DNR Operational Order 128 "Conservation Easement Stewardship" along with the "Ecological and Water Resources Division Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines", which call for annual landowner contact as well as on-the-ground monitoring once every three years. If a violation is found, annual site visits (or more frequently) are conducted until the violation is rectified. Budgeted into this proposal is funding to deposit into an account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal.

Native Prairie Bank staff in partnership with the landowner will actively seek funding to execute the best on-going prairie management activities. These management activities, such as prescribed burning, invasive species control, woody control, etc., will be completed when feasible through a variety of funding sources.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2018-2021	OHF	Develop Baseline Property Report to be signed by both the landowner and DNR at time of closing.	Once easement closes, transfer funds to dedicated Conservation Easement Stewardship Account per OHF appropriation and accomplishment plan for long-term easement stewardship.	-
Perpetually/Annually	Interest derived from dedicated Conservation Easement	Ongoing landowner partnership, monitoring, reporting and easement	-	-

	Stewardship Account established with this appropriation	stewardship as laid out in DNR Operational Order 128 and the Division of Ecological and Water Resources Conservation Easement Stewardship Division Guidelines.		
2018-2021 (or within 5 years post acquisition)	OHF	Restore any cropped acres present at time of acquisition to local-ecotype native prairie seed (estimated 25 acres).	-	-
On-Going	Variety of Funding Sources (Landowner, ENRTF, OHF, Game & Fish, USDA Programs, etc.)	Native Prairie Bank staff in partnership with the landowner will actively seek funding to execute the best on-going prairie management activities. These management activities, such as prescribed burning, invasive species control, woody control, etc., will be completed when feasible.	-	-

## Activity Details

### Requirements

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

Yes

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

Yes

**Who will manage the easement?**

MN DNR Division of Ecological & Water Resources

**Who will be the easement holder?**

State of Minnesota

### Land Use

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

Yes

**Explain what will be planted:**

Native Prairie Bank may acquire a few acres of cropland in order to properly buffer the native prairie acres. Limited farming of these acres may occur until the area is restored into a diverse local-ecotype prairie. Restoration of all cropland acres will occur prior to the end of this appropriation.

**Are any of the crop types planted GMO treated?**

True

**Will the eased land be open for public use?**

No

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

Yes

**Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:**

When necessary, Native Prairie Bank will allow the use of a field road for the landowner to access the site or adjacent land-locked parcel for land management activities. Sometimes these non-public field roads are maintained in permanent vegetated cover with little to no trace of vehicle traffic.

**Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition?**

Yes

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**

Use of the allowed field road is limited to the landowner for necessary activities only. Field road is documented on the Exhibit A Map that is recorded along with the easement at the county in addition to being photographed and documented in the Baseline Property Report to insure the road does not increase in size or expand from existing necessary location. Through implementation of DNR Operational Order 128 "Conservation Easement Stewardship" along with the "Ecological and Water Resources Division Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines" Native Prairie Banks acquired with these funds will be monitored at least once every 3 years, at which time the field road will be checked for compliance.

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

No

**Timeline**

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Enroll 380 acres of Native Prairie Bank Easements	June 30, 2023
Restore approximately 25 acres of prairie (inclusion cropped acres acquired with these funds)	June 30, 2023

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 11/01/2023

## 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	\$150,000	-	-	\$150,000
Contracts	\$15,000	-	-	\$15,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$930,000	-	-	\$930,000
Easement Stewardship	\$176,000	-	-	\$176,000
Travel	\$20,500	-	-	\$20,500
Professional Services	\$160,000	-	-	\$160,000
Direct Support Services	\$18,500	-	-	\$18,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$20,000	-	-	\$20,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,490,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$1,490,000</b>

### Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Project Coordinator/Acquisition Specialist	0.04	4.0	\$15,000	-	-	\$15,000
Natural Resource Specialist/Technician	0.36	4.0	\$125,000	-	-	\$125,000
Natural Resource Laborer	0.07	4.0	\$10,000	-	-	\$10,000

**Amount of Request:** \$1,490,000

**Amount of Leverage:** -

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 0.0%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$168,500

**As a % of the total request:** 11.31%

**Easement Stewardship:** \$176,000

**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 18.92%

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

The Prairie Bank Program will accommodate the appropriation reduction by proportionally reducing the target goal from protecting 2000 acres down to 380 acres. \$1,490,000 is 19% of the original request of \$8,000,000, therefore 380 acres is 19% of the original goal of 2000 acres.



## Contracts

### **What is included in the contracts line?**

Yes, 100% of the contract dollars will be tied to restoration work. There may be circumstances where cropland acres (approximately 25 acres total) are included in the Native Prairie Bank easements acquired with these funds in order to provide a buffer to the native prairie. In these cases, the cropland acres would be restored as part of this proposal and some activities tied to these restorations may be contracted out to private vendors or the Conservation Corps of Minnesota.

## Easement Stewardship

### **What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?**

## 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 DNR Direct & Necessary Cost Calculator was used to determine Direct Support Service costs. DNR's Direct & Necessary Costs (\$18,531) pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated projects and calculated based on the specific demands of this project. Direct and necessary costs cover HR support (\$2,791), Safety Support (\$641), Financial Support (\$2,293), Communication support (\$3,812), IT Support (\$5,779) and Planning Support (\$3,216).

