

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2022 / ML 2021 Request for Funding



Date: May 28, 2020

Program or Project Title: Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Phase 9 (FA01)

Funds Requested: \$11,353,900

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County Locations: Dodge, Fillmore, Houston, Olmstead, Wabasha, and Winona.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Southeast Forest

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Restore
- Enhance
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Abstract:

This project will protect approximately 3,440 acres using conservation easement and fee land acquisition, and restore and enhance approximately 1,320 acres of declining habitat for important wildlife species. Actions will occur in strategically targeted areas of biodiversity significance within the Blufflands of Southeast Minnesota, resulting in increased public access and improved wildlife habitat.

Design and scope of work:

The Southeast Blufflands is Minnesota's most biodiverse region. Some 86 different native plant communities have been mapped by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) in the program area, covering nearly 150,000 acres. These communities provide habitat for 183 rare state-listed plants and animals and more Species in Greatest Conservation Need than anywhere else in the state. These imperiled species are concentrated within 749 Sites of Biodiversity Significance.

Despite this biological richness only 5% of the region has been protected to date. This program is increasing access to public lands to meet the continued high demand for outdoor recreation within the region.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) and The Trust for Public Land (TPL), in partnership, are working to change

this circumstance. Through our Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Program, we are working to expand and connect larger contiguous blocks of protected lands, allowing land managers to restore, enhance and maintain high-quality habitats at a scale difficult to accomplish with fragmented ownership. Protecting and managing these lands is not only important for ecological reasons, but also benefits public enjoyment of these lands and the resources they provide.

This Program has a long, proven track record of protecting, restoring and enhancing lands that meet both state and local priorities for biodiversity, land access and watershed health. To date, the Partnership has protected 7,457 acres of priority lands and 27 miles of stream, and has restored/enhanced 1,177 acres of habitat.

This 9th Phase of our Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Program continues this body of work:

1. Conservation Easements. MLT will protect 2,400 acres of high-quality private land through conservation easements and develop restoration and habitat management plans for eased lands. MLT will identify potential projects within targeted priority areas through an RFP process coupled with local outreach via SWCD offices. This competitive landowner bid process will rank projects based on ecological value and cost, prioritizing the best projects and securing them at the lowest cost to the state.

2. Fee Acquisition. TNC and TPL will coordinate with MN DNR on all potential fee title acquisitions. TNC and TPL will assist the participating DNR Divisions by conducting all or some of the following activities: initial site reviews, negotiations with the willing seller, appraisals, environmental reviews and acquisition of fee title. TNC and TPL will transfer lands to the DNR except when TNC ownership is appropriate. Fee acquisition of forest (645 acres), prairie (395 acres) and 2.5 miles of coldwater trout stream is planned.

3. Restoration and Enhancement. TNC will use a stewardship crew and contractors to restore/enhance approximately 1,270 acres of bluff prairie, floodplain, riparian habitat and forest within priority complexes of protected lands. MLT will restore and enhance 50 acres of habitat on existing easements, and identify restoration/enhancement priorities on its other existing easement lands in the Southeast. Ecological restoration enhancement management plans will be developed in coordination with the DNR staff, landowners and/or hired subcontractors.

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

Most of the projects selected for this proposal are located in complexes of biodiversity significance, as identified by MBS. Many are also in close proximity to current state land. Building and expanding contiguous blocks of natural vegetation protects habitat continuity in a fragmented landscape.

Sedimentation and erosion are major threats to fish in the region. Protecting and enhancing upland natural communities, especially on the steep bluffs that flank most trout streams, will help prevent additional erosion. Aquatic habitat also benefits from protection of trout stream banks and floodplains. The water quality benefit that comes with the protection of forested upland areas is significant and contributes to improved trout and non-game fish and mussel habitat.

Proposed projects contain over 98 occurrences of Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) identified by the Natural Heritage Inventory, including 58 different species/communities/assemblages. This proposal will continue with high impact projects that have included a total of 211 occurrences representing 95 different species/communities/assemblages. Specific habitats include bluff prairie, oak savanna, barrens prairie, oak-hickory woodland, jack pine-oak woodland, white pine - oak/maple forest and maple basswood hardwood forest. These habitats support species including: tri-colored and northern long-eared bats, timber rattlesnake, Blanding's turtle, western foxsnake, North American racer, American ginseng, great Indian plantain, plains wild indigo and red-shouldered hawk.

What is the degree of timing/opportunistic urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible:

Habitat fragmentation caused by the continued growth from Rochester and demand for rural residential housing and cropland continues to be a threat. This program has generated several large protection and restoration projects that are increasingly rare to the region due to subdivision. When larger landholdings come available, it's crucial to move fast to protect them before they're split up. Protecting large parcels while expanding existing protected areas helps improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ecological management and ensures the long-term viability of the ecosystem.

Invasive species threaten many of the high quality habitat complexes in the region and require active management to maintain native plant communities. Likewise, the lack of fire on bluff prairies and oak savannas within larger fire dependent habitat threatens the long-term viability of priority habitat complexes.

Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

Southeast Minnesota benefits from a wealth of conservation planning and biological indices and analyses. Our partnership has defined our priorities based on these existing plans, like the watershed-based Landscape Stewardship Plans and DNR's Wildlife Action Network along with the Conservation Focus Areas in the Root River and Whitewater watersheds to identify priority areas to focus our efforts and resources (see proposal handout). Individual projects are assessed based on their significance to biodiversity (according to data from the MN Biological Survey), along with several other important criteria such as:

- location within a priority area
- health and extent of existing natural communities
- areas of significant biodiversity and native plant communities
- proximity to existing conservation lands
- parcel size
- importance for stream quality
- risk of conversion

Which sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are applicable to this project:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Describe how your program will advance the indicators identified in the plans selected:

OHF 25 Year Framework

1. Protect forest habitat through acquisition in fee or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties. 4,606 acres opened to public hunting, fishing and recreation to date, improving access and management. 3,022 protected through conservation easements.
2. Protect, enhance and restore habitat for wildlife in rivers, cold water streams and associated upland habitat. 27 miles of trout streams protected, 12.5 opened to fishing.
3. Restoration and enhancement from bluff to stream on 1,177 acres.
4. Protect and restore bluff prairies. 520 acres protected/enhanced.
5. Restore forest habitat that has experienced substantial decline in area in recent decades. Over 540 acres of forest restored or enhanced.

