



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2021 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 12/11/2020

Project Title: Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, Phase XII

Funds Recommended: \$3,280,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2021, Ch. XX, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd.

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Ruth Thornton

Title: Deputy Director of Habitat Protection

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

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Location Information

County Location(s): Becker, Big Stone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Kittson, Brown, Chippewa, Clay, Cottonwood, Grant, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Mahnomen, Marshall, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Pipestone, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stearns, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Wilkin and Yellow Medicine.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

The Nature Conservancy and US Fish and Wildlife Service will work together to permanently protect native prairie and associated complexes of wetlands and native habitats in western and central Minnesota by purchasing approximately 875 acres of fee title properties and/or permanent habitat easements. Approximately 469 acres will be native prairie. Work will be focused in areas identified as having significant biodiversity by the Minnesota Biological Survey and located in priority areas in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan.

Design and Scope of Work

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) was established in 2000 to address the loss of America's grasslands and the decline of grassland wildlife. The Refuge was created to permanently preserve and restore a portion of our disappearing tallgrass prairie. The Refuge is authorized to work in the prairie landscapes of western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa.

To date, the Refuge has protected more than 12,000 acres. Funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) will allow The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), working in partnership, to significantly accelerate this progress. TNC and USFWS will cooperate on protecting approximately 875 acres of native prairie and associated habitat in the 49 Minnesota counties within the Refuge boundary. We expect to protect approximately 350 acres in fee title and approximately 525 acres with permanent habitat easements.

This program's work is targeted at protecting high-quality native habitat in areas with existing concentrations of native prairie, wetlands, and protected lands. The lands protected will consist of native prairie and associated habitats including wetlands, streams, coulees, and lakes.

Potential acquisitions are reviewed using the following criteria:

- 1) Is there untilled native prairie on the tract? If not, is it adjacent to untilled native prairie?
- 2) Is the property in a priority area (core/corridor/complex) identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (Prairie Plan)?
- 3) Is it adjacent to an existing complex of protected land?
- 4) Was it identified by Minnesota Biological Survey (Biological Survey) or FWS biologists as having concentrations of threatened and endangered species and communities?
- 5) Is it suitable for public recreation?

Because of the nature of parcel ownership, some properties acquired through this program will likely include small areas of converted or degraded habitat needing restoration or enhancement work. Restoration and enhancement will be completed where needed. With this program's focus on native habitat, only a limited amount of cropland restoration has been required. The funds for this work are primarily for enhancement activities such as invasives, tree, and brush removal that prepare these properties for long-term management.

Previous OHF support has allowed the partners to make significant progress towards our shared goal of protecting and buffering the remaining native prairie. The first property was acquired in March, 2013. Since then, approximately 6,319 acres have been added to the Refuge with OHF funding. Of these, approximately 3,715 acres (nearly 60%) are classified as untilled native prairie. Additional habitat includes nearly 560 acres of wetlands, nearly 15 miles of stream front, and more than 2 miles of lakefront. We have signed agreements with landowners for the protection of approximately 737 additional acres (470 acres of which are native prairie), and are

negotiating with landowners on an additional 75 acres. Talks are ongoing with a long list of interested landowners.

With additional support from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, this program will continue to make real and lasting progress towards protecting Minnesota's native prairies and the wildlife that depend on those lands.

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?

The NTP NWR program takes the approach that specific species are best protected by conserving high-quality habitat in the most critical prairie areas.

This focus on habitat quality has produced results. Of the 6,319 acres protected, approximately 3,069 have been identified as having significant biodiversity by the Biological Survey. These high-quality lands provide habitat for a wide range of species, from game species to those that are endangered, threatened, or in greatest conservation need.

Biological Survey field work has identified populations of 29 rare species located wholly or partially on NTP NWR properties protected with OHF-funding. Benefited species include:

Birds – Henslow's sparrow (endangered), Wilson's phalarope (threatened), greater prairie-chicken, marbled godwit, short-eared owl, bald eagle, and yellow rail

Butterflies – Dakota skipper (endangered), Poweshiek skipperling (endangered), arogos skipper, Pawnee skipper, and regal fritillary

Fish - Topeka shiner (endangered)

Reptiles - Blanding's turtle (threatened)

Plants – prairie bush clover (federally threatened), sterile sedge (threatened), hair-like beak rush (threatened), western white prairie clover, blanket flower, buffalo grass, few-flowered spikerush, Hall's sedge, least moonwort, Missouri milk-vetch, mudwort, prairie mimosa, slender milk-vetch, slender plantain, and small white lady's slipper.

