



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Protecting Strategic Forestlands Near Camp Ripley

Laws of Minnesota 2019 Final Report

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### General Information

**Date:** 11/16/2022

**Project Title:** Protecting Strategic Forestlands Near Camp Ripley

**Funds Recommended:** \$3,348,000

**Legislative Citation:** ML 2019, 1st Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd, 3(a)

**Appropriation Language:** \$3,348,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with The Conservation Fund to acquire in fee and restore and enhance forest wildlife habitat in Cass, Crow Wing, and Morrison Counties in proximity to the Minnesota National Guard Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape. Land must be acquired for state forests under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 7; for wildlife management under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8; for scientific and natural areas under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 5; or as county forest land or municipal forest land. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Emilee Nelson

**Title:** Associate Minnesota State Director

**Organization:** The Conservation Fund

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Cass and Crow Wing.

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

- Northern Forest
- Forest / Prairie Transition

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Fee

## Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest

## Narrative

### Summary of Accomplishments

The program protected 848 acres using OHF, and a total of 1,627 acres of forested habitat which leveraged over \$2.2 million in other state and federal Department of Defense funding to permanently protect these lands near some of Minnesota's fastest developing cities (Baxter and Brainerd). This was a partnership effort involving The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Camp Ripley, City of Baxter, Sylvan Township, Cass County, and Crow Wing County. The local press covered the closing of the project on radio, TV, and the newspapers.

### Process & Methods

The forest parcels protected in this project had been identified by Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape partners and the Cass and Crow Wing County Land Departments for many years as high priorities for protection, due to their connectivity to nearby habitat and public access benefits. The Conservation Fund became the official fee title acquisition partner for Camp Ripley in 2017 and the Department of Defense brought nearly \$2 million to permanently protect these forests along Camp Ripley's northern border on the Mississippi River. The City of Baxter also applied for an ENTRF grant in 2017 to focus on 200 acres of the Potlatch parcels along the Mississippi River in southwest Baxter. This program protected land in three separate transactions with three sellers: PotlatchDeltic, Minnesota Power, and a private landowner. Multiple public meetings with the eventual owners and managers of the property were led by The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy, who is the coordinating partner for the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape. The Conservation Fund was able to negotiate a larger landscape transaction with Potlatch to acquire 1,512 acres and apply three funding sources across the property (OHF, LCCMR, and Department of Defense) based on comments from the local partners for future plans for the land. Forested lands that had any potential future trail corridors in southwest Baxter and Sylvan Township were acquired with LCCMR and Department of Defense funding, and lands in Cass and Crow Wing County without plans for added trails were purchased with OHF. The momentum in this area of Baxter led to the two other transactions with the private landowner and Minnesota Power and permanently protected eight developable lake lots along Kramer Lake. Camp Ripley Environmental Staff are partnering with Baxter and Sylvan Township to assist with habitat management plans, costs, and implementation into the future, which helped both entities in their decision to be the long-term owner.

### **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?**

This area is the confluence of the Anoka Sand Plain, Hardwood Hills, Pine Moraines and Outwash Plains, and Mille Lacs Uplands ecological subsections of Minnesota. The habitats protected in this program have documented Blanding's Turtles and Red-Shouldered hawks, and are suitable habitats for Northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, and gray wolf.

### **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.**

GIS models created for the North Central Conservation Roundtable partnership showed these parcels had high connectivity to adjacent forestlands, medium to high biodiversity significance, and are resilient for fish, game, and wildlife habitat. The property in southwest Baxter has dozens of documented Blanding's turtle (state-threatened) occurrences in the MN Biological Survey.

## Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

Partners included The Nature Conservancy, Camp Ripley, Department of Defense, ENTRF, City of Baxter, Sylvan Township, Cass County, and Crow Wing County. These entities helped to identify and complete the permanent protection of the property. Crow Wing County proposed language regarding "no net gain of existing trails" on the 350 acres acquired by the county and this was acceptable to both LSOHC and Crow Wing County, which allowed the transaction to proceed.