Wildlife Action Plan

Stabilize and increase SGCN populations on: oak savanna, native prairie, cliffs and bluffs and stream habitats. 446 acres of bluff prairies enhanced.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Southeast Forest:

- Protect forest habitat through acquisition in fee or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties

Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:

To date, 12 square miles of critical habitat have been protected. Over 7 square miles opened for public hunting and fishing and allowing increased management within habitat complexes and nearly 5 square miles of permanent conservation easements within priority habitat complexes improving habitat within large complexes. This program has protected habitat for 95 different Species in Greatest Conservation Need, including 8 classified as endangered and 21 considered threatened. The importance of habitat protection in Southeast Minnesota was highlighted recently by new research from TNC scientists. They identified the Blufflands as a resilient landscape that gives native species the greatest opportunity to adapt to a changing climate. Investing in the protection, restoration, and enhancement of resilient landscapes like the blufflands will have a bigger impact on future wildlife, as these areas are expected to remain viable habitat for more of our native species as climate change shifts their historic ranges.

Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Clean Water Fund

Describe the relationship of the funds:

This project implements priority activities identified in watershed protection plans developed with support from the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund and Clean Water Fund.

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

The Minnesota Land Trust encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements as part of its landowner bid protocol. An estimated leverage of \$480,000 of donated value from landowners from easement acquisition is a conservative estimate.

Partners are also leveraging private funds to cover a portion of travel and direct support services cost totaling \$89,000.

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Any state agency or organization requesting a direct appropriation from the OHF must inform the LSOHC at the time of the request for funding is made, 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 proposal does not substitute or supplant previous funding that was not from a Legacy fund.

Describe the source and amount of non-OHF money spent for this work in the past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2013	The Nature Conservancy	\$67,661
2014	The Nature Conservancy	\$2,173,459
2015	The Nature Conservancy	\$14,200
2016	The Trust for Public Land	\$250,000
2016	The Nature Conservancy	\$25,656
2017	The Nature Conservancy	\$63,600
2017	Trust for Public Land - Land Donation	\$55,000
2017	RIM Critical Habitat Match	\$500,000
2018	Trust for Public Land - Private	\$21,250

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

Tracts acquired in fee title will be transferred to the state for ongoing management except when TNC ownership is appropriate. Acquisition projects will be near or adjacent to existing protected lands, including state-owned lands and lands under conservation easement, allowing for the expansion of management activities that are already taking place. Habitats cleared of invasive species will be maintained with prescribed fire and other practices depending on funding. Protection and restoration projects will improve future prescribed fire and maintenance activities through economies of scale. The tracts protected and enhanced as part of this proposal also meet the prioritization for Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan. MN DNR has been successful in securing federal habitat enhancement funding.

Land protected through conservation easements will be sustained by MLT through a state-of-the-art easement stewardship standards and practices. MLT is a nationally-accredited and insured land trust with a successful easement stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring and defending the easements as necessary. In addition, MLT encourages landowners to undertake active ecological management of their properties, provides them with habitat management plans and works with them to secure resources (expertise and funding) to undertake these activities over time.

Explain the things you will do in the future to maintain project outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Every 4-6 years	US Fish and Wildlife Service	prescribed fire		
Every 4-6 years	Game and Fish Fund	prescribed fire		
2023 and perpetually	MLT Easement Stewardship and Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring in perpetuity	Enforcement as necessary	

Identify indicator species and associated quantities this habitat will typically support:

Natural populations, including healthy populations with good habitat, vary among locations, and also rise and fall within lakes and rivers. Most fish surveys conducted by DNR produce an index of abundance (catch per unit effort) rather than a population estimate. This project is estimated to benefit 2,500 pounds of brook trout and 3,250 pounds of brown trout. Species such as rusty patch bumblebee, monarch butterfly, timber rattlesnake, bull snake, Blanding's turtle, Louisiana water thrush, wild turkey, and whitetail deer will also benefit from this program, along with species unique to Southeast Minnesota.

Activity Details

Requirements:

If funded, this proposal 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**

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**

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program - **Yes**

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 - **Yes (WMA, SNA, AMA, Permanently Protected Conservation Easements County/Municipal, Public Waters, State Forests, OHF Acquired TNC Preserve)**

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **Yes**

Are the funds confirmed - **Yes**

Documentation

What are the types of funds?

Other - Leverage

Land Use:

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

Explain

Short-term use of agricultural crops is an accepted best practice for preparing a site for prairie restoration. For example, short-term use of soybeans could be used for restorations in order to control weed seedbeds prior to prairie planting. In some cases this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seedbank, however neonicotinoids will not be used.

MLT - The purpose of the Minnesota Land Trust's conservation easements is to protect existing high quality natural habitat and to preserve opportunities for future restoration. As such, we restrict any agricultural lands and use on the properties. In cases in which there are agricultural lands associated with the larger property, we will either carve the agricultural area out of the conservation easement, or in some limited cases, we may include a small percentage of agricultural lands if it is not feasible to carve those areas out. In such cases, however, we will not use OHF funds to pay the landowners for that portion of the conservation easement.

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing - **No**

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion - **Yes**

None

Will the eased land be open for public use - **No**

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list - **No**

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition - **No**

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this proposals funding and availability? - **No**

Explain how, when, and source of the R/E work:

Restoration expenses include program development activities in addition to restoration construction expenses. MLT restoration personnel will conduct outreach with easement landowners to evaluate, scope, design and schedule additional restoration projects. These activities will improve the project selection, cost-estimates and outcomes for future OHF funding requests.