Highlights this past year included the protection of a parcel with 0.8 miles of frontage on a stream identified as critical habitat for the Topeka Shiner (OHF funding for this program has now protected approximately 6.5 miles of habitat for this federally listed species), a total of more than 3 miles of stream frontage on perennial streams, 297 acres designated as having significant biodiversity by the Biological Survey, protection of 292 acres of untilled native prairie and 26 acres of wetlands, and populations of both federally- and state listed species. All parcels protected were fully in the Prairie Plan, with four out of five parcels located in Prairie Core areas.

Future acquisition work will be guided by this same focus on high-quality, diverse habitat, benefiting a wide range of species.

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:

Biological Survey data is a critical part of this review. In addition to an evaluation based on the Minnesota Prairie Plan and location in a Prairie Core, Corridor, or Complex, every proposed project is evaluated using Survey information on: 1) native prairie sites, 2) rare, threatened and endangered species locations, and 3) areas of biodiversity significance.

The selection criteria also recognize the importance of building on existing complexes and reducing fragmentation. If a prairie is small or isolated, the animal and plant species that live there are at risk. The best approach is conserving larger areas, like the Prairie Plan's cores/complexes/corridors, that have the scale, species diversity, and connectivity to support functioning prairie systems over the long-term.

The numbers shared above demonstrate this program's success at identifying and protecting biologically significant lands located in areas with existing complexes of habitat and protected lands.

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
- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area (HPA) Final Environmental Impact Statement

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?

Yes

Explain the leverage:

This proposal includes \$266,200 in leverage. The USFWS has committed \$105,000 of in-kind staff support from USFWS field staff. A letter has been provided from the USFWS confirming these funds. This phase also includes

\$161,200 in leverage from a Pheasants Forever (PF) North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) acquisition of a fee parcel in western Minnesota. For the four completed rounds of this program, we have exceeded our original leverage estimates by over 20%. We hope to continue that success in this round.

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This project does not substitute or supplant any previous funding. The work described in this proposal would not be funded or completed without this appropriation.

Non-OHF Appropriations

Year	Source	Amount
2010	USFWS In-kind Contributions	308,000
2015	USFWS In-kind Contributions	302316
2016	TNC Private Contributions	85550
2016	USFWS In-kind Contributions	400000
2017	TNC Private Contributions	18,475
2018	TNC Private Contributions	307
2019	TNC Private Contributions	78
2017	USFWS In-kind Contributions	290,206
2018	USFWS In-kind Contributions	41458
2010	TNC Private Contributions	37,700
2011	USFWS In-kind Contributions	144,000
2011	TNC Private Contributions	23,200
2012	USFWS In-kind Contributions	139,400
2012	TNC Private Contributions	36,100
2014	USFWS In-kind Contributions	288,000
2014	TNC Private Contributions	64,400
2015	TNC Private Contributions	110789

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

Outdoor Heritage Funds will be used to purchase the land in fee title or to purchase perpetual habitat easements. The land and easements purchased will be transferred to the USFWS to become units of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. Long term costs for restoration, management, and wildlife/habitat/easement monitoring will be funded through annual USFWS operations funding.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Annually	USFWS Annual Service Operating funds	Monitoring and management by USFWS managers, biologists, field staff, and realty staff to ensure the long-term health of these habitats is maintained. Activities may include burning as well as mechanical, biological, and chemical treatments.	-	-

Activity Details

Requirements

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

Yes

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**

No

Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:

We will follow the county/township board notification processes as directed by current statutory language.

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

Yes

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

Yes

Who will manage the easement?

All easements will be managed by the USFWS as part of their Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge.

Who will be the easement holder?

The USFWS will hold and manage all easements.

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?

We are anticipating that this program will acquire approximately 525 acres of conservation easements in 4 - 6 transactions.

