

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2022 / ML 2021 Request for Funding

Date: May 28, 2020

Program or Project Title: St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 2 (HA01)

Funds Requested: \$8,295,000

Manager's Name: Monica Zachay

Title: Director of Programs

Organization: St. Croix River Association

Address: PO Box 655

City: St. Croix Falls, WI 54024

Office Number: 715-483-3300

Email: monicaz@scramail.com

County Locations: Chisago, Pine, and Washington.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest
- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest
- Habitat

Abstract:

The St. Croix River Association, Minnesota Land Trust, and The Trust for Public Land will work in partnership to permanently protect approximately 1,590 acres of critical wildlife habitat on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River watershed through fee-title acquisition and conservation easements. The goals of the program are to protect high quality wildlife habitat, improve conservation connectivity, and provide public access for outdoor recreation opportunities.

Design and scope of work:

The St. Croix River is one of the nation's first federally designated "Wild and Scenic" rivers and is home to a diverse abundance of native flora and fauna, rivaling any other location within the greater Upper Mississippi River basin. It contains large swaths of unspoiled brushland and forest habitat, critical for the survival of game species, non-game species, and threatened populations of wildlife including populations of sharp-tailed grouse and endangered Karner blue butterflies. To the north, pineries provide an abundance of forest products that sustain rural communities, along with seasonal economic boosts from visitors who come for an array of outdoor activities – from hunting and fishing, to hiking, biking and boating.

Despite its federal protections as a "Wild and Scenic" river, the watershed beyond the Riverway boundary is quite vulnerable. With more than 75% of the watershed's brushland and forest habitat in private holdings, the threat of development, fragmentation, and conversion to agriculture is substantial.

Building upon years of woodland owner outreach and increased interest in private forest stewardship, we seek to increase permanent protection options for landowners that result in the conservation of well connected, functional forests and rivers that sustain and enhance wildlife habitat. In partnership with the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) and The Trust for Public Land (TPL), we seek to protect large intact forest patches that are managed for complexity; sustain riparian forests that are managed for connectivity; and restore lands



that are important to the 128 listed Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) that are known to occur within this landscape.

Funding allocated through Phase I of the St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration program has largely been committed to projects that will be completed within the next year. The partnership is requesting ML 2021 funding for Phase II of the program to continue the important work of permanently protecting some of Minnesota's highest quality habitat.

TPL will protect approximately 690 acres in fee focusing on lands that have been identified as high priority in statewide and regional plans as immediate opportunities for protection. TPL will convey lands to the DNR, except when LGU ownership is appropriate, for permanent ownership, management, and stewardship.

MLT will acquire approximately 900 acres of conservation easements and develop habitat management plans for eased acres. Projects within targeted priority areas will be identified through a competitive RFP process and subsequently ranked based on ecological value and cost, prioritizing the best projects and securing them at the lowest cost to the state. MLT will negotiate and close all conservation easements.

The St. Croix River Association will provide overall program administration and landowner outreach and engagement.

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:

The areas targeted by this proposal have been identified and prioritized through state, regional, and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity, connectivity, and ability to preserve habitat for species of greatest conservation need.

The project area has a mixed representation of extensive forestland, brushland, and riparian habitats that are home to approximately 128 SGCN including: Lake Sturgeon, wood turtle, gray wolf, bald eagle, osprey, sandhill crane, trumpeter swan, yellow rail, and sharp-tailed grouse. The St. Croix River watershed is also globally-recognized for its mussel diversity with over 40 known mussels, including 5 federally endangered, and 20 state-listed species, such as the winged mapleleaf and snuffbox. The project area also contains a significant amount of high quality brushland and regenerating forestland habitat critical to the breeding success of the Golden-winged Warbler.

Within this region we have an unparalleled opportunity. The St. Croix River watershed has been classified as containing the best-preserved remnant of pre-settlement natural communities in the Upper Mississippi drainage. But we must protect the rich natural and cultural heritage of the St. Croix River watershed before they too are altered by ever encroaching agricultural and development pressure.

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

The watershed faces ongoing development pressures in riparian areas from population growth and recreational tourism. From 2000-2016 central MN counties within the St. Croix watershed experienced a 23% increase in population, nearly double the state average. Increases in housing density and associated development on rural forest lands can be linked to numerous changes to private forest services across watersheds, including decreases in native wildlife; changes in forest health; and reduced water quality, forest carbon storage, timber production, and recreational benefits. Additionally, data released in 2019 shows that Washington County, covering the southern part of the watershed, is within the top five fastest growing counties in the state.