## 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	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	380	0	0	380
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>380</b>

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

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	300
Enhance	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>

### Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$1,490,000	-	-	\$1,490,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$1,490,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$1,490,000</b>

### 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	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	100	0	280	0	380
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>380</b>

### 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	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$392,100	-	\$1,097,900	-	\$1,490,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$392,100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$1,097,900</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$1,490,000</b>

### Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$3,921	-	-
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	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$3,921	-	\$3,921	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

### Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

NA

### Outcomes

#### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands ~ *-Acres of native prairie protected from conversion insuring grassland habitat for upland birds*  
*-Acres of native prairie protected which house threatened, endangered and Species of Greatest Conservation Need*  
*-Acres protected within Prairie Plan Core and Corridor Areas*  
*-Average size of protected complex*

#### Programs in prairie region:

- Remnant native prairies and wetlands are perpetually protected and adequately buffered ~ *-Acres of native prairie protected from conversion insuring grassland habitat for upland birds*  
*-Acres of native prairie protected which house threatened, endangered and Species of Greatest Conservation Need*  
*-Acres protected within Prairie Plan Core and Corridor Areas*  
*-Average size of protected complex*

## 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

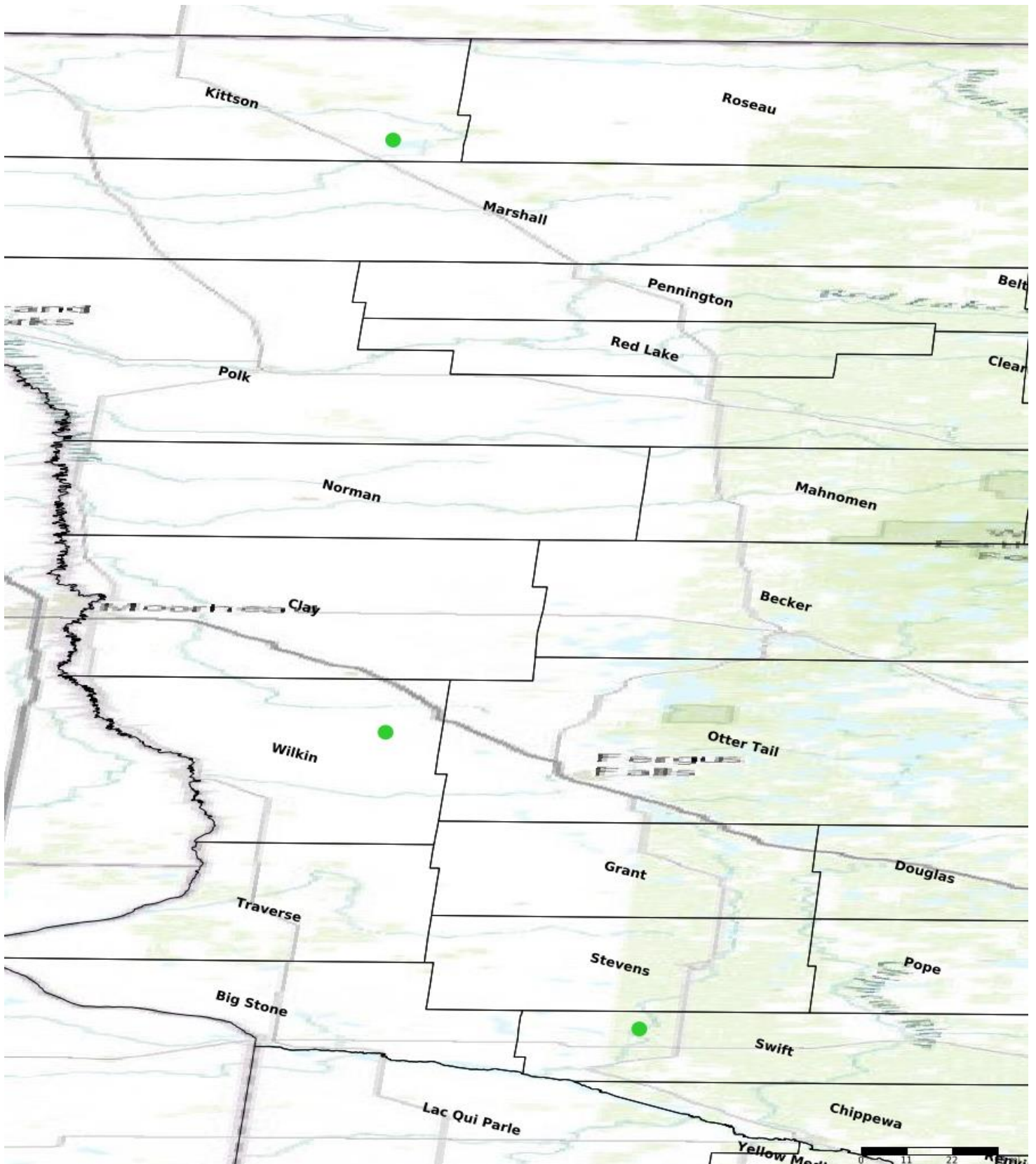
### Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes](#)

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

## Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Arveson 5-1 NPB	Kittson	15945205	350	\$130,000	No
Fairfield 29-2	Swift	12242229	10	\$40,000	No
Akron 9-1 NPB	Wilkin	13445209	40	\$75,000	No



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

**Parcel Map**  
**Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection-Phase VII**  
**(Data Generated From Parcel List)**