Land Use

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

Yes

Explain what will be planted:

Short-term planting of agricultural crops is an accepted Best Management Practice for preparing a site for prairie restoration. For example, short-term use of soybeans could be used to prepare seedbeds prior to prairie plantings, which has been proven effective in decreasing the need for subsequent invasives control activities, and can shorten the amount of time that additional weed control is needed on the site. In some cases this may necessitate the use of GMO products to facilitate herbicide use to control invasives.

Neonicotinoid treated seeds will not be used. We anticipate that the use of agricultural crops would not exceed 3 years on any given OHF-acquired property, and in most cases will be considerably shorter.

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:

Land acquired in fee title will be open to public hunting and fishing during the open season according to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, United States Code, Title 16, Section 668dd, et seq.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

- Federal

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

- National Wildlife Refuge

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?

We are anticipating to acquire approximately 875 acres in both fee title and easement acquisitions in a total of 6 - 10 closed acquisitions.

Will the eased land be open for public use?

No

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

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?

Yes

Restoration/enhancement activities will be completed where needed. While the focus of this program is on native prairie and associated complexes of wetlands and native habitats, small areas of acquired parcels will likely consist of converted or degraded habitat with restoration and/or enhancement needs. The majority of restoration/enhancement funds allocated within this appropriation will likely be used for enhancement, including invasive species control and woody vegetation removal. Small areas of cropland acquired will be restored to native prairie species.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?

Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Purchase agreements/options secured for approximately 350 acres of fee and approximately 525 acres of easement parcels	June 30, 2024
Grassland and wetland restoration and enhancement activities on all acquired parcels to be completed.	June 30, 2029

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2029

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	\$280,000	\$105,000	-	\$385,000
Contracts	\$160,000	-	-	\$160,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$1,183,500	\$161,200	PF NAWCA	\$1,344,700
Easement Acquisition	\$1,444,000	-	-	\$1,444,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$6,000	-	-	\$6,000
Professional Services	\$115,000	-	-	\$115,000
Direct Support Services	\$45,500	-	-	\$45,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$41,000	-	-	\$41,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$3,280,000	\$266,200	-	\$3,546,200

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TNC Staff	0.98	3.0	\$280,000	\$105,000	USFWS	\$385,000

Amount of Request: \$3,280,000

Amount of Leverage: \$266,200

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 8.12%

DSS + Personnel: \$325,500

As a % of the total request: 9.92%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

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

The budget and accomplishments were reduced roughly in proportion to the difference between the original request and appropriation recommendation, which was approximately 35% of the request. The proposed accomplishments were reduced to 33% of the request to account for economies of scale compared to a larger program.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The personnel line includes \$105,000 of USFWS in-kind support. The fee acquisitions without PILT line includes leverage from a Pheasants Forever fee parcel acquisition that was paid for through a North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant in the amount of \$161,200.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?

Yes

Please explain the overlap of past and future staffing and position levels previously received and how that is coordinated over multiple years?

This proposal is the continuation of several years of funded Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge grants that, as described above, have resulted in protecting more than 6,300 acres to be managed as part of the National Wildlife Refuge. Continuity of funding across multiple phases allows us flexibility when prioritizing parcels for protection, and it ensures stability in our staffing model that gives us the ability to plan and prioritize projects over multiple years. This flexibility is essential to continue to achieve the conservation goals so important for these highly vulnerable habitat types, given the uncertainty of when priority parcels may be available on the open market.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

These funds are entirely for restoration and enhancement work. While this program primarily targets high-quality habitats, small areas included in the acquisition projects may need enhancement and/or restoration. It is anticipated that the majority of contracts work will consist of control and removal of woody species and invasives.

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?

We are anticipating to acquire approximately 350 acres of fee title land in 2-4 transactions.

Travel

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

Yes

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

Rental car expenses are also included.

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

Yes

Direct Support Services

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

DSS is based on The Nature Conservancy's Federal Negotiated Rate (FNR) as proposed and approved by the US Dept. of Interior on an annual basis. In this proposal we are requesting reimbursement of 7.5% of eligible base costs as determined by our annual FNR and based on suggestions from the Council in prior years' hearings. The amount requested for reimbursement represents less than one-third of the total reimbursable costs allowed under the FNR. Examples of expenses included in the FNR include services from in-house legal counsel; finance; human resources; and information technology support, all of which contribute directly to the implementation of the project. The FNR is not applied to capital equipment over \$50,000 or land acquisition.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?