Protecting healthy watersheds with permanent conservation options, such as easements and fee acquisitions, is an effective strategy to ensure that the ecosystem and economic services provided by healthy watersheds remain intact.

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:

This proposal uses a science-based multiple benefits approach for prioritizing and targeting areas of greatest conservation value. We will utilize The Nature Conservancy's St. Croix Basin GIS-based Priority Protection Analysis which incorporates Minnesota Biological Survey Sites of Biodiversity Significance, Lakes of Biological Significance, habitat complexes and connectivity, along with other data sets to spatially prioritize the most important sites for protection. The intent of this model was to develop and score priorities where multiple benefits overlap – habitat, biodiversity, water quality, water quantity, and resiliency. Evaluation criteria include: 1) aquatic and terrestrial habitat protection priorities, 2) lands important to drinking water quality and groundwater recharge, and 3) resilience of lands and waters to climate change and other anticipated future changes and disturbance.

More specifically, this approach includes data on habitat quality, target species communities, and habitat complexes for terrestrial species with emphasis on expanding corridors adjacent to public lands. The most heavily weighted component of this approach uses

data from the Minnesota Biological Survey focused on fish and wildlife that includes data on biodiversity, wetlands, native plant communities, Lakes of Biological Significance, wild rice catchments, coldwater refuge for trout, proximity to protected lands, and ecological connections. Added benefits for water quality are assessed using data on wellhead protected areas, groundwater contamination susceptibility, private well density, and groundwater recharge.

Using results of this Multiple Benefits approach, areas will be targeted down to the parcel level for landowner engagement and outreach for implementing permanent protection activities. For MLT easements, a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process by which landowners will apply for consideration of a conservation easement will be used. Proposed projects will be scored along ecological grounds, and will also consider donative value from the landowner.

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- LU8 Protect large blocks of forest land

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:

According to the Outdoor Heritage Fund: 25 Year Vision, 89% of the Northern Forest region is identified as habitat, but only 55% of it is protected. Additionally, 41% of the Metropolitan Urbanizing region is identified as habitat, with a mere 12% of it permanently protected. This project will protect forestland through acquisition and easements to prevent parcelization and fragmentation, producing multiple enduring conservation benefits, addressing wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and providing access to hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities.

This program will address objectives within the MN State Wildlife Action Plan including: 1) sustaining and enhancing species, habitat and landscape biological diversity and 2) maintaining habitat through acquisition of threatened sites that provide exceptional habitat and ecological values. This program emphasizes work within the St. Croix River watershed priority area, home to 7 target mature upland/lowland forest birds and 5 target reptile species identified in the plan.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Northern Forest:

- Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement

Metro / Urban:

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

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:

Through permanent land protection, our program will continue to prevent degradation and loss of quality habitat within the St. Croix watershed. It will improve and increase the amount of available public land for hunting and angling opportunities in the eastern part of the state, within an easy drive from the Twin Cities Metro area. This program will also lead to larger complexes of restored forests, brushlands, and riparian areas that will improve terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

Strong partnerships exist between local, state, and federal agencies; local non-governmental organizations; and willing conservation-minded landowners. High quality lands will be protected through fee title acquisition and conservation easements. Protected lands in fee acquisitions are available for the public for outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, thereby addressing the need to provide such opportunities within a short distance from the Twin Cities' growing and diversifying urban population.

Relationship to other funds:

- Clean Water Fund
- Healthy Watershed Consortium

Describe the relationship of the funds:

The St. Croix River Association is currently managing \$400,000 from the Clean Water Fund to work with partners to restore private lands for water quality improvements, and a \$150,000 Healthy Watershed Consortium grant (EPA, NRCS, and U.S. Endowment for Forestry) to work throughout the watershed (MN and WI) to increase the capacity for permanent protection work.

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

Through its market-based RFP process, MLT expects private landowners to donate at least \$600,000 in easement value toward the program, which is shown as leverage.

One-half of TPL's DSS costs and all of TPL's travel costs are provided as privately sourced leverage for this proposal. TPL will attempt to bring various state, local and private funds to acquire additional property and leverage the OHF grant, and will attempt to leverage fee acquisition with partial donations of the appraised value of protected parcels.

