

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2022 / ML 2021 Request for Funding



Date: June 30, 2020

Program or Project Title: Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative Moorhead, MN Land Acquisition (HA10)

Funds Requested: \$773,100

Manager's Name: Marshall Johnson

Title: Executive Director

Organization: National Audubon Society DBA Audubon Dakota

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County Locations: Clay

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Restore
- Enhance
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Abstract:

The National Audubon Society and the Buffalo Red River Watershed District, are seeking funding of \$773,074 through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council to support the fee title acquisition and restoration of Tessa Terrace, a 70-acre site in Moorhead, MN to expand the Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative. Audubon developed the UWP Initiative in 2014 to restore riparian properties along the Red River of the North to reduce flood impact, improve ecosystem resiliency and grow habitat biodiversity. If awarded, BRRWD will acquire Tessa Terrace in September 2021 and Audubon will lead restoration action in April 2022.

Design and scope of work:

Project partners, the National Audubon Society and the Buffalo Red River Watershed District, are seeking funding to support the fee title acquisition and restoration of Tessa Terrace, a 70-acre site composed of riparian woodlands and uplands in Moorhead, MN. With fertile soils, flat topography, and favorable growing season conditions, this region has lost 99% of native prairie to agricultural expansion with just 150,000 acres of prairie remaining of the original 18 million acres (MN DNR – Prairie Parkland Province Action Plan). Currently, 89% of the Red River Prairie is classified as row crops (MN DNR – Red River Prairie Profile). The small remaining patches are not sufficient habitats nor act as functional ecosystems due to surrounding urban or agricultural landscapes. Additionally, like many cities experiencing urban expansion, Moorhead boasts well-manicured parks, playgrounds, and sports complexes but lacks natural areas providing exploration for citizens. The need for habitat reconstruction and natural ecological services is critical along the Red River.

As a solution, Audubon and partners launched the Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative in 2014 to restore and enhance riparian habitat along the Red River. By restoring native prairie, wetlands, and riparian woodland areas, this Initiative improves water

purification, flood resiliency, bank stabilization, and carbon sequestration of enrolled nature sites, benefitting the entire community. These improvements create high quality habitats for wildlife, reduce management burdens of landowning partners, and offer community members the opportunity to explore nature in their own city. Today, UWP Initiative is comprised of 29 sites across nearly 1,000 riparian acres in five Minnesota (Moorhead) and North Dakota cities (Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot) along the English Coulee, Red, Missouri and Souris Rivers. Audubon collaborates with local landowning entities such as city governments and park districts to identify idle land in ecologically important locations to implement the UWP Initiative and ensure long-term (up to 30 years) habitat management of the nature sites. Site selection considers proximity to existing protected natural areas and/or UWP nature sites, importance to urban wildlife, and recreation potential.

Once acquired by BRRWD, Tessa Terrace will be enrolled as a UWP nature site and maintained as native prairie and riparian woodland habitat. Audubon will lead the restoration and management in three-phases over a 5-year establishment period; phase I: removing invasive species throughout the woodlands, and preparing uplands for seeding, phase II: upland sites are planted with a high diversity seed mix, while native trees/shrubs are re-established in woodlands, phase III: follow-up maintenance such as mowing, prescribed fire, and spot-herbicide applications. Tessa Terrace will be protected perpetually under the ownership of BRRWD.

Audubon Minnesota recognizes Audubon Dakota's relevant experience and the ecological significance of protecting all riparian sides of the Red River; therefore, they have greatly supported Audubon Dakota's leadership of the UWP Initiative.

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 project area rests within the Red River Prairie Ecological Subsection of the Minnesota Prairie Parkland Province. According to Red River Prairie Profile, this region is home to 83 species in Greatest Conservation Need such as the golden-winged warbler, which relies on healthy un-fragmented habitat. Additionally, the Red River Valley is home to a wide variety of common birds that have seen unprecedented declines, including grasshopper sparrow and winter migrants like the boreal chickadee (NAS Top 20 Common Birds in Decline, PIF Grassland Bird Plan).

Minnesota's Prairie Parkland Province has lost 99% of native prairie to agricultural expansion, with just 150,000 acres of prairie remaining of the original 18M acres (Prairie Parkland Province Action Plan), endangering rare and common species alike. Currently, 89% of the Red River Prairie is classified as row crops (Red River Prairie Profile). The small remaining patches are not sufficient habitats nor act as functional ecosystems due to surrounding urban and agricultural landscapes. The need for large-scale habitat reconstruction and natural ecological services is critical along the Red River in order to conserve Minnesota's natural heritage.