Land Use:

Have you received OHF dollars in the past through LSOHC? - **Yes**

Past appropriations and spending to date:

Apprp Year	Approp Amount Received	Approp Amount Spent to Date	Leverage as Reported in AP/th>	Leverage Realized to Date	Total Acres Affected in AP	Total Acres Affected to Date	Program Complete and Final Report Approved?
2009	500000	471900	0	100000	300	548	Yes
2013	2750000	1644600	152000	19440	974	1065	Yes
2014	5770000	5765700	2159300	2294950	1974	2059	Yes
2015	2910000	2694124	19800	14200	536	509	No
2016	5000000	4992088	355500	785032	1525	1935	No
2017	2375000	2073461	247900	302290	700	766	No
2018	2142000	1400894	136600	50284	736	641	No
2019	5741000	400016	375900	11693	1945	523	No

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Purchase agreements or options on acquisition of fee land	June 30, 2024
Acquisition of fee land	June 30, 2025
Restoration/Enhancement on parcels protected with grant	June 30, 2029
Restoration/Enhancement on parcels protected without grant	June 30, 2026
MLT easement acquisition	June 30, 2025

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$11,353,900

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$1,008,400	\$0		\$1,008,400
Contracts	\$1,484,000	\$0		\$1,484,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$4,300,000	\$0		\$4,300,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$2,400,000	\$480,000	Landowners	\$2,880,000
Easement Stewardship	\$576,000	\$0		\$576,000
Travel	\$63,000	\$3,000	Private	\$66,000
Professional Services	\$901,000	\$0		\$901,000
Direct Support Services	\$333,300	\$86,000	Private	\$419,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$65,000	\$0		\$65,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$33,200	\$0		\$33,200
Supplies/Materials	\$85,000	\$0		\$85,000
DNR IDP	\$105,000	\$0		\$105,000
Total	\$11,353,900	\$569,000	-	\$11,922,900

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TPL Protection and Legal Staff	0.30	3.00	\$149,500	\$0		\$149,500
TNC Project Management, Protection and Grants Admin	0.60	3.00	\$182,900	\$0		\$182,900
TNC Restoration/Enhancement Crew	1.77	4.00	\$220,000	\$0		\$220,000
MLT Protection Staff	0.70	4.00	\$266,000	\$0		\$266,000
MLT Restoration Staff	0.50	4.00	\$190,000	\$0		\$190,000
Total	3.87	18.00	\$1,008,400	\$0	-	\$1,008,400

Budget and Cash Leverage by Partnership

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Trust for Public Land	\$149,500	\$0		\$149,500
Contracts	Trust for Public Land	\$200,000	\$0		\$200,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Trust for Public Land	\$3,050,000	\$0		\$3,050,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$3,000	Private	\$3,000
Professional Services	Trust for Public Land	\$130,000	\$0		\$130,000
Direct Support Services	Trust for Public Land	\$86,000	\$86,000	Private	\$172,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Trust for Public Land	\$35,000	\$0		\$35,000
Capital Equipment	Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	Trust for Public Land	\$75,000	\$0		\$75,000
Total	-	\$3,725,500	\$89,000	-	\$3,814,500

Personnel - Trust for Public Land

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TPL Protection and Legal Staff	0.30	3.00	\$149,500	\$0		\$149,500
Total	0.30	3.00	\$149,500	\$0	-	\$149,500

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	The Nature Conservancy	\$402,900	\$0		\$402,900
Contracts	The Nature Conservancy	\$1,000,000	\$0		\$1,000,000

Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	The Nature Conservancy	\$1,250,000	\$0	\$1,250,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	The Nature Conservancy	\$0	\$0	\$0
Easement Acquisition	The Nature Conservancy	\$0	\$0	\$0
Easement Stewardship	The Nature Conservancy	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	The Nature Conservancy	\$36,000	\$0	\$36,000
Professional Services	The Nature Conservancy	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000
Direct Support Services	The Nature Conservancy	\$123,300	\$0	\$123,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	The Nature Conservancy	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
Capital Equipment	The Nature Conservancy	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	The Nature Conservancy	\$25,200	\$0	\$25,200
Supplies/Materials	The Nature Conservancy	\$80,000	\$0	\$80,000
DNR IDP	The Nature Conservancy	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
Total		\$3,077,400	\$0	\$3,077,400

Personnel - The Nature Conservancy

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TNC Project Management, Protection and Grants Admin	0.60	3.00	\$182,900	\$0		\$182,900
TNC Restoration/Enhancement Crew	1.77	4.00	\$220,000	\$0		\$220,000
Total	2.37	7.00	\$402,900	\$0		\$402,900

Budget Name	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Minnesota Land Trust	\$456,000	\$0		\$456,000
Contracts	Minnesota Land Trust	\$284,000	\$0		\$284,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	Minnesota Land Trust	\$2,400,000	\$480,000	Landowners	\$2,880,000
Easement Stewardship	Minnesota Land Trust	\$576,000	\$0		\$576,000
Travel	Minnesota Land Trust	\$27,000	\$0		\$27,000
Professional Services	Minnesota Land Trust	\$671,000	\$0		\$671,000
Direct Support Services	Minnesota Land Trust	\$124,000	\$0		\$124,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Minnesota Land Trust	\$8,000	\$0		\$8,000
Supplies/Materials	Minnesota Land Trust	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
DNR IDP	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$4,551,000	\$480,000		\$5,031,000

Personnel - Minnesota Land Trust

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Protection Staff	0.70	4.00	\$266,000	\$0		\$266,000
MLT Restoration Staff	0.50	4.00	\$190,000	\$0		\$190,000
Total	1.20	8.00	\$456,000	\$0		\$456,000

Amount of Request: \$11,353,900
Amount of Leverage: \$569,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 5.01%
DSS + Personnel: \$1,341,700
As a % of the total request: 11.82%
Easement Stewardship: \$576,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 24.00%

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

TNC: 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.

MLT: In a process that was approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, Minnesota Land Trust determined our direct support services rate to include all of the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget, which is similar to the Land Trust's proposed federal indirect rate. We will apply this DNR approved rate only to personnel expenses to determine the total amount of the direct support services.

TPL: The Trust for Public Land's DSS request is based upon our federally approved indirect rate, which has been approved by the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant and 50% is contributed as leverage.

What is included in the contracts line?

TNC and TPL contract line item are dedicated to enhancement and restoration work. Typical contractors include private vendors and Conservation Corps of MN/IA.

MLT will use the contract budget item for three distinct purposes: to complete habitat management plans on the new easement acquisitions; for restoration plans and projects on existing easements; and for partnering with SWCD's on outreach for easement acquisition.

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:

Vehicle rental is also included.

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

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

TPL will leverage privately sourced funds to cover direct support services (DSS) costs not reimbursed.

TPL has leveraged private funds for travel.

The Land Trust encourages landowners to donate value as a participant in the program. This leverage (\$480,000) is a conservative estimate of expected landowner contribution.

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable? - Yes

Tell us how this project would be scaled and how administrative costs are affected, describe the "economy of scale" and how outputs would change with reduced funding, if applicable:

Partially scalable- full funding allows larger projects to be completed. Personnel costs are associated with projects. Larger protection, enhancement and restoration projects, despite higher acquisition, easement or contract costs, allow for greater efficiency in personnel and administrative costs.