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:

Funding requested by the Partnership will not supplant or substitute for any previous non-legacy funding used for the same purpose.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2011	TPL:ENRTF - Metro Conservation Corridors	\$423,000
2013	TPL:ENRTF - Metro Conservation Corridors	\$395,000
2009	MLT:ENRTF - Metro Conservation Corridors 5	\$67,700
2010	MLT:ENRTF - Metro Conservation Corridors 5 Supplemental	\$20,300
2011	MLT:ENRTF - Metro Conservation Corridors 6	\$27,400

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

The land protected through conservation easements will be sustained through state-of-the-art standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship. MLT is a nationally-accredited land trust with a very successful stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring, effective records management, addressing inquiries and interpretations, tracking changes in ownership, investigating potential violations and defending the easement in case of a true violation. MLT will assist landowners in the development of habitat management plans to help ensure that the land will be managed for its wildlife and water quality benefits. MLT (as easement holders on respective properties) will work with landowners in an ongoing basis to provide habitat restoration plans, resources and technical expertise to undertake ongoing management of these properties.

TPL will convey all fee title land to the DNR or LGUs for permanent stewardship. Once land has been conveyed, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. Estimated costs for initial restoration work are included in this proposal. TPL will work with DNR or LGUs to complete a restoration and management plan, and implementation of that plan will be completed in the following years. These properties will be managed and maintained by the respective government entities according to OHF standards.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2026 and in perpetuity	MLT Long-Term Stewardship and Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of easements in perpetuity	Enforcement as necessary	
2022	TPL - OHF and DNR	Post property	Develop restoration/management plan for property	
2023	TPL - DNR	Develop restoration/management plan for property	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	
2024	TPL - DNR	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation		

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

Several species have been identified by the DNR to represent various forestland and aquatic habitats: Ovenbird, Golden-winged Warbler, White-tailed deer, and Trout. The metrics are derived from existing data sources and scientific literature, but are gross averages; they are not accurate at the site-specific scale. Therefore, they are not intended to be used to score or rank requests, but represent the best information we have for immediate support to the Council's objective.

Ovenbird

Typically found in mature forests, Ovenbirds are an indication of the health of mature forest uplands with an average of 16 pairs for every 40 acres.

Golden-winged Warbler

Often associated with shrubland habitat and regenerating forests, more current research indicates a variety of forest habitats are required by Golden-winged Warblers. While territories vary in size, quality habitat will support roughly six pairs for every 40 acres.

White-tailed deer

White-tailed deer use a wide variety of forested habitats and are an important game species in the State. Covering most of the Northern Forest section, the six-year average (2010-2015) for pre-fawn deer densities across all deer permit areas is 13 deer per square mile of land. This translates to roughly 1 deer for every 50 acres of land.

Trout - All Species

Natural populations of trout, including healthy populations with good habitat, vary among locations, and also rise and fall within lakes and rivers; however quality habitat may support up to 40 pound per acre.

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**

Pursuant to state statute, County Board Notification will occur prior to 30 days of closing and project managers will be made available for questions if requested.

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**

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **No**

Land Use:

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

Explain

TPL - For lands acquired that are conveyed as WMAs to the DNR, the DNR has indicated the following:

The primary purposes of WMAs are to develop and manage for the production of wildlife and for compatible outdoor recreation. To fulfill those goals, the DNR may use limited farming specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife. Lands proposed to be acquired as WMAs may utilize farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is a standard practice across the Midwest. On a small percentage of WMAs (less than 2.5%), DNR uses farming to provide a winter food source for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture-dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources.

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

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

Yes, all fee-title land acquired will be open to public hunting and fishing.

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 - **Yes**

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

MLT - Most conservation easements are established on private lands, many of which have driveways, field roads and trails located on them. Often, these established trails and roads are permitted in the terms of the easement and can be maintained for personal use if their use does not significantly impact the conservation values of the property. Creation of new roads/trails or expansion of existing ones is typically not allowed.

TPL is not aware of any trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list nor are any new trails planned.

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

MLT - Existing trails and roads are identified in the project baseline report and will be monitored annually as part of the MLT's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads/trails in line with the terms of the easement will be the responsibility of the landowner.