Moorhead, MN's natural riparian areas are regularly sold at rates of \$350,000/acre for urban development. As competition for parcels increases in the face of urban expansion, it is critical for natural riparian areas such as Tessa Terrace to be protected and connected to existing UWP assets along the river. Tessa Terrace acquisition could alternatively be developed into more than two dozen development lots. Taking only 10 lots as an example, which would typically be sold (recent sales data attached) for nearly \$121,200 each, just four acres worth of this land could be sold for \$1,212,000. Fortunately, the willing seller has committed to selling these properties at below market value to preserve the area's natural features. As a UWP nature site, Tessa Terrace has the potential to flourish with 27 acres of prairie and 33 acres of riparian woodlands enhanced through invasive species removal and native species plantings. These efforts will improve ecological services such as water infiltration and retention.

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 Red River represents a critical migratory corridor for declining bird species, like the golden-winged warbler. The golden-winged warbler is on the PIF Red Watch List (PIF 2016) since it has an extreme vulnerability to changing forest conditions and urbanization, which have factored into its greater than 50% population loss. As Moorhead, MN expands, it is imperative that conservation organizations prevent further degradation, destruction, and fragmentation of habitat.

The Red River Prairie is home to 83 species in Greatest Conservation Need – 54 are birds such as bobolink, and northern pintail and 10 species are insects like the monarch butterfly. These species rely on healthy, un-fragmented habitat, yet 99% of native Red River Prairie habitat has been lost. Therefore, large-scale restoration, as is implemented by UWP, is critical to conserve Minnesota's natural heritage.

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:

Central goals as detailed in the Red River of the North Comprehensive Watershed Plan (2015) specify the importance of protecting and rehabilitating the upland and riparian habitat along the Red River while also expanding education and recreation opportunities for local residents. With these goals in mind, Audubon developed the UWP Initiative to restore flood buyout properties as native riparian habitat to reduce flood impact, restore ecological services, improve resiliency and enhance local biodiversity. Through the UWP Initiative, Audubon seeks to revive the community's relationship with the Red River by promoting its unique natural resources and offering access to unprecedented local outdoor recreation, nature-based outdoor classrooms, and community outreach locations. Today the UWP Initiative comprises 29 sites across nearly 1,000 acres in five MN and ND cities.

To bolster UWP's ecological impact, Audubon and BRRWD seek to acquire Tessa Terrace. The site is composed of 33 acres of degraded riparian woodlands and 27 acres of urban uplands currently planted as row crops. The remaining 10 acres will persist as buffer strips

along neighboring agricultural fields. Though Tessa Terrace is small in comparison to other neighboring protected complexes, even small parcels can deliver efficient nutrient cycling and maintain viable wildlife populations. Additionally, Tessa Terrace neighbors existing UWP nature sites in Moorhead and Fargo, ND, enhancing overall habitat connectivity along the Red River.

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

- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Red River of the North Fisheries Management Plan

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

This project addresses multiple indicators weaved throughout federal, state and regional plans including: restoring native prairie, protecting and improving migratory habitat, improving habitat connectivity, rehabilitating riverine systems (specifically the Red River), expanding environmental based education, and addressing the threats to our common, yet declining, birds. By managing invasive vegetation and establishing native plant species, the UWP Initiative creates biologically diverse and significant habitat in close proximity to existing natural habitats. Establishing Tessa Terrace as a nature site and growing the UWP Initiative as a whole will provide local communities an example of the importance of conservation to wildlife and people alike and will elevate nature-based education outreach efforts.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

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:

As Moorhead continues its expansion, it is imperative to establish high quality natural resource lands to ensure urban resident and migratory wildlife have un-fragmented habitat and provide local residents and visitors recreational opportunities within city limits. Establishing Tessa Terrace as a nature site will expand the footprint of the UWP Initiative and mend a fragmented landscape. Once acquired, Tessa Terrace will be protected under the ownership of the BRRWD, providing generations the opportunity to responsibly recreate and learn through activities such as community science, fishing, birding, and hiking. Tessa Terrace is currently composed of turf grass, degraded riparian woodlands, and cropland. Upon establishing Tessa Terrace as a UWP nature site, Audubon will implement a three-stage restoration process over a 5-year establishment period. Phase I includes removing invasive species throughout the woodlands, and preparing uplands for seeding. In phase II, upland sites are planted with a high diversity seed mix (33 species), while native trees/shrubs are re-established in woodlands. Phase III includes follow-up maintenance such as mowing, prescribed fire, and spot-herbicide applications.

As proven with existing UWP nature sites, the abundance of birds and wildlife rediscovering refuge in these restored habitats ensures natural heritage preservation progresses from goal, to reality, to legacy. Over 50 different bird species can be spotted among deer, fox, and pollinators. At this time, no form of hunting is allowed due to the site's private ownership however BRRWD will open Tessa Terrace for archery deer hunting and fishing once acquired. Rifle hunting will not be allowed.