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

The acreage goals were not achieved due to some of the lands within Baxter having been zoned as commercial, and those were not a priority for habitat protection after the zoning change. There were also two separate projects that did not come to fruition due to landowners not willing to sell. The Conservation Fund was able to allocate funding from three funding sources across the 1,627 acres to meet the needs for the various funding restrictions and eventual land management requirements for the eventual landholders (city, township, counties). Of the total, 848 acres were protected using OHF. We worked closely with DNR Appraisal and Grants staff, Department of Defense, and ENTRF to ensure this approach worked for the various entities.

## What other fund may contribute to this program?

- Other : Department of Defense
- Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund

## How were the funds used to advance the program?

ENTRF acquired 198.5 acres in southwest Baxter, Department of Defense acquired 580 acres in southwest Baxter and Sylvan Township. These acquisitions from Potlatch were part of a large negotiation that used all three funding sources applied to separate parcels. Without this additional leverage, this project would not have been achieved.

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

Camp Ripley is partnering with Baxter and Sylvan Township to write habitat management plans, cost share, and implement habitat projects on the properties, when needed. Cass and Crow Wing Counties have robust land departments and will manage the lands in accordance with the accomplishment plan.

## Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2022+	Dept. of Defense	Camp Ripley Environmental staff plan with Sylvan/Baxter on management activities	Camp Ripley staff implement management	-

## Budget

### Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Antic. Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$62,600	-	-	-	\$120,000	\$62,600
Contracts	\$100,000	\$100,000	-	-	-	-	\$100,000	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$220,000	\$220,000	-	\$500,000	-	Department of Defense	\$720,000	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,739,000	\$2,739,000	\$1,727,500	\$2,500,000	-	Department of Defense	\$5,239,000	\$1,727,500
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$7,000	\$7,000	-	-	-	-	\$7,000	-
Professional Services	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$63,800	-	-	-	\$80,000	\$63,800
Direct Support Services	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$8,800	-	-	-	\$17,000	\$8,800
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$11,300	-	-	-	\$15,000	\$11,300
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$50,000	\$50,000	-	-	-	-	\$50,000	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,348,000</b>	<b>\$3,348,000</b>	<b>\$1,874,000</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>	-	-	<b>\$6,348,000</b>	<b>\$1,874,000</b>

### Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MN Representative	0.3	4.0	\$62,600	-	-	\$62,600

### 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 Conservation Fund staff that will be directly involved with this program keep records to track direct time spent on projects by grant source. We have used those past metrics to estimate the costs for this grant request.

**Explain any budget challenges or successes:**

The Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) funding was able to fund \$1,915,700 of the value of three parcels purchased in the transaction with PotlatchDeltic, because that forested property is within the Priority Area 1 for Camp Ripley's Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) zone. LCCMR funded \$295,000 of another parcel within Priority Area 1. The lands were acquired for less than budgeted in the accomplishment plan. The additional funding was explored to fund projects in Cass County, however the landowners were not ready to sell their property.

**Total Revenue:** \$0

**Revenue Spent:** \$0

**Revenue Balance:** \$0

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

- 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	200	0	0	0	200	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	2,700	848	0	0	2,700	848
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,900</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,900</b>	<b>848</b>

### 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	-	-	-	-	\$250,000	-	-	-	\$250,000	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	\$3,098,000	\$1,874,000	-	-	\$3,098,000	\$1,874,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,348,000</b>	<b>\$1,874,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,348,000</b>	<b>\$1,874,000</b>

### 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	100	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	200	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	2,600	848	2,700	848
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
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>2,900</b>	<b>848</b>

## 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	-	-	\$150,000	-	-	-	-	-	\$100,000	-	\$250,000	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	\$120,000	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,978,000	\$1,874,000	\$3,098,000	\$1,874,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>\$270,000</b>	-	-	-	-	-	<b>\$3,078,000</b>	<b>\$1,874,000</b>	<b>\$3,348,000</b>	<b>\$1,874,000</b>

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

2,900 feet

## Outcomes

### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need ~ *Central Lakes College has incorporated the lands in southwest Baxter into their college curriculum and students are surveying plant and animal species each semester. These results are gathered and reported to Camp Ripley Environmental Staff as part of their responsibility to monitor Federally Endangered and Threatened species.*

### Programs in the northern forest region:

- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ~ *This area north of Camp Ripley has one of the most robust Blanding's turtle's populations in the state.*