TPL - N/A

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? - **Yes**

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?
2019	3751000	664200	227900	109000	725	150	Program in progress

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
MLT - Conservation easements completed or options secured	June 30, 2025
TPL - Landowner negotiations, agreements, and due diligence	June 30, 2024
TPL - Land acquired	June 30, 2024
TPL - Initial site development/restoration	Fall 2024

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$8,295,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$553,000	\$0		\$553,000
Contracts	\$187,000	\$0		\$187,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$3,535,000	\$0		\$3,535,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$3,000,000	\$600,000	Donative	\$3,600,000
Easement Stewardship	\$288,000	\$0		\$288,000
Travel	\$16,000	\$2,000	Private	\$18,000
Professional Services	\$455,000	\$0		\$455,000
Direct Support Services	\$140,000	\$78,000	Private	\$218,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$35,000	\$0		\$35,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Supplies/Materials	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
DNR IDP	\$75,000	\$0		\$75,000
Total	\$8,295,000	\$680,000	-	\$8,975,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
SCRA Staff	0.40	3.00	\$105,000	\$0		\$105,000
TPL Staff	0.46	3.00	\$220,000	\$0		\$220,000
MLT Staff	0.60	4.00	\$228,000	\$0		\$228,000
Total	1.46	10.00	\$553,000	\$0	-	\$553,000

Budget and Cash Leverage by Partnership

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	St. Croix River Association	\$105,000	\$0		\$105,000
Contracts	St. Croix River Association	\$15,000	\$0		\$15,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	St. Croix River Association	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
DNR IDP	St. Croix River Association	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	-	\$125,000	\$0	-	\$125,000

Personnel - St. Croix River Association

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
SCRA Staff	0.40	3.00	\$105,000	\$0		\$105,000
Total	0.40	3.00	\$105,000	\$0	-	\$105,000

BudgetName	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	The Trust for Public Land	\$220,000	\$0		\$220,000
Contracts	The Trust for Public Land	\$100,000	\$0		\$100,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	The Trust for Public Land	\$3,535,000	\$0		\$3,535,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	The Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0

Easement Acquisition	The Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	The Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	The Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$2,000	Private	\$2,000
Professional Services	The Trust for Public Land	\$115,000	\$0		\$115,000
Direct Support Services	The Trust for Public Land	\$78,000	\$78,000	Private	\$156,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	The Trust for Public Land	\$35,000	\$0		\$35,000
Capital Equipment	The Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	The Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	The Trust for Public Land	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	The Trust for Public Land	\$75,000	\$0		\$75,000
Total		\$4,158,000	\$80,000		\$4,238,000

Personnel - The Trust for Public Land

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TPL Staff	0.46	3.00	\$220,000	\$0		\$220,000
Total	0.46	3.00	\$220,000	\$0		\$220,000

Budget Name	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Minnesota Land Trust	\$228,000	\$0		\$228,000
Contracts	Minnesota Land Trust	\$72,000	\$0		\$72,000
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	\$3,000,000	\$600,000	Donative	\$3,600,000
Easement Stewardship	Minnesota Land Trust	\$288,000	\$0		\$288,000
Travel	Minnesota Land Trust	\$16,000	\$0		\$16,000
Professional Services	Minnesota Land Trust	\$340,000	\$0		\$340,000
Direct Support Services	Minnesota Land Trust	\$62,000	\$0		\$62,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Minnesota Land Trust	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
Supplies/Materials	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	Minnesota Land Trust	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$4,012,000	\$600,000		\$4,612,000

Personnel - Minnesota Land Trust

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Staff	0.60	4.00	\$228,000	\$0		\$228,000
Total	0.60	4.00	\$228,000	\$0		\$228,000

Amount of Request: \$8,295,000
Amount of Leverage: \$680,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 8.20%
DSS + Personnel: \$693,000
As a % of the total request: 8.35%
Easement Stewardship: \$288,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 9.60%

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

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 MLT's proposed federal indirect rate. We will apply this DNR approved rate only to personnel expense to determine the total amount of the direct support services.

TPL: DSS request is based upon our federal rate which has been approved by the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant, 50% is contributed as leverage.

What is included in the contracts line?

SCRA - Support for Soil and Water Conservation District local public outreach.
MLT - Writing of habitat management plans for easement lands.
TPL - Potential site clean-up and initial restoration activities.

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:

MLT staff regularly rent vehicles for grant-related purposes, which is a significant cost savings over use of personal vehicles.

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:

MLT encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements to the program. The leverage amount is a conservative estimate of value we expect to see donated by landowners. One-half of TPL's DSS and all of TPL's travel costs are provided as privately leverage for this proposal.