Relationship to other funds:

- Minnesota DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

Describe the relationship of the funds:

Audubon has received two MN Conservation Partners Legacy grants to support the expansion of the Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative in Moorhead, MN. Funding was awarded in 2017 (\$147,294) and 2019 (\$51,445).

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

Local neighboring landowner, Matthew Cullen will be providing \$300,000 cash to contribute to the acquisition of the project area. Mr.

Cullen is a professional hockey player, playing Center for 22 years with a number of teams, including two stints with the Minnesota Wild. As a Moorhead, MN native, Matthew enjoys giving back to his hometown community.

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 request would not supplant or substitute any previous funding.

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

Not Listed

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

Audubon and BRRWD are dedicated to securing funding for the long-term management of Tessa Terrace and the broader UWP Initiative. The project partners will seek federal, state, and local grant funding opportunities to support UWP, in addition to private donations. Audubon will continue to guide management decision-making in partnership with BRRWD to ensure the riparian woodlands and restored prairies retain biodiversity and ecological functionality. Management will be adaptive and based on resource monitoring (vegetation, woodland, and avian surveys) conducted on an annual basis by Audubon seasonal staff.

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

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|------|--|---|---|--|
| 2024 | Minnesota Conservation Partners Legacy | Successfully apply to CPL | Implement prairie management with methods such as prescribed fire, herbicide spot spraying. | Woodland management - continue invasive species removal, native tree plantings |
| 2025 | Fargo Moorhead Area Foundation | Successfully apply to FMAF community grant. | Provide environmental based education to local community members and students. | Engage local schools and clubs in restoration activities such as invasive species removal, trash clean up, water testing, etc. |

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

Utilizing USFWS's thunderstorm models, it was estimated that the fee title acquisition of the 70-acre Tessa Terrace outlined within the proposal would support between 1-10 additional nesting pairs of mallards. Additionally, Tessa Terrace lies within Priority Zone 2 (25-50%) for Grassland Birds (species include bobolinks, clay-colored sparrow, grasshopper sparrow). Due to the site's proximity to urban neighborhoods and agricultural fields, restoration will likely lead to limited impacts to waterfowl and grassland bird species. However, Tessa Terrace and additional UWP nature sites provide habitat for a variety of urban species, like deer, turkeys, foxes, and pollinators such as the monarch butterfly, which have been recorded through local community science efforts. Additionally, migratory songbirds such as golden-winged warbler, cape-may warbler, Baltimore oriole, and eastern bluebird have been recorded utilizing neighboring UWP nature sites, therefore similar species are expected to inhabit Tessa Terrace once the site is restored.

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) - **Yes**

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) 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 (Public Waters)**

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 - **No**

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

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

Tessa Terrace is currently privately-owned and does not allow hunting nor public access to the Red River for fishing. Once acquired by BRRWD, Tessa Terrace will become open to archery deer hunting through permit and will become publicly available for shore fishing.

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 - **Yes**

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

A goal of the UWP Initiative is to improve the accessibility of UWP nature sites to all communities members through establishing natural trails and connecting to the broader 24-mile citywide trail system. Project partners aspire to establish minimum maintenance, low impact trails at Tessa Terrace once the site has been successfully restored and enhanced. Yet partners will remain mindful during trail development to minimize disturbance of the newly established habitat and the urban wildlife inhabitants.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

If trails are established at Tessa Terrace, BRRWD and Audubon Dakota would seek funding through local or state-based trail funding programs such as the Minnesota DNR Regional Trail Grant Program or the Alex Stern Foundation. The trail maintenance and monitoring would become the responsibility of the landowner, BRRWD, with funding from the above mentioned sources.

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? - **No**

Accomplishment Timeline

| Activity | Approximate Date Completed |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Land Acquisition | September 2021 |
| Woodland Invasive Species Removal | April 2022 |
| Upland Prairie Restoration | June 2022 |
| Woodland Native Tree Planting | June 2022 |
| Site Management | September 2023 |

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$773,100

Budget and Cash Leverage

| BudgetName | LSOHC Request | Anticipated Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Personnel | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Contracts | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | \$700,000 | \$300,000 | Matthew Cullen | \$1,000,000 |
| Easement Acquisition | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Easement Stewardship | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Travel | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Professional Services | \$73,100 | \$0 | | \$73,100 |
| Direct Support Services | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Capital Equipment | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Other Equipment/Tools | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Supplies/Materials | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| DNR IDP | \$0 | \$0 | | \$0 |
| Total | \$773,100 | \$300,000 | - | \$1,073,100 |

Amount of Request: \$773,100
 Amount of Leverage: \$300,000
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 38.80%
 DSS + Personnel: \$0
 As a % of the total request: 0.00%
 Easement Stewardship: \$0
 As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -%

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Matthew Cullen has committed \$300,000 in cash to contribute to the acquisition of the project area, his support and contribution letter is forthcoming. Acquisition is estimated at \$1,000,000, Audubon is seeking support of \$773,100 to support the acquisition, associated fees, and restoration.

