



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

State Forest Acquisition, Richard J. Dorer Memorial Forest - Phase V

Laws of Minnesota 2018 Final Report

General Information

Date: 03/31/2023

Project Title: State Forest Acquisition, Richard J. Dorer Memorial Forest - Phase V

Funds Recommended: \$1,255,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 3(d)

Appropriation Language: \$1,255,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire in fee and enhance lands for wildlife habitat in the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 7. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

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Location Information

County Location(s): Winona, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston and Olmsted.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Southeast Forest

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee
- Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

Phase 5 of the Sate Forest Acquisition project protected 43 acres of critical forest habitat in the southeastern ecological section of the state. These lands have been incorporated into the State Forest program of the Outdoor Recreation System, and will be sustainably managed for quality wildlife habitat, timber production, and public recreation in perpetuity. Additionally, over 300 acres of sensitive floodplain forest habitat were enhanced using a variety of methods.

Process & Methods

In working with local conservation partners, DNR Forestry staff identified opportunities to acquire lands in the Richard J. Dorer State Forest that best met forest management objectives. Parcels were identified through discussions with willing private land owners, and ranked using DNR's strategic land asset management (SLAM) tool, with priority given to those that improved public land access to state lands, consolidated fragmented ownership boundaries, and provided protection of critical forest habitats. Due to a variety of circumstances, several of the larger acquisition projects targeted with this appropriation were unable to be successfully completed. In total we were able to protect one parcel for 43 acres; far below the original goal of 300 acres.

RJD Pleasant Grove, Olmstead County - This parcel consists of high quality wet mesic blue beech and bitternut hickory riparian forest along nearly 425 feet of Partridge Creek. It is ranked outstanding in biodiversity significance by the MN Biological Survey (MBS), and contains at least one plant species that is listed as state threatened, and several other species of greatest conservation need. Protection of this parcel helps provide an important buffer against nearby agricultural lands, and helps mitigate water quality issues in Partridge Creek.

Enhancement projects were focused on sensitive floodplain forest communities in the southeastern ecological section of the state that were degraded with invasive species and at risk of failing to regenerate. In total we were able to enhance over 300 acres of native forest plant communities. Our initial plan to enhance these sites included both removal of invasive woody species and underplanting of native trees. However due to limited availability of appropriate native seedlings, we instead limited planting to a single critical site along Clear Lake in Goodhue County. This provided an opportunity to expand our invasive species control efforts to a greater number of sites, and resulted in treatment of more than double our initial enhancement goal of 130 acres.

Efforts included controlling for terrestrial non-native species through a variety of treatment methods, including selective cutting, girdling, and herbicide applications targeting woody invasive shrubs. Forest species diversity was also enhanced through selective overstory thinning, site preparation, and planting of under-represented native tree species using specialized root production method (RPM) planting stock. Use of RPM hardwood seedlings in floodplain restoration ensures better site enhancement success by promoting rapid establishment of native trees in riparian areas before invasive species can gain a foothold.

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?

Project sites selected for protection contain important ecological landscape features and native plant communities of high or outstanding biological significance, including floodplain forests and sensitive creek shoreline habitat. These sites were prioritized in part for the critical habitat they provide for several state listed threatened species.

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.

Project site prioritization included use of many existing science-based conservation habitat plans (MN Wildlife Action Plan), geospatial tools (MN Biological Survey, DNR Natural Heritage database, DNR Ecological Classification System); as well as ongoing consultation and collaboration with conservation professionals, wildlife habitat specialists, and ecologists throughout Minnesota.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

All parcel acquisitions received support from local conservation groups, county and township boards, and DNR staff in the Divisions of Ecological and Water Resources, Parks and Trails, and Fish and Wildlife.

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

A variety of unexpected setbacks resulted in reduced project accomplishments. Several landowners who had expressed interest in selling their lands had backed out on existing purchase options, or were unable to complete necessary title actions required by the State. A reoccurring issue particular to this portion of the state where forest conservation lands are often intermixed with agricultural lands, is the difference between appraised value and a landowner's expectations as to what their land is worth. This has resulted in some landowners rejecting our offer, or being out-bid by other interested parties.

What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this program?

- Other : General Fund

How were the funds used to advance the program?

General fund dollars were used in part to fund DNR Division of Forestry staff in their efforts to identify, analyze, and prioritize important habitat project areas appropriate for this project. DNR staff time spent building support for specific projects with local conservation groups, landowners, local government units and other DNR staff was funded with General Fund monies.

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

All parcels acquired in this project have been fully incorporated into the DNR's State Forest system, and will be included in ongoing planning efforts to determine what/if any management needs exist to maintain and enhance these tracts to meet the multiple use needs of providing quality wildlife habitat, and natural resources based economic and recreational opportunities. Any future required management activities will be funded through the Forest Management Investment Account, and/or state bonding dollars.

Budget

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	-	-	-	\$120,000	-	General Fund	\$120,000	-
Contracts	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$95,800	-	-	-	\$100,000	\$95,800
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,060,800	\$1,060,800	\$124,000	-	-	-	\$1,060,800	\$124,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$3,400	-	-	-	\$40,000	\$3,400
Direct Support Services	\$4,200	\$4,200	-	-	-	-	\$4,200	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$21,900	-	-	-	\$50,000	\$21,900
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$1,255,000	\$1,255,000	\$245,100	\$120,000	-	-	\$1,375,000	\$245,100

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Lands Program Consultant	0.25	4.0	-	\$120,000	General Fund	\$120,000

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

DNR land acquisition costs appear higher than anticipated due to work that had been completed on 3 additional projects that ultimately failed to close.