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:

With less funding, we will be able to work on fewer and smaller projects. Larger projects, and a higher volume of projects, 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 fund the Minnesota Land Trust's perpetual monitoring and enforcement obligations is \$24,000. This figure is derived from MLT's detailed stewardship funding "cost analysis" which is consistent with Land Trust Accreditation standards. MLT shares periodic updates to this cost analysis with LSOHC staff.

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?

FTEs listed in the proposal are an estimate of the personnel time required to produce the grant deliverables put forward in this proposal. Personnel funds are only used when necessary to achieve the goals of the grant.

MLT - An array of staff draw from these funds for legal work, negotiating with landowners, crafting of conservation easements, writing baseline reports and managing the grant.

TPL - An array of staff draw from these funds for legal work, negotiating with landowners, crafting of acquisition documents, coordinating with agency partners and managing the grant.

SCRA - Program staff use these funds for project management and coordination, as well as education and outreach to landowners.

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?

We anticipate we will close on three transactions and investigate three others.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	345	345	690
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	900	900
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	345	1,245	1,590

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$2,111,000	\$2,110,000	\$4,221,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,074,000	\$4,074,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$2,111,000	\$6,184,000	\$8,295,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	80	0	0	0	610	690
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	400	0	0	0	500	900
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	480	0	0	0	1,110	1,590

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$488,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,733,000	\$4,221,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$2,037,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,037,000	\$4,074,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$2,525,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,770,000	\$8,295,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$6,119	\$6,116
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,527
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$6,100	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,120
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$5,093	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,074
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

1

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 the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation *This project will be measured by the acres of high quality forestlands that are permanently protected from development and fragmentation. Protected land will also be evaluated by its proximity to existing public lands as well as connectivity to other protected forestlands.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need *This project will be measured by the acres of wildlife corridors protected and evaluated based on the observed use by wildlife populations and evidence of SGCN.*

Parcel List

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

Minnesota Land Trust uses a competitive, market-based approach through an RFP process to identify interested landowners and prioritize parcels for conservation easement acquisition. All proposals submitted by landowners are evaluated and ranked relative to their ecological significance based on three primary factors: 1) size of habitat on the parcel; 2) condition of habitat on the parcel; and 3) the context (both in terms of amount/quality of remaining habitat and protected areas) within which the parcel lies. We also ask the landowner to consider contributing all or a portion of fair market value to enable our funds to make a larger conservation impact (see attached sign-up criteria). SCRA works to provide outreach services and contracting with county SWCDs as a way to connect effectively with local landowners.

The Trust for Public Land works with its public partners to identify and prioritize projects that meet their objectives and are on their priority lists. Criteria includes whether the land provides critical habitat for game and non-game species, quality public recreational opportunities, presence of unique plants and animal species (including SGCN), goals of conservation plans, adjacency to other public land or habitat complexes, existence of local support, immediacy of threats, land owner willingness and time frame.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Chisago

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Carlos Avery WMA Addition	03321205	62	\$150,000	No	Full	Full
Franconia SNA Addition	03319216	85	\$400,000	No	Full	Full

Pine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Chengwatana State Forest Addition II	03820212	160	\$300,000	No	Full	Full
Chengwatana State Forest Addition III	03720208	160	\$480,000	No	Full	Full

Washington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Bayport WMA Addition	02920222	82	\$1,100,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