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:

Audubon Dakota and BRRWD aim to continuously grow the UWP Initiative, and if the acquisition of Tessa Terrace proves to be an effective method of expansion for UWP, then project partners would seek additional opportunities through federal, state, local funding and private donations.

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?

1

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 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | 0 | 27 | 33 | 10 | 70 |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Enhance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 27 | 33 | 10 | 70 |

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

| Type | Native Prairie |
|--|----------------|
| Restore | 0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | 0 |
| Protect in Easement | 0 |
| Enhance | 0 |
| Total | 0 |

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

| Type | Wetlands | Prairies | Forest | Habitats | Total |
|--|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Restore | \$0 | \$11,900 | \$0 | \$0 | \$11,900 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$710,000 | \$710,000 |
| Protect in Easement | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Enhance | \$0 | \$29,500 | \$21,700 | \$0 | \$51,200 |
| Total | \$0 | \$41,400 | \$21,700 | \$710,000 | \$773,100 |

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 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | 0 | 0 | 0 | 70 | 0 | 70 |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Enhance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 70 | 0 | 70 |

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | Northern Forest | Total |
|--|-------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Restore | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$11,900 | \$0 | \$11,900 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$710,000 | \$0 | \$710,000 |
| Protect in Easement | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Enhance | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$51,200 | \$0 | \$51,200 |
| Total | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$773,100 | \$0 | \$773,100 |

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 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$71,000 |
| Protect in Easement | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| 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 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$10,143 | \$0 |
| Protect in Easement | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Enhance | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

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 prairie region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species *27 acres of cropland will be restored to upland native prairie, providing habitat for migratory bird species such as grasshopper sparrow, lark sparrow, western meadowlark and bobolinks, plus raptors like Northern harrier and American kestrel. 33 acres of riparian woodlands will be enhanced through invasive species removal and native tree plantings. This will improve habitat for species such as the golden-winged warbler, cape-may warbler, eastern bluebird, and wood thrush. Site proximity to the Red River will encourage habitat use by shorebirds and waterfowl species such as northern pintail, mallards, wood duck, least sandpiper, great blue heron, and greater yellowlegs.*

Parcel List

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

Tessa Terrace is located near existing Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative nature parks in Moorhead, MN and Fargo, ND, therefore it's protection and restoration will enhance overall habitat connectivity along the Red River.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Clay

| Name | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection? | Hunting? | Fishing? |
|---------------|----------|-------|-------------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Tessa Terrace | 13948230 | 70 | \$1,000,000 | No | No | Full |