What is the cost per easement for stewardship and explain how that amount is calculated?

The average cost per easement to perpetually fund the Minnesota Land Trust's long-term monitoring and enforcement obligations is \$24,000. This figure has been determined by using a detailed stewardship funding calculator or "cost analysis" which is the industry standard according to the Land Trust Accreditation process. This cost analysis examines seventeen different categories of future annual expenditures related to the management of the easement and then calculates what the Land Trust needs in one-time funding to cover these various expenditures in perpetuity. In addition, the Land Trust seeks private contributions whenever possible to further leverage these state funds. The Minnesota Land Trust reviews and updates this cost-analysis periodically to ensure that the organization will have the capacity to fulfill its ongoing obligations. This cost-analysis is on file with the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council staff and the Land Trust shares a new version with the Council whenever updates are made.

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?

Phase 9 is a component of the larger Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Program. Continuity of funding across multiple phases allows us flexibility when prioritizing parcels for protection or enhancement. Further, it ensures stability in our staffing model and provides the ability to plan and prioritize projects over multiple years. The flexibility provided by stable funding is critically important

to achieving conservation goals given the uncertainty and variability of field season weather conditions.

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?

3-5

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	30	40	50	120
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	395	645	0	1,040
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	2,400	2,400
Enhance	0	700	500	0	1,200
Total	0	1,125	1,185	2,450	4,760

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

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	40
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	30
Total	70

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$170,000	\$272,600	\$400,800	\$843,400
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$2,417,700	\$2,862,800	\$0	\$5,280,500
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,167,000	\$4,167,000
Enhance	\$0	\$483,000	\$580,000	\$0	\$1,063,000
Total	\$0	\$3,070,700	\$3,715,400	\$4,567,800	\$11,353,900

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	120	0	0	120
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	1,040	0	0	1,040
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	2,400	0	0	2,400
Enhance	0	0	1,200	0	0	1,200
Total	0	0	4,760	0	0	4,760

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$843,400	\$0	\$0	\$843,400
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$5,280,500	\$0	\$0	\$5,280,500
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$4,167,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,167,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$1,063,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,063,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$11,353,900	\$0	\$0	\$11,353,900

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$5,667	\$6,815	\$8,016
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$6,121	\$4,438	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,736
Enhance	\$0	\$690	\$1,160	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$7,028	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$5,077	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$1,736	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$886	\$0	\$0

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

2.5

I have read and understand Section 15 of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Statute 97A.056, and the Call for Funding Request. I certify I am authorized to submit this proposal and to the best of my knowledge the information provided is true and accurate.

Outcomes

Programs in southeast forest region:

- Large corridors and complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat typical of the unglaciated region are restored and protected We will track the acres of priority parcels protected within the Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA) identified as priorities in regional planning. Success within each COA will be determined based on the percentage of area protected, restored and/or enhanced.

Parcel List

Explain the process used to select, rank and prioritize the parcels:

- Within Conservation Opportunity Area or Area of Significant Native Biodiversity (allows for large landscape management and management efficiencies, i.e. large scale Rx fire)
- Contains a Minnesota Biological Survey mapped native plant community
- Equal to or greater than 80 acres in size
- Property line began within ¼ mile of a state-owned parcel
- A Conservation Partner is willing to accept the property/meets partner objectives (SNA, WMA, Forestry)
- Willing seller

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

Fillmore

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Choice WMA	10 20820 1	40	\$32,000	Yes
Chosen Valley WMA	10 41220 6	10	\$4,000	Yes
Gribben Creek State Forest Unit	10 30 9228	30	\$36,000	Yes
Rushford Sand Barrens	10 408221	50	\$25,000	Yes
Rushford SF South 2	10 408226	30	\$15,000	Yes
Schueler Bluffs	10 408203	25	\$25,000	Yes
Vesta Bluff Prairies	10 208214	20	\$50,000	Yes
William Pease WMA	10 411207	25	\$10,000	Yes

Houston

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Chisholm Valley WMA	10 30 720 4	35	\$14,000	Yes
Ferndale Ridge WMA	10 40 7232	300	\$120,000	Yes
Mound Prairie Forests	10 30 520 3	30	\$12,000	Yes

Winona

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Rushford Drainage District	10 508233	31	\$93,000	Yes
Whitewater Burnt Oaks	10 810 211	65	\$162,500	Yes
Whitewater hwy26 Bluff	10 710 203	35	\$42,000	Yes
Whitewater Larsen Prairie	10 710 208	30	\$50,200	Yes
Whitewater Lupine Valley	10 810 201	143	\$50,000	Yes
Whitewater Prairie 2	10 810 211	27	\$67,500	Yes
Whitewater Savanna	10 810 211	65	\$162,500	Yes
Whitewater Savanna 2	10 810 235	100	\$30,000	Yes
Whitewater WMA	10 810 202	60	\$180,000	Yes
Wiscoy Valley 1	10 50 7217	40	\$120,000	Yes
Wiscoy Valley 2	10 50 7233	23	\$70,000	Yes

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Dodge

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Middle Fork Zumbro River SNA	10 817224	175	\$787,500	No	Full	Full

Fillmore

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Choice	10308211	102	\$102,000	No	Full	Full
Choice WMA 6	10208212	120	\$420,000	No	Full	Full
Choice WMA North 4	10308234	75	\$270,000	No	Full	Full
Deer Creek SNA II	10313213	159	\$506,000	No	Full	Full
Forestville 2	10212222	130	\$455,000	No	Full	Full
Rushford SB 2	10408222	160	\$500,000	No	Full	Full

Houston

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Money Creek South	10406206	100	\$100,000	No	Full	Full
Money Creek South	10406206	100	\$300,000	No	Full	Full
Root River WMA	10405236	37	\$135,000	No	Full	Full
Wet Bark 3	10306230	325	\$1,137,500	No	Full	Full

Olmstead

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Root River Forestry	10513220	40	\$900,000	No	Full	Full

Wabasha

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
McCarthy Lake	10909206	138	\$135,000	No	Full	Full
McCarthy Lake 2	10909207	100	\$450,000	No	Full	Full
Mighty Zumbro	11010220	155	\$750,000	No	Full	Full
Mighty Zumbro II	11011220	200	\$1,000,000	No	Full	Full
Watopa Forest	10910210	320	\$1,320,000	No	Full	Full
Weaver Dunes	10909206	231	\$250,000	No	Full	Full
Whitewater WMA Main	10909230	50	\$252,000	No	Full	Full
Whitewater WMA Main II	10909232	210	\$486,000	No	Full	Full