Pine

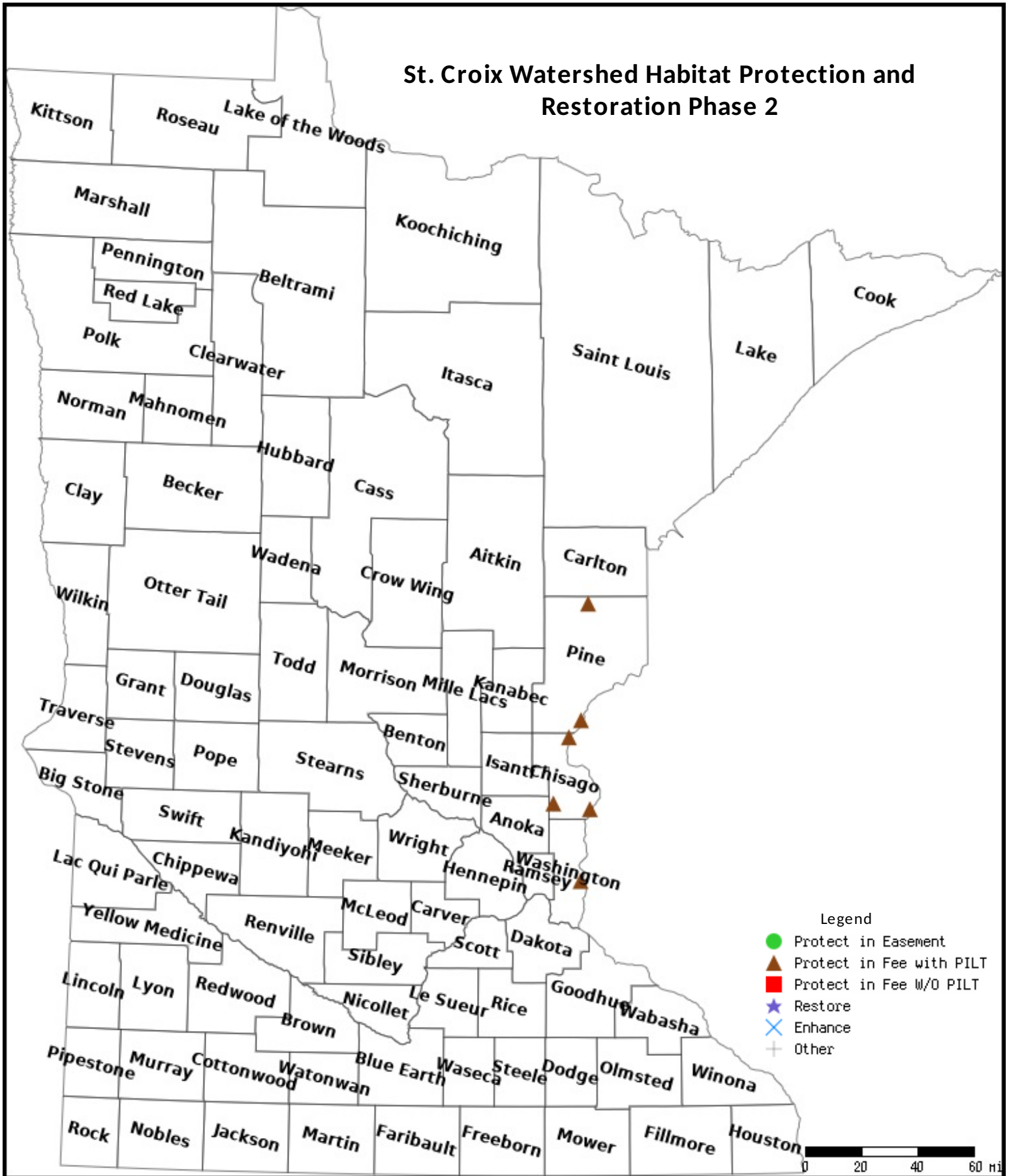
Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	# Bldgs?	Bldg Improve Desc	Value of Bldg	Disposition of Improvements
Sturgeon Lake	04519215	143	\$1,450,000	1	Dilapidated structure	\$0	Demolish

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 2



Data Generated From Parcel List

ST. CROIX WATERSHED

HABITAT PROTECTION AND RESTORATION PHASE II



Photo by Craig Blacklock

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The St. Croix River Association, Minnesota Land Trust, and The Trust for Public Land will work in partnership to permanently protect approximately 1,590 acres of critical wildlife habitat on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River Watershed through fee-title acquisition and conservation easements. The goals of the program are **to protect high quality wildlife habitat, improve conservation connectivity, and provide public access for outdoor recreation opportunities.**

OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND REQUEST

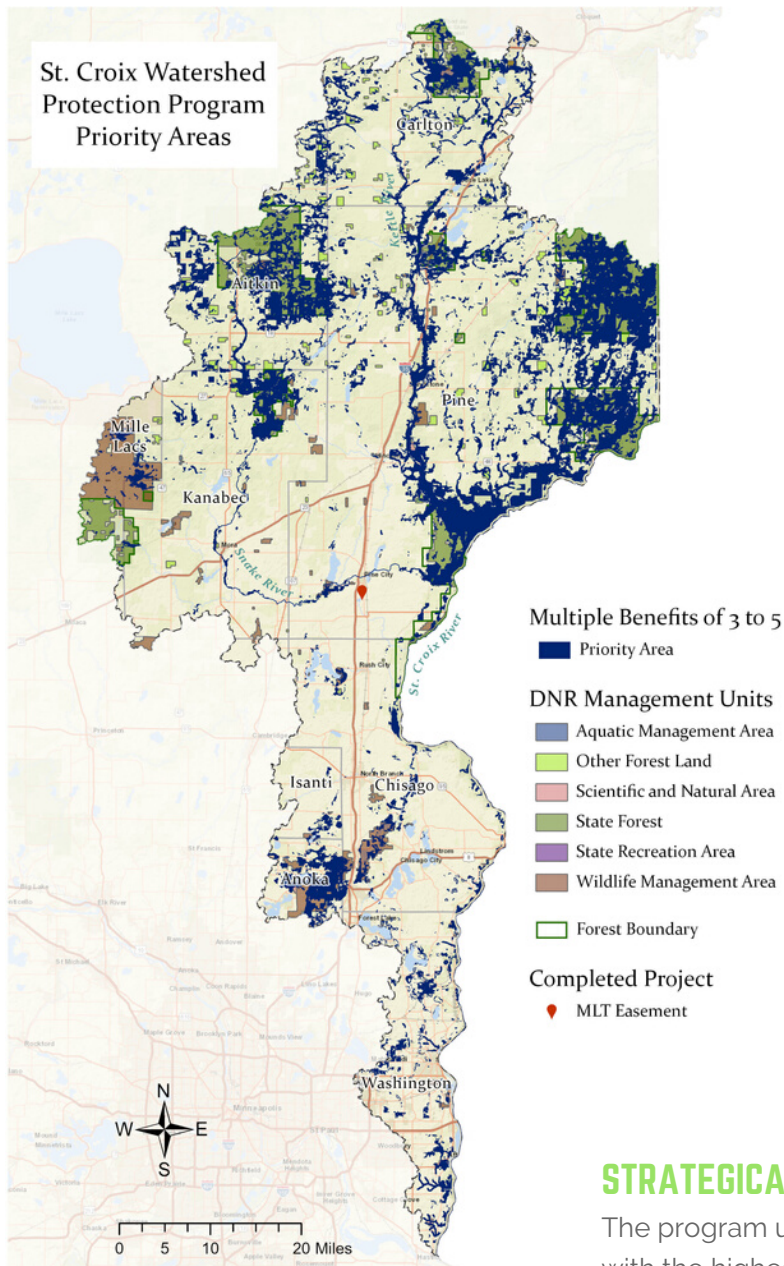
\$8,295,000 to protect over **1,590 acres** through fee-title acquisition and conservation easements.

TRULY WILD AND SCENIC

The St. Croix River is one of the nation's first "Wild and Scenic Rivers". It is home to a diverse abundance of native flora and fauna, rivaling any other location within the greater Upper Mississippi River Basin.

Beyond the narrow federally protected Riverway boundary, more than 75% of the St. Croix's forestlands remain in private holdings and the threat of development, fragmentation and conversion to agriculture is substantial. We must act now to ensure critical habitats are protected for future generations to come.





BUILDS UPON MOMENTUM

We seek to increase permanent protection options for landowners that result in well connected, functional forests and rivers that sustain and enhance wildlife habitat.

Phase I program allocations have largely been committed to projects for completion within the next year. The partnership is requesting ML 2021 funding for Phase 2 of the program to continue this important work.

SUPPORTS STATE GOALS

This program aligns with the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund priorities:

- **Northern Forests Section** - providing access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties and protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, and conservation easements.
- **Metro Urban Section** - protecting habitat corridors, with emphasis on the St. Croix River.

STRATEGICALLY TARGETS

The program uses a multiple benefits approach to target areas with the highest quality habitat. Lands adjacent to existing protected lands are of high priority.

PARTNERSHIP

- **Minnesota Land Trust** is a nationally accredited land trust that monitors, manages and enforces more than 500 conservation easements throughout the state. MLT will be responsible for negotiating the purchase of conservation easements and ongoing monitoring and enforcement.
- **The Trust for Public Land** works to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. TPL will be responsible for protecting land in fee.
- **St. Croix River Association** is the only entity working watershed wide to protect, restore, and celebrate the St. Croix River and its watershed. SCRA will be responsible for program administration and landowner outreach.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Monica Zachay, SCRA Director of Programs at 715-483-3300 or monicaz@scramail.org