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

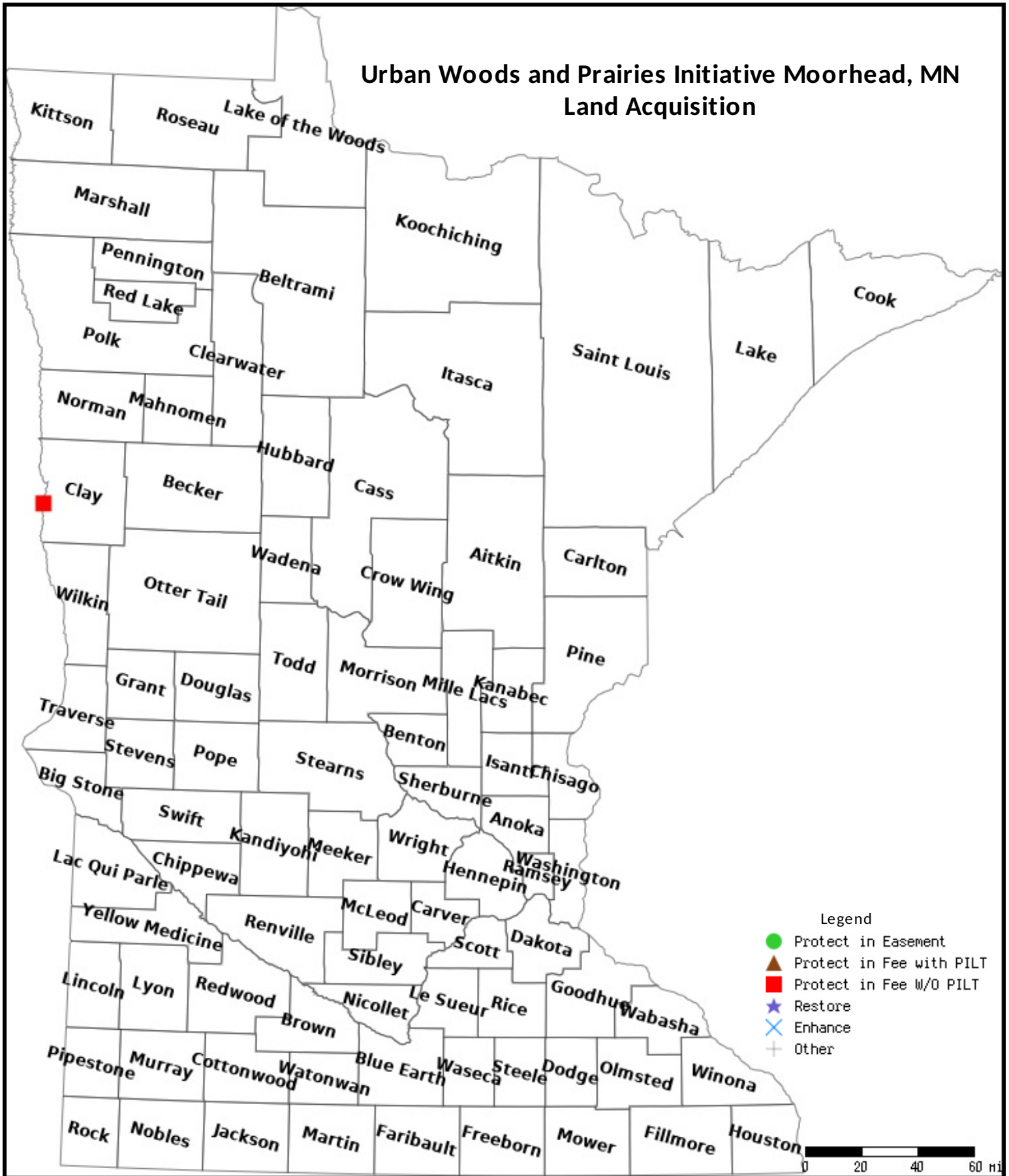
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative Moorhead, MN Land Acquisition



Data Generated From Parcel List



Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative

Moorhead, MN Land Acquisition

Proposal Illustration

The Project:

Audubon Dakota and the Buffalo Red River Watershed District, are seeking funding to support the fee title acquisition and restoration of Tessa Terrace, a 70-acre site in Moorhead, MN. Once acquired, Tessa Terrace will be enrolled as an Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative nature site.

The Why:

With fertile soils, flat topography, and favorable growing season conditions, the Prairie Parkland Province region has lost 99% of native prairie to agricultural expansion with just 150,000 acres of prairie remaining of the original 18 million acres (MN DNR – Prairie Parkland Province Action Plan). Currently, 89% of the Red River Prairie is classified as row crops (MN DNR – Red River Prairie Profile). The small remaining patches are not sufficient habitats nor act as functional ecosystems due to surrounding urban or agricultural landscapes. The need for habitat reconstruction and natural ecological services is critical along the Red River. The UWP Initiative restores lost habitat along the Red River with the goal of increasing habitat connectivity and reducing degradation along this critical migratory route of western Minnesota.

By restoring native prairie, wetlands, and riparian woodland areas, this Initiative improves water purification, flood resiliency, bank stabilization, and carbon sequestration of enrolled nature sites, benefitting the entire community. These improvements create healthy habitats for wildlife and reduce management burdens of landowning partners.

The How:

Audubon Dakota collaborates with local landowning entities such as city governments and park districts to implement the UWP Initiative and ensure long-term (up to 30 years) habitat management of the nature sites. For this project, the UWP landowner partner will be the Buffalo Red river Watershed District.



Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative

LOCAL CONSERVATION

The UWP Initiative restores and enhances riparian habitat along the Red River, creating high quality habitat for urban birds and wildlife, and offering community members the opportunity to explore nature in their own city.

Launched in 2014, the UWP Initiative began by restoring just five nature parks in Fargo, ND to improve flood resiliency of local Red River riparian areas.

Today the UWP Initiative is comprised of 29 sites across nearly 1,000 riparian acres in five Minnesota (Moorhead) and North Dakota cities (Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot) along the English Coulee, Red, Missouri and Souris Rivers.



Upon establishing Tessa Terrace as a UWP nature park, Audubon Dakota will implement a **three-phase restoration process**.

Phase I: Removal of invasive species throughout the woodlands, and preparing uplands for seeding.

Phase II: Upland sites planted with a high diversity seed mix, while native trees/shrubs are re-established in woodlands.

Phase III: Follow-up maintenance such as mowing, prescribed fire, and spot-herbicide applications. Audubon staff measure the ecological impacts through annual avian and vegetation monitoring.