Winona

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Whitewater WMA Main III	10710209	54	\$277,900	No	Full	Full
Whitewater WMA North I	10710207	41	\$259,000	No	Full	Full
Whitewater WMA North II	10710208	86	\$624,900	No	Full	Full
Whitewater WMA South	10709231	430	\$2,300,000	No	Full	Full
Whitewater WMA South II	10710226	543	\$1,884,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

Fillmore

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	# Bldgs?	Bldg Improve Desc	Value of Bldg	Disposition of Improvements
Choice WMA 7	10208202	570	\$2,000,000	2	Farm buildings and grain sheds		\$ Remove
Rush Creek	10408202	240	\$825,000	1	shed	\$0	Remove

Winona

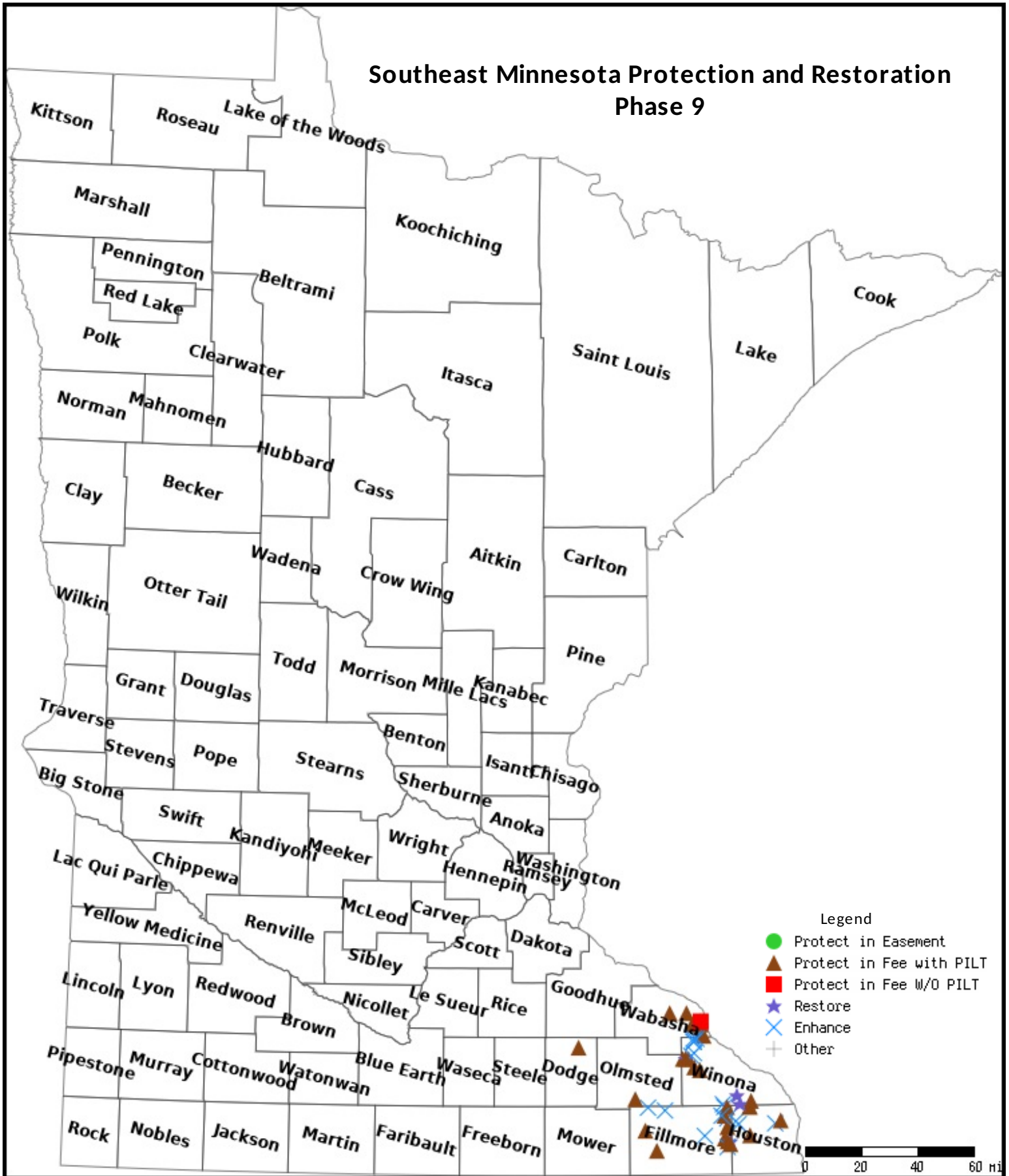
Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	# Bldgs?	Bldg Imprpove Desc	Value of Bldg	Disposition of Improvements
Money Creek	10 50 6230	850	\$2,500,000	1	shed	\$0	Remove

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Phase 9



Data Generated From Parcel List



Southeast Minnesota Protection & Restoration Phase 9

The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and Minnesota Land Trust request \$11,353,900 for the Southeast Minnesota Protection & Restoration Program.

The Blufflands Region of Southeast Minnesota contains some of the highest quality, most diverse and least protected wildlife habitat in Minnesota. This program will invest in targeted land protection through fee simple and conservation easement acquisitions and the restoration of important habitat types. It will protect 3% of the remaining High or Outstanding Biodiversity areas in the region as recognized by the Minnesota Biological Survey.

This program builds on existing protected lands to improve large landscape management for Species in Greatest Conservation Need through land acquisition and restoration. These actions will focus on areas of High or Outstanding Biodiversity Significance. They will return communities to healthy conditions and improve their stability, making ongoing management easier and more effective in the future.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Request:

\$11,353,900 for:

- 2,400 acres of perpetual conservation easements.
- 1,040 acres of fee land acquisition.
- 1,320 acres of bluff prairie, savanna, forest restoration & enhancement.