These expenses will be primarily for the lease of a vehicle for the use of TNC acquisition staff.

Federal Funds

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

Yes

Are the funds confirmed?

Yes

Is Confirmation Document attached?

[Yes](#)

- Cash : \$161,200
- In Kind : \$105,000

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	0	-	-	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	350	-	-	350
Protect in Easement	-	525	-	-	525
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	875	-	-	875

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

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	117
Protect in Easement	352
Enhance	-
Total	469

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	-	\$1,477,700	-	-	\$1,477,700
Protect in Easement	-	\$1,802,300	-	-	\$1,802,300
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	\$3,280,000	-	-	\$3,280,000

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	0	-	0	-	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	18	-	332	-	350
Protect in Easement	-	26	-	499	-	525
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	44	-	831	-	875

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	-	\$73,900	-	\$1,403,800	-	\$1,477,700
Protect in Easement	-	\$90,100	-	\$1,712,200	-	\$1,802,300
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	\$164,000	-	\$3,116,000	-	\$3,280,000

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	-	\$4,222	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$3,432	-	-
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	-	\$4,105	-	\$4,228	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$3,465	-	\$3,431	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands ~ *The percent of native remnant prairie, as determined by the Minnesota Biological Survey and/or FWS biologists, will be documented on each parcel, as will the proximity to other protected land and neighboring habitat types, including oak savanna, wetlands, and Big Woods forest. These factors are considered in the ranking criteria for each parcel.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands ~ *The percent of native remnant prairie, as determined by the Minnesota Biological Survey and/or FWS biologists, will be documented on each parcel. Surrounding natural habitat types and cropped areas will be evaluated as part of the ranking criteria for submitted parcels.*

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](#)

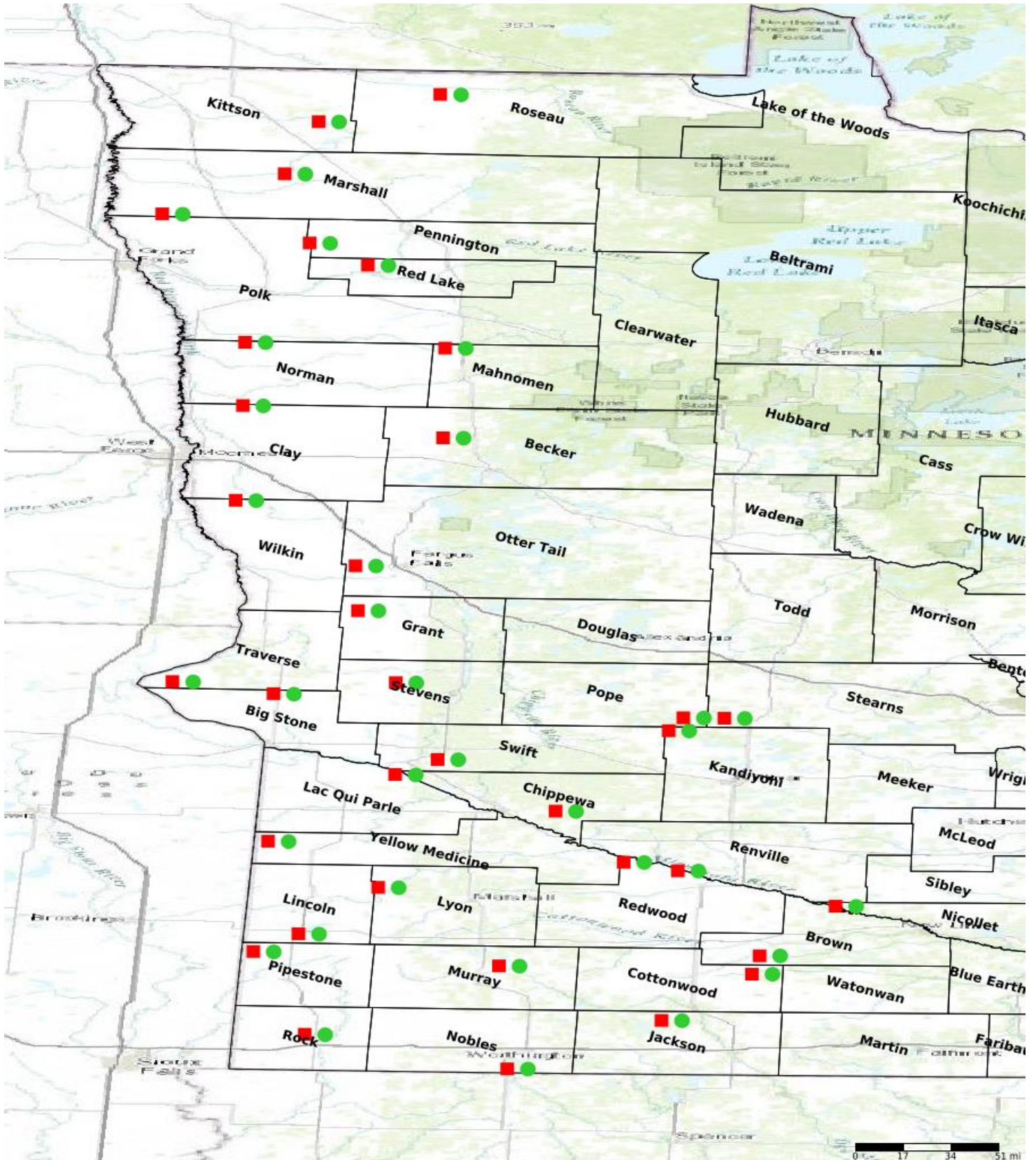
Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