Priority Wildlife Species



Golden-Winged Warbler, source: Cornell

Migratory Songbirds



Northern Pintail Source: Cloudfront.net

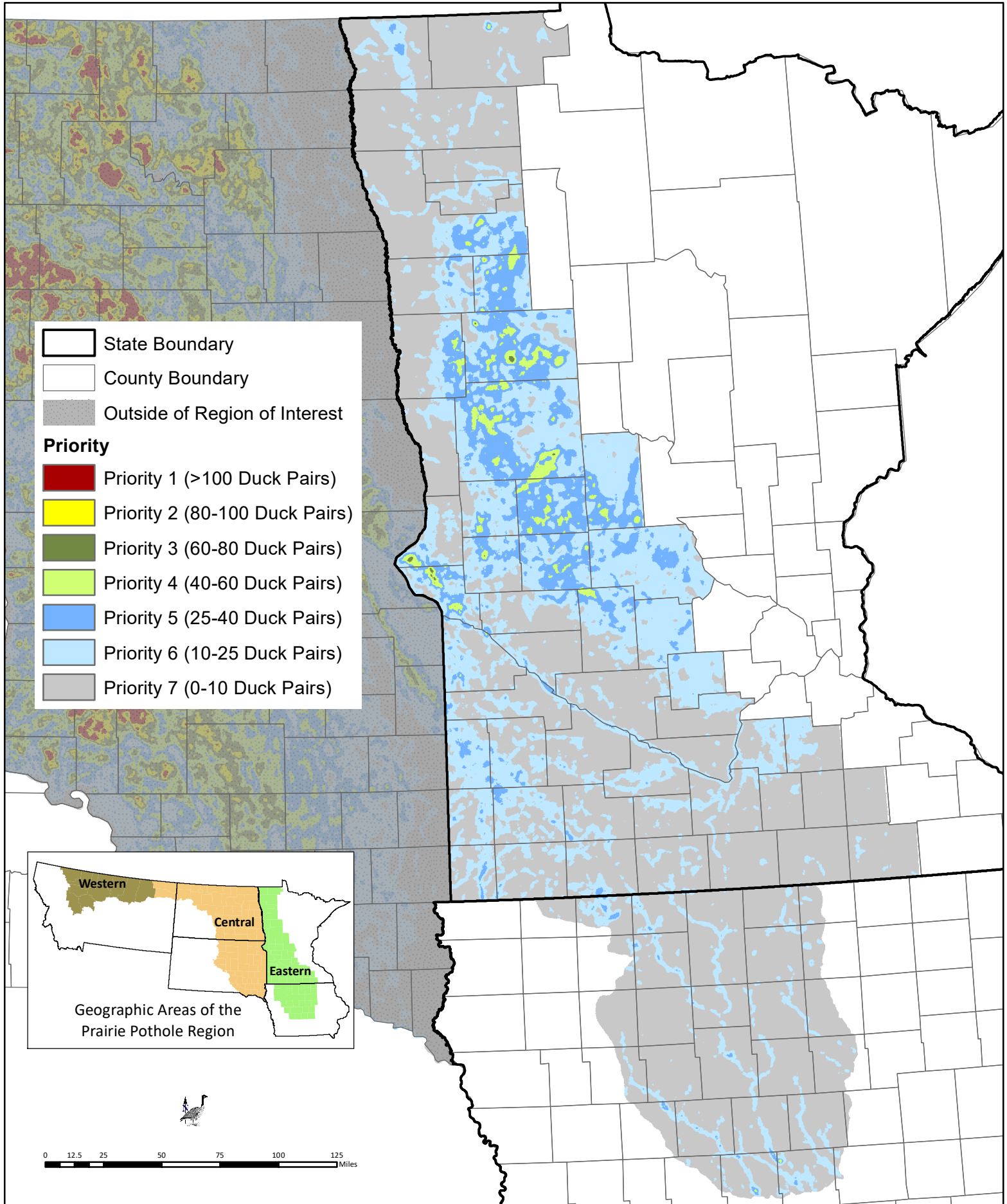
Waterfowl and Shorebirds

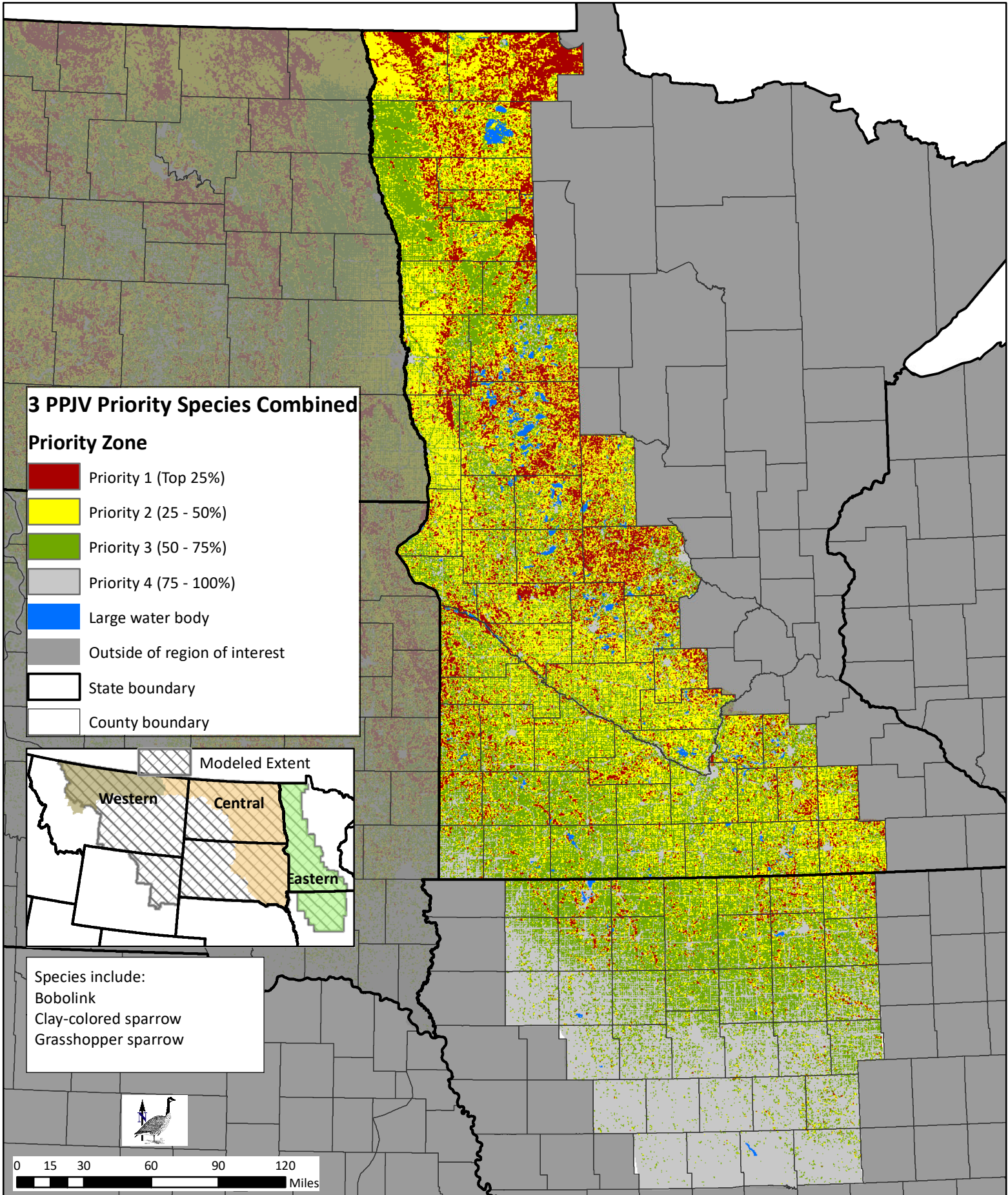


Pollinators, source: flickr

Native Pollinators



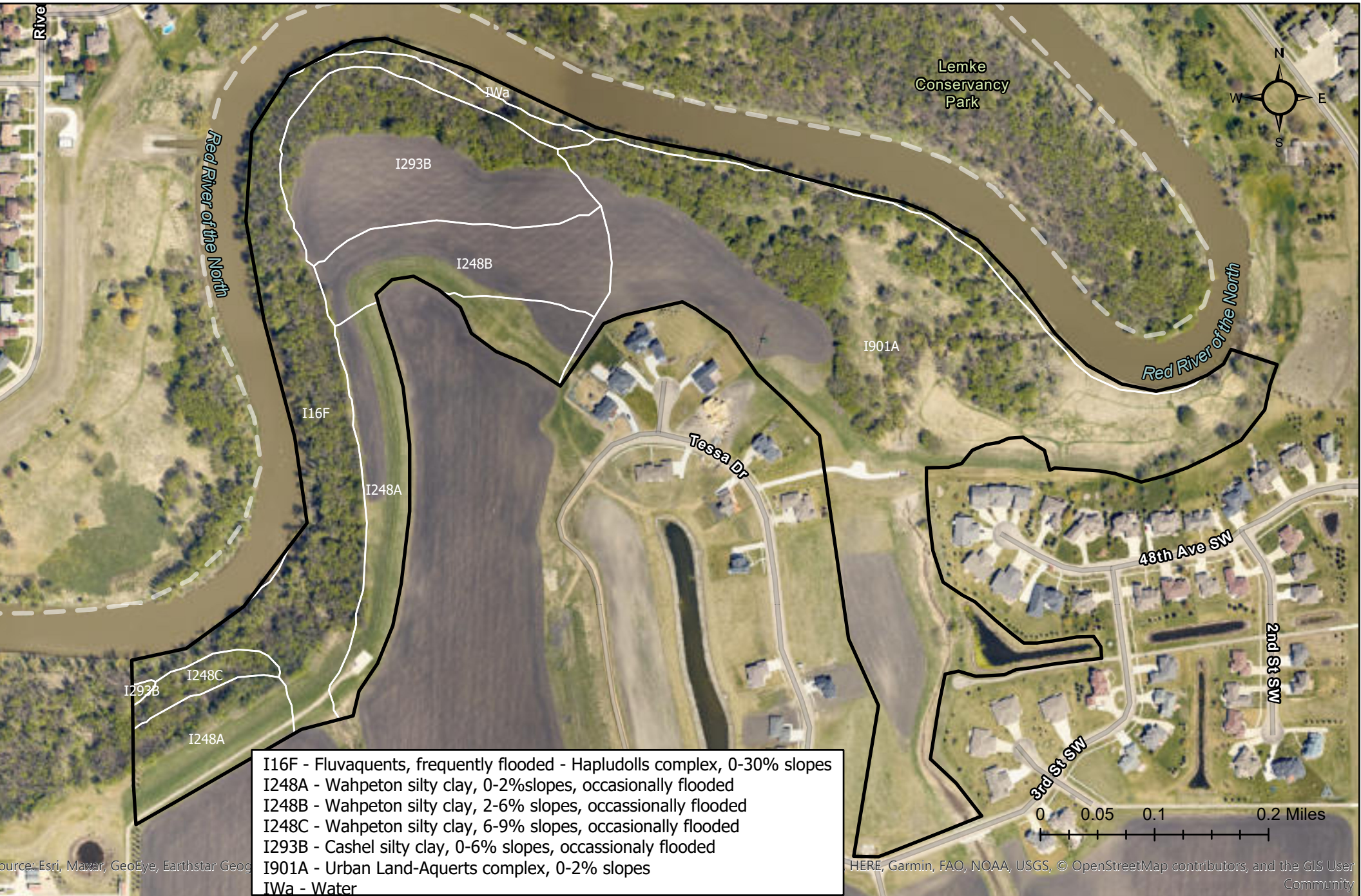


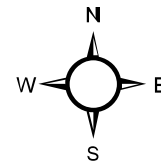


Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative

Tessa Terrace Nature Park Moorhead, MN

Parcel Numbers: -58.900.1729, -58.792.0350, -58.790.0010

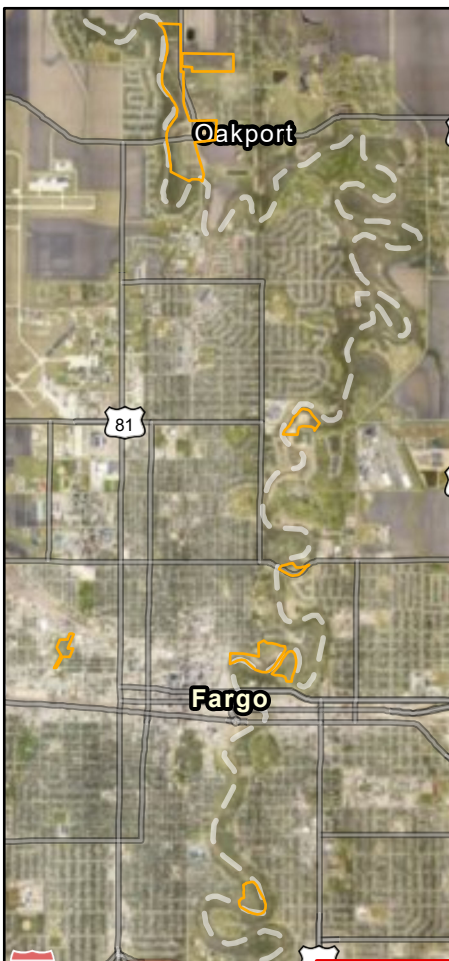




Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative Tessa Terrace Nature Site Moorhead, MN

- Tessa Terrace Nature Site
- UWP Sites

Parcel Numbers: -58.900.1729, -58.792.0350, -58.790.0010



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Urban Conservation

Connecting with communities to restore places that are healthy and sustainable for birds and people



Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative



CREATING LOCAL CONSERVATION COMMUNITIES

One Nature Park at a Time

Audubon Dakota's community place-based approach to engage people and focus conservation efforts has created unprecedented access to hiking, birding, archery, and other outdoor activities, while also creating important resident and migratory