For more information about this proposal, please contact Rich Biske, Freshwater Conservation Program Director, The Nature Conservancy at rbiske@tnc.org or (612) 331-0766

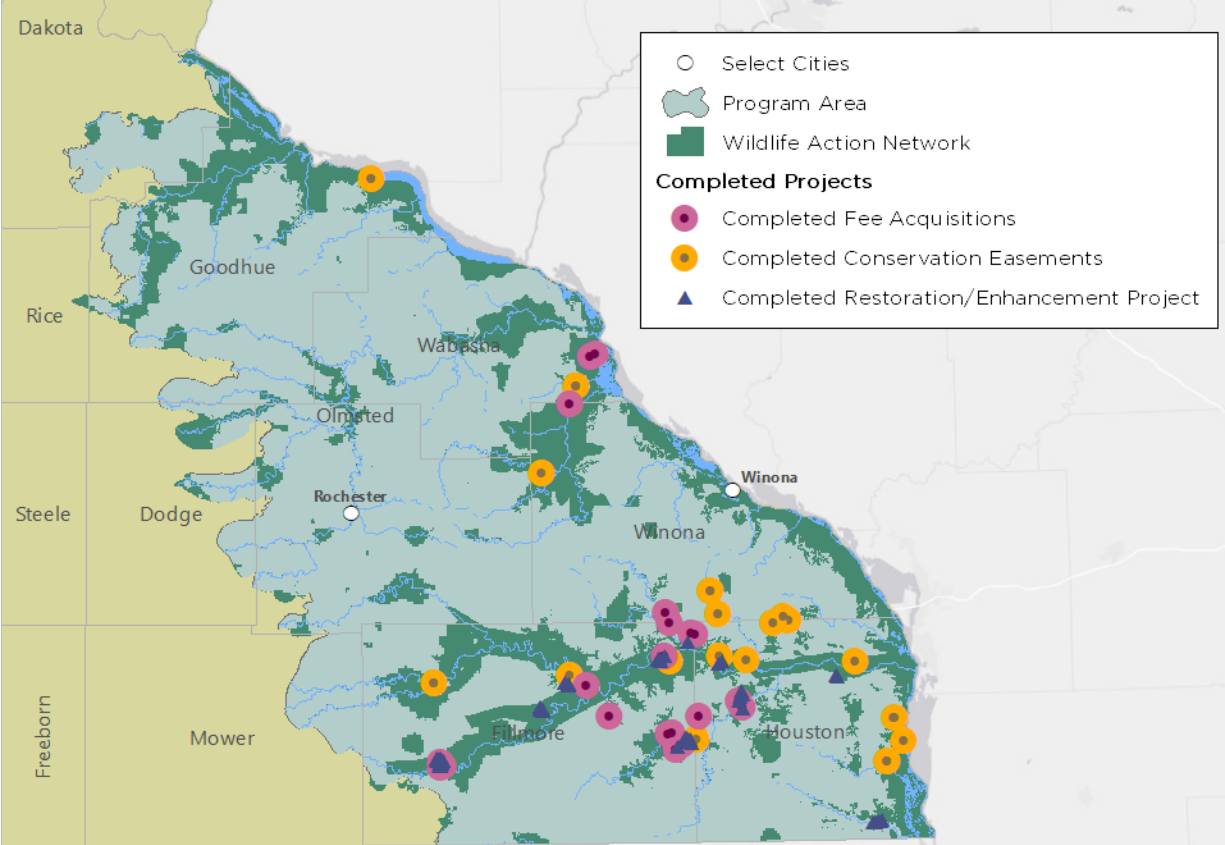


Hansi Johnson

Partners

The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land will complete all fee simple land acquisitions in collaboration with the Minnesota DNR. The Nature Conservancy will also coordinate habitat restoration and enhancement with DNR.

The Minnesota Land Trust will complete permanent conservation easements and restoration/enhancement projects in partnership with private landowners.



What has Been Accomplished to Date in the Program?

Protection

Fee acquisition:

- 4,435 acres (94% of goal)
- 27 miles of trout stream (200% of goal)

Easement acquisition:

- 3,022 acres (106% of goal)

Restoration/Enhancement

- 1,177 acres (129% of goal).

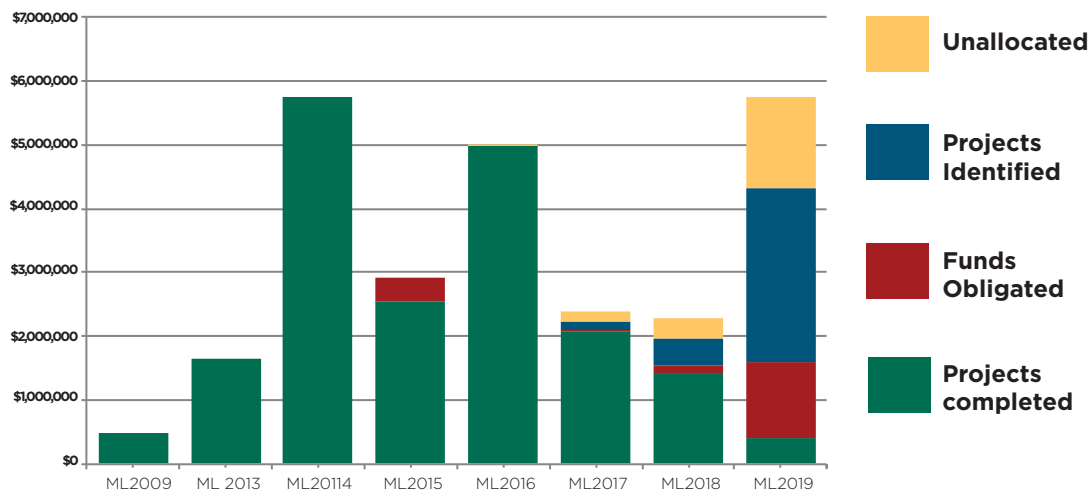
This program has

leveraged \$3,970,000

to date, including

\$1,196,000 in landowner donation of easement value, \$200,000 in federal funds, and \$2,700,000 from private and other sources.

Expenditures by Grant



**MINNESOTA
LAND TRUST**

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A Decision Support Tool for Prioritizing Conservation Easement Opportunities

The Minnesota Land Trust often employs within its conservation program areas an RFP (Request for Proposals) model to both identify high-quality projects and introduce a level of competition into the easement acquisition process. Below, we briefly discuss how the system works and the framework put in place to sort the varied opportunities that come before us.