## Parcels

### Sign-up Criteria?

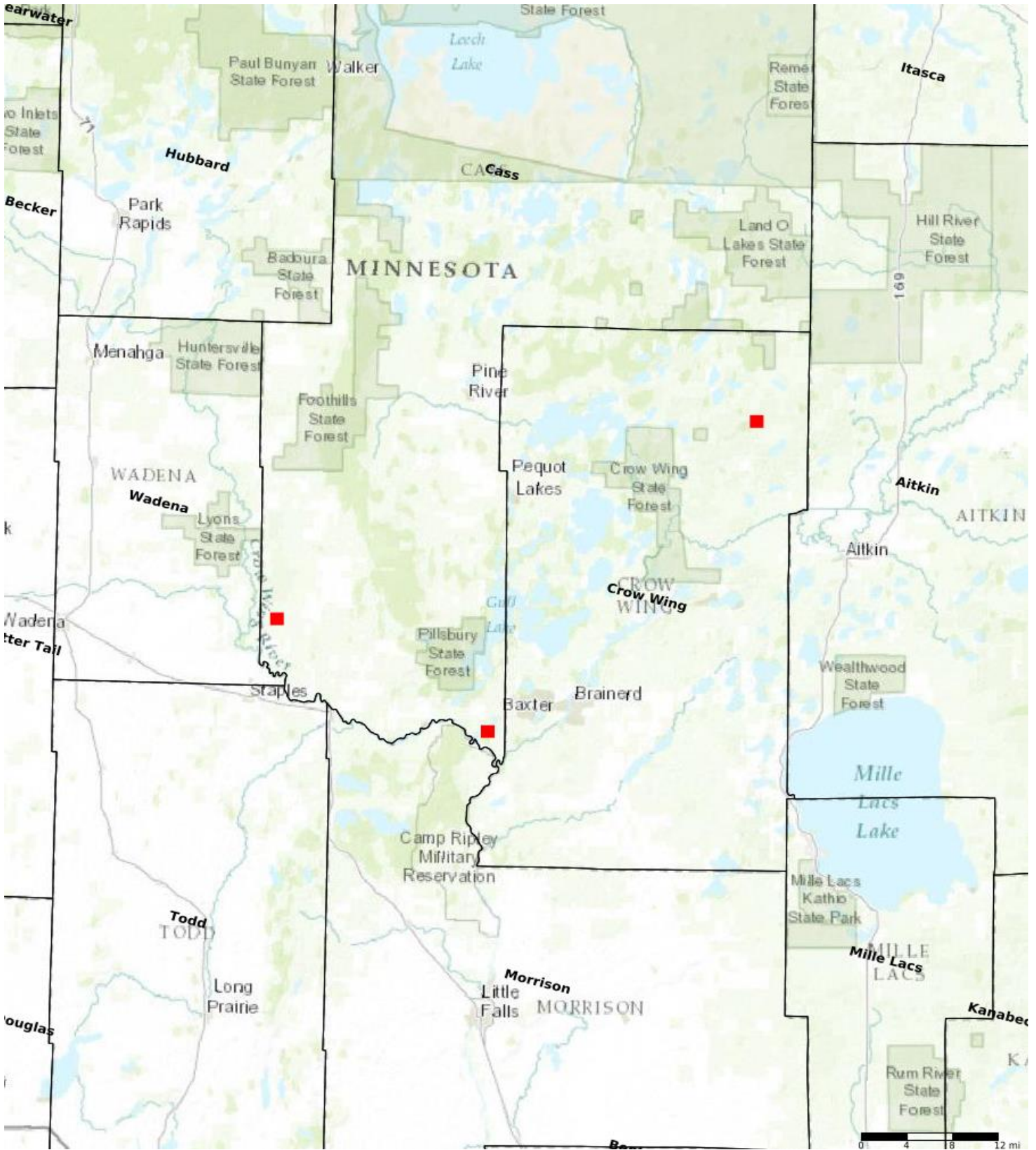
[Yes](#)

### Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
MN Power Kramer Lake	Cass	13329220	55	\$435,000	No
Potlatch 1	Cass	13432205	443	\$710,000	No
Potlatch 2	Crow Wing	13725208	350	\$581,000	No



# Parcel Map



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