Submitted parcels will be prioritized and selected according to criteria that include: the amount of native remnant prairie on the parcel, location in a Minnesota Prairie Plan priority area (Prairie Core, Corridor, or Complex), adjacency to existing protected lands and habitat complexes, and presence of federally or state listed plant and animal species and Species in Greatest Need of Conservation.

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
NA	Becker	14142233	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Becker	14142236	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Big Stone	12446209	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Big Stone	12446212	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Brown	10834213	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Brown	10834216	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Chippewa	11739216	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Chippewa	11739213	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Clay	14247201	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Clay	14247204	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Cottonwood	10734220	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Cottonwood	10734223	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Grant	13044236	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Grant	13044233	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Jackson	10436222	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Jackson	10436219	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Kandiyohi	12236207	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Kandiyohi	12236210	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Kittson	16045203	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Kittson	16045206	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Lac qui Parle	11943212	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Lac qui Parle	11943209	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Lincoln	10945214	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Lincoln	10945217	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Lyon	11243215	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Lyon	11243218	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Mahnomen	14642208	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Mahnomen	14642211	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Marshall	15746213	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Marshall	15746216	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Murray	10740210	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Murray	10740207	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Nicollet	11132211	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Nicollet	11132208	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Nobles	10140228	99	\$1,000	No

NA	Nobles	10140225	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Norman	14647201	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Norman	14647204	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	Otter Tail	13244205	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Otter Tail	13244202	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Pennington	15345227	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Pennington	15345230	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Pipestone	10846222	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Pipestone	10846219	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Polk	15449204	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Polk	15449201	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Pope	12336213	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Pope	12336216	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Red Lake	15144201	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Red Lake	15144204	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Redwood	11336204	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Redwood	11336201	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Renville	11437222	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Renville	11437219	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Rock	10345228	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Rock	10345225	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Roseau	16242210	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Roseau	16242207	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Stearns	12335213	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Stearns	12335216	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Stevens	12543213	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Stevens	12543216	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Swift	12042212	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Swift	12042209	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Traverse	12548222	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Traverse	12548219	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Wilkin	13647202	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Wilkin	13647205	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Yellow Medicine	11546224	99	\$1,000	No
NA	Yellow Medicine	11546221	99	\$1,000	No



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

Parcel Map
Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife
Refuge, Phase XII
 (Data Generated From Parcel List)



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2021 - Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, Phase XII