How the Ranking System Works

The parcel ranking framework employed through the Minnesota Land Trust's RFP process is intended as a **decision support tool** to aid in identifying, among the slate of landowners submitting bids for conservation easements, the most ecologically significant opportunities for the price. Using this framework, the Land Trust and its partners use an array of weighted data sets tailored to the specific circumstances inherent in a program area to identify those worthy of consideration.

It is important to note that this parcel ranking framework enables the Land Trust to rank projects *relative* to one another. That's important to do, but it's also important to understand how a project (or suite of projects) relates to the ideal situation (i.e., a project that is of exceptional size, condition and superb landscape context). If, for example, an RFP generated 20 proposals in a program area, the framework would effectively sift among them and identify the relatively good from those relatively bad. However, this information alone would not determine whether any of those parcels were of sufficient quality to pursue for protection (all may be of insufficient quality to warrant expenditure of funds). To solve this problem and make sure ranked projects are high priorities for conservation, we step back and evaluate them relative to the ideal - i.e., is each project among the best opportunities for conservation we can expect to find in the program area?

As part of its proposals to LSOHC, the Land Trust included easement sign-up criteria that laid out at a general level the framework utilized by the organization. Below is a more detailed description of the process the Land Trust utilizes in ranking potential parcels relative to one another, and identifying those with which a conservation easement will be pursued. We also include a ranking form illustrating the representative weighting applied to each criteria. These weightings will be refined as we move forward in applying this approach in each program area.

The Framework

We evaluate potential projects based on two primary factors: ecological significance and cost. Both are assessed independent of one another.

Factor 1: Ecological Significance

The Ecological Significance score is determined by looking at 3 subfactors, each weighted equally (as a default). Each of these constitutes 1/3 of the total ecological significance score.

Subfactors:

- **Size or Quantity** – the area of the parcel to be protected (how big is it?), length of shoreline, etc. The bigger the better.
- **Condition or Quality** – the condition of the natural communities and/or target species found on a parcel. The higher quality the better.
- **Landscape Context** – what’s around the parcel, both ecologically and from a protected status standpoint. The more ecologically intact the surrounding landscape the better; the extent to which a parcel builds off of other protected lands to form complexes or corridors, the better.

Note that we have the ability to emphasize one subfactor over another if the specific circumstances warrant it, but we begin with a default standard at the onset. At present, all of our geographies are using the default standard.

Indicators:

A suite of weighted indicators is used to score each parcel relative to each of the above subfactors. Indicators are selected based on their ability to effectively inform the scoring of parcels relative to each of the respective subfactors. Weightings for each criterion are assessed and vetted to ensure that a set of indicators for each subfactor produces meaningful results, then applied across each of the proposed parcels. Finally, we vet and make improvements to the scoring matrix when we identify issues or circumstances where results seem erroneous.

Data sets used for this purpose must offer wall-to-wall coverage across the program area to ensure that bias for or against parcels does not creep into the equation. Where gaps in such coverages exist, we attempt to fill them in to the extent feasible (via field inventory, etc.). Finally, we vet and make improvements to the scoring matrix when we identify issues or circumstances where results seem erroneous.

Factor 2: Cost

Cost is a second major factor used in our consideration of parcels. Although ecological significance is *the* primary factor in determining the merits of a project, our RFP programs also strive to make the greatest conservation impact with the most efficient use of State funds. As such, we look at the overall cost of each project relative to its ecological significance; we also ask landowners to consider donating all or some of their easement value to the cause and to better position their proposals. Many landowners participate in that fashion.

Cost, as a primary factor, is assessed independently of the ecological factors. Given equal ecological significance, a project of lower cost will be elevated over those of higher cost in the ranking. That said, exceptionally high quality projects are likely to be pursued even if no or modest landowner donation is put forward. Alternatively, there are projects offered as full donations that are not moved forward because their ecological significance is not acceptable. The degree to which cost factors into the ranking of parcels relative to one another is made on a case-by-case basis.

SOUTHEAST BLUFFLANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM Conservation Easement Selection Worksheet		SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3	SITE 4	SITE 5	SITE 6	SITE 7	SITE 8	SITE 9	SITE 10	SITE 11	SITE 12	Notes
COUNTY														
100 Pts	ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE													
Weighting Factor	Size/Abundance of Habitat (33 points)													
	a) Size (33 pts): Acres of Habitat to be Protected by an Easement													
	SUBTOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weighting Factor	Quality of Natural Resources to be Protected by the Easement (33 points)													
	a) Habitat Quality (28 pts): Quality of Existing Ecological Systems (Terrestrial & Aquatic)													
	b) Imperiled Species (5 pts): Occurrence of Documented Rare Species on Parcel													
	SUBTOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weighting Factor	Landscape Context (34 points)													
	Current Status (30 points)													
	a) Protection Context (15 points)													
	i. Size of Contiguous Protected Lands (8 pts)													
	ii. Amount of Protected Lands within 3 miles of Property													
	: Protected Land within 0.5 miles of Property (4 pts)													
	: Protected Land 0.5-3 miles from Property (3 pts)													
	b) Ecological Context (15 points)													
	i. Size of Contiguous Ecological Habitat (8 pts)													
	ii. Amount of Ecological Habitat within 3 miles of Property													
	: Ecological Habitat within 0.5 miles of Property (4 pts)													
	: Ecological Habitat 0.5-3 miles from Property (3 pts)													
	Future Potential (4 points)													
	a) Conservation Plan Context (2 pts)													
	b) Amount of Existing Activity (2 pts)													
	SUBTOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL ECOLOGICAL VALUE POINTS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COST														
	i. Bid amount (\$)/acre	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	ii. Estimated donative value (\$)/acre	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	TOTAL ACQUISITION COST (\$)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

KEY	
	Priority
	Possible
	Out

SOUTHEAST BLUFFLANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM

Conservation Easement Selection Worksheet – Scoring and Criteria

Three primary factors when taken together provide a good estimate of long-term viability for biodiversity: 1) **Size** of the occurrence (species population or example of natural community), 2) **Condition** of the occurrence, and 3) its **Landscape context**. This framework is used widely across the world by a large number of conservation organizations and agencies and here in Minnesota by the Minnesota DNR, The Nature Conservancy and others. The Minnesota Land Trust has adopted this practice as well.

In this summary document, we provide an overview of the framework used by the Land Trust in assessing and prioritizing land protection opportunities before the organization.