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	0	0	300	44	0	0	300	44
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	130	302	0	0	130	302
Total	0	0	0	0	430	346	0	0	430	346

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	-	-	-	-	\$1,155,000	\$149,200	-	-	\$1,155,000	\$149,200
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	\$100,000	\$95,900	-	-	\$100,000	\$95,900
Total	-	-	-	-	\$1,255,000	\$245,100	-	-	\$1,255,000	\$245,100

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	300	44	0	0	0	0	300	44
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	130	302	0	0	0	0	130	302
Total	0	0	0	0	430	346	0	0	0	0	430	346

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	-	-	-	-	\$1,155,000	\$149,200	-	-	-	-	\$1,155,000	\$149,200
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	\$100,000	\$95,900	-	-	-	-	\$100,000	\$95,900
Total	-	-	-	-	\$1,255,000	\$245,100	-	-	-	-	\$1,255,000	\$245,100

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Outcomes

Programs in southeast forest region:

- Forestlands and savannas are protected from parcelization and fragmentation and accessible for resource management purposes ~ *Outcome is measured by number of acres acquired.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes - Sign up criteria is attached](#)

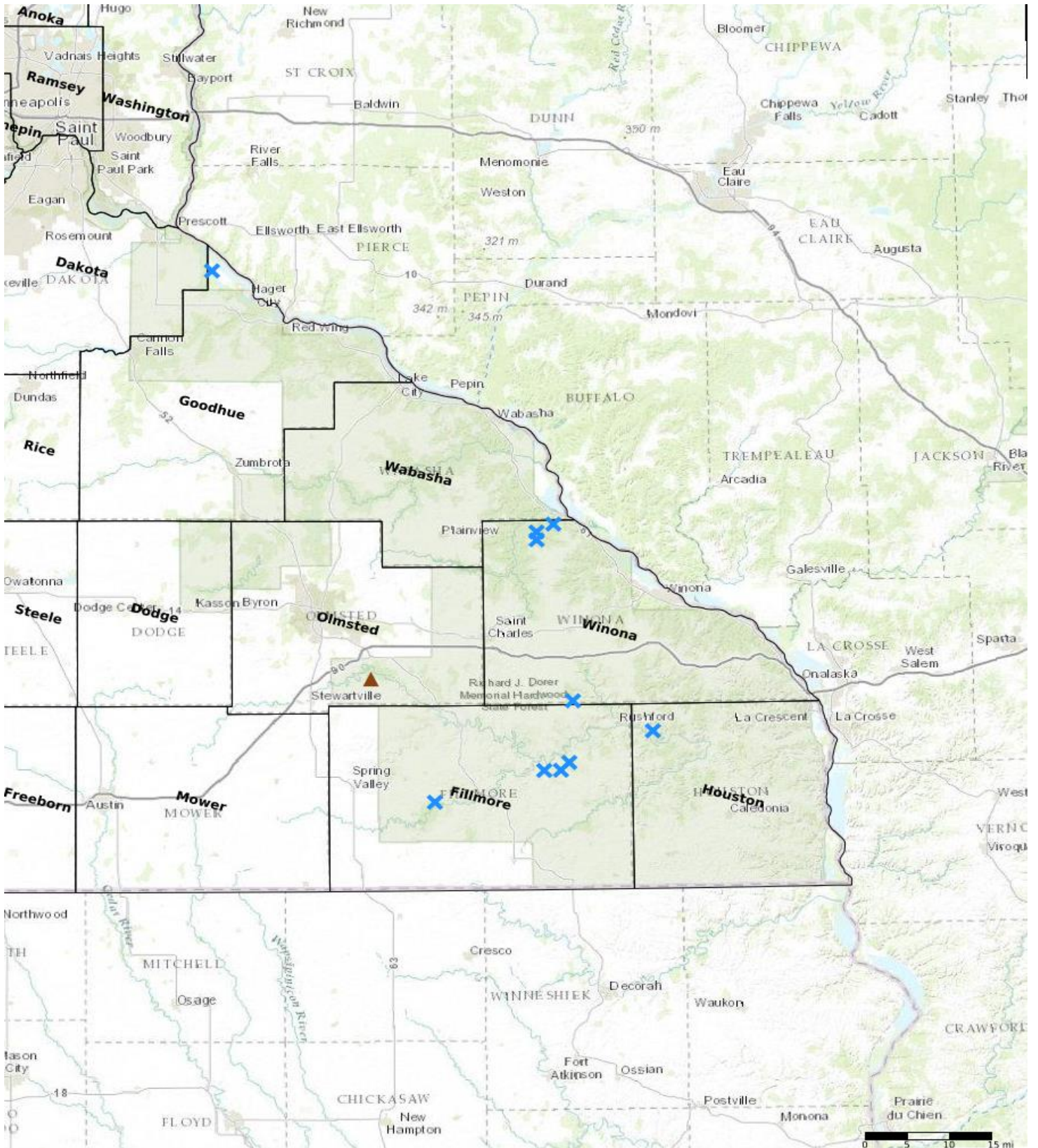
Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Fillmore 2	Fillmore	10309217	27	\$6,500	Yes
Fillmore 3	Fillmore	10309211	32	\$8,900	Yes
Fillmore 1	Fillmore	10211206	18	\$4,500	Yes
Fillmore 4	Fillmore	10309215	13	\$2,700	-
Goodhue 1	Goodhue	11416222	58	\$25,000	Yes
Houston 1	Houston	10407221	34	\$13,400	Yes
Winona 3	Winona	10509235	14	\$3,000	Yes
Winona 2	Winona	10809207	27	\$6,400	Yes
Winona 4	Winona	10809218	59	\$19,000	Yes
Winona 1	Winona	10809204	20	\$6,500	Yes

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
RJD Pleasant Grove	Olmsted	10513214	43	\$125,000	No

Parcel Map



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