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Manager: Ruth Thornton

Budget

Requested Amount: \$8,129,800

Appropriated Amount: \$3,280,000

Percentage: 40.35%

Item	Total Requested		Total Appropriated		Percentage of Request	
	Requested	Leverage	Appropriated	Leverage	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	\$692,500	\$250,000	\$280,000	\$105,000	40.43%	42.0%
Contracts	\$387,000	-	\$160,000	-	41.34%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,944,000	\$161,200	\$1,183,500	\$161,200	40.2%	100.0%
Easement Acquisition	\$3,588,000	-	\$1,444,000	-	40.25%	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$14,800	-	\$6,000	-	40.54%	-
Professional Services	\$290,000	-	\$115,000	-	39.66%	-
Direct Support Services	\$111,500	-	\$45,500	-	40.81%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	\$5,000	-	100.0%	-
Supplies/Materials	\$97,000	-	\$41,000	-	42.27%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$8,129,800	\$411,200	\$3,280,000	\$266,200	40.35%	64.74%

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

The budget and accomplishments were reduced roughly in proportion to the difference between the original request and appropriation recommendation, which was approximately 35% of the request. The proposed accomplishments were reduced to 33% of the request to account for economies of scale compared to a larger program.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	920	350	38.04%
Protect in Easement	1,380	525	38.04%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$3,664,100	\$1,477,700	40.33%
Protect in Easement	\$4,465,700	\$1,802,300	40.36%
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	920	350	38.04%
Protect in Easement	1,380	525	38.04%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$3,664,100	\$1,477,700	40.33%
Protect in Easement	\$4,465,700	\$1,802,300	40.36%
Enhance	-	-	-

Parcel Selection Criteria used by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Land Acquisition Program

The purpose of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Protection National Wildlife Refuge Program is to accelerate progress towards the US Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) goal of permanently protecting and enhancing 77,000 acres of prairie remnants across the broad area originally covered by the Northern Tallgrass Prairie. The Land Acquisition Program supports the acquisition of fee title or conservation easements in the 49 western Minnesota counties included in the refuge boundary. The USFWS and The Nature Conservancy (Conservancy) are partners in this Program.

Parcels are reviewed by both the USFWS and Conservancy to ensure that they meet the priorities of both partners. They are then submitted to LSOHC staff for final review/approval. This review is based on the following criteria:

1. **Native prairie on all or most of tract, or adjacency to existing native prairie.** The emphasis of this Program is protecting and enhancing native prairie, as identified by DNR Biological Survey or site inspection by trained biologist. Protecting native prairie includes the need to buffer and connect native remnants via restoration of non-native lands. The partners will identify and work with private landowners to acquire tracts that further our shared goal of native prairie conservation, and in particular, those that meet the other criteria listed below.
2. **Within core area boundary or in critical corridors between core areas.** This Program will assist with building "functioning landscapes" by focusing in areas with concentrations of existing native prairie. The 2017 Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan identified 28 prairie cores and connecting corridors within the Refuge. The partners will give priority to those parcels that are within these core areas or that help form critical corridors to maintain landscape function.
3. **Near existing protected lands.** Building larger protected complexes is preferred to simplify and reduce overall management costs and travel time. In general, larger protected blocks are more effective at conserving the full array of wildlife species and biological diversity. The partners will strategically identify properties that are in areas where the USFWS already has a presence and prioritize these higher than those that are isolated.
4. **Greater habitat and species diversity, or host to unique species.** Parcels that host a rare habitat or a continuum of habitats, such as interconnected upland, wetland, riparian, and stream features, will be recognized as having added ecological value and given greater priority. Tracts with underrepresented, small-scale features (e.g. threatened species), will also be prioritized.
5. **Suitability for public recreation.** Constitutional language requires that the lands purchased in fee title be open to the public taking of fish and game. Fee title lands purchased with this grant will be opened. Lands especially suited to these uses will be given a higher priority. Conservation easements purchased with Outdoor Heritage Fund support will be open to hunting only with landowner permission.

6. **Willing Seller.** We will only work with willing sellers, and those that can abide by the statutory process laid out for use of public funds. We work with landowners to ensure that they are comfortable with the Program and how it will affect their property.
7. **Avoid buildings.** Existing buildings pose a challenge because they may not be eligible for Outdoor Heritage Fund use and they require additional effort to demolish or sell. Properties with structures are carefully reviewed to ensure that they do not place an undue burden on the USFWS or Conservancy.