- 1. Habitat Size (33 points):** Parcels are scored based on acres of habitat to be protected through the easement relative to the largest parcels available for protection in the program area. Although size can pertain to species populations, the size of such populations is often constrained by available habitat. In addition, very little information pertaining to the size of species populations on a given property typically exists, making any determination suspect. Habitat size is a valid indicator in these circumstances.

Scoring: Parcels are scored by how they fall relative to twelve size classes of habitat:

0 pt	1-40 acres
3 pts	41-50 acres
6 pts	51-75 acres
9 pts	76-108 acres
12 pts	109-152 acres
15 pts	153-224 acres
18 pts	225-320 acres
21 pts	321-460 acres
24 pts	461-660 acres
27 pts	661-960 acres
30 pts	961-1380 acres
33 pts	>1380 acres

- 2. Quality of Natural Resources (33 points):** Parcels are scored based on the quality or condition of occurrences of ecological communities (habitat) and imperiled species if known. As with Habitat Size above, population data for imperiled species is often minimal on private lands. As such, the condition of score is heavily influenced by the condition of natural communities on a property. However, we do allocate a modest level of points to the presence of imperiled species if they have been documented on a property.

Scoring: Parcels are scored based on the condition of focal ecological community targets – both terrestrial and freshwater – and presence of imperiled species on the property, as such:

- a) Habitat Quality (28 points)** – The Minnesota Biological Survey natural community element occurrence ranking framework (for terrestrial systems) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency fish and insect indices of biotic integrity are used to score habitat quality on parcels, as such:

- 0 pts Absence of natural communities; fish/insect IBI = 0-10.
- 4 pts Natural communities averaging D rank; fish/insect IBI = 10-20.
- 8 pts Natural communities averaging CD rank; fish/insect IBI = 20-40.
- 12 pts Natural communities averaging C rank; fish/insect IBI = 50-59.
- 16 pts Natural communities averaging BC rank; fish/insect IBI = 60-69.
- 20 pts Natural communities averaging B rank; fish/insect IBI = 70-79.
- 24 pts Natural communities averaging AB rank; IBI = 80-89.
- 28 pts Natural communities averaging A rank; IBI > 90.

b) Imperiled Species (5 points) – Scoring of the parcel is based on species abundance, as follows:

- 1 pt 1 occurrence
- 2 pts 2 occurrences
- 3 pts 3 occurrences
- 5 pts 4 or more occurrences

3. Landscape Context (34 points): Parcels are scored based current ecological context of the property and protected lands surrounding it; in addition, points are also allocated based on the likelihood that lands around a parcel will be protected going forward based on the identification of these adjacent lands in respective conservation lands.

Scoring: Parcels are scored based as follows:

a) Protection Context (15 points) – Is calculated based on two subfactors, including size of contiguous protected land (if any) and amount of protected land within 3 miles of the property. Here, we look at two subfactors:

i) Amount of protected land (acres) contiguous with the parcel. Scoring of the parcel is based on the amount of protected land contiguous to the parcel (8 points), as follows:

- 1 pt 0-80 acres of contiguous protected lands
- 2 pts 81-320 acres
- 3 pts 321-640 acres
- 4 pts 641-960 acres
- 5 pts 961-1920 acres
- 6 pts 1921-3840 acres
- 7 pts 3841-7680 acres
- 8 pts >7680 acres

ii) Amount of protected lands within a 3-mile radius of the parcel, whether contiguous or not (7 points). Blocks of habitat nearby but not contiguous can also play a very significant role in the maintenance of biodiversity over the long term. In this assessment, we weight protected lands within ½ mile of the parcel higher than those farther removed, and score them separately.

(a) Amount (acres) of protected land within ½ mile of protected property (4 points) – The amount of protected land within ½ mile of the parcel, scored as follows:

- 1 pt 0-80 acres of protected land

- 2 pts 81-360 acres
- 3 pts 361-640 acres
- 4 pts >640 acres

Amount (acres) of protected land ½-3 miles of the protected property (3 points) –

- 1 pt 0-640 acres of protected land
- 2 pts 641-2560 acres
- 3 pts >2561 acres

b) Ecological Context (15 points) – As with Protection context, ecological context is calculated based on two subfactors, including size of contiguous ecological habitat (if any) and amount of ecological habitat within 3 miles of the property.

i) Amount of ecological habitat (acres) contiguous with the parcel, providing species with direct access to larger blocks of permanent habitat (8 points). Scoring of the parcel is based on the amount of natural ecological habitat contiguous to the parcel, as follows:

- 1 pt 0-80 acres of contiguous ecological habitat
- 2 pts 81-320 acres
- 3 pts 321-640 acres
- 4 pts 641-960 acres
- 5 pts 961-1920 acres
- 6 pts 1921-3840 acres
- 7 pts 3841-7680 acres
- 8 pts >7680 acres

ii) Amount of protected lands within a 3-mile radius of the parcel, whether contiguous or not (7 points). Blocks of habitat nearby, whether contiguous or not play a very significant role in the maintenance of biodiversity over the long term. In this assessment, we weight ecological habitat within ½ mile of the parcel higher than that farther removed, and score them separately.

Amount (acres) of protected land within ½ mile of protected property (4 points) – The amount of protected land within ½ mile of the parcel, scored as follows:

- 1 pt 0-80 acres of protected land
- 2 pts 81-360 acres
- 3 pts 361-640 acres
- 4 pts >640 acres

Amount (acres) of protected land ½-3 miles of the protected property (3 points) –

- 1 pt 0-640 acres of protected land
- 2 pts 641-2560 acres
- 3 pts >2561 acres

c) Future Potential (4 points) – The degree to which the area within which a parcel lies has been identified as a priority for conservation action and the degree to which action is being

implemented in that area is a direct indicator of the long-term potential for maintenance of biodiversity associated with a parcel. Lands affiliated with priority areas are more likely to be complemented with additional levels of nearby protected lands than those outside of priority areas. In areas experiencing high levels of development, this factor may carry a significant amount of weight in setting protection priorities.

Scoring: Parcels are scored based on two subfactors: 1) their position relative to priority areas identified in statewide or local planning efforts, and 2) the degree to which action is being implemented within a priority area.

- 0 pts Parcel not within priority area
- 1 pt Parcel within priority area; minimal activity occurring
- 2 pts Parcel within priority area; modest activity occurring
- 3 pts Parcel within priority area; good levels of activity occurring
- 4 pts Parcel within priority area; high levels of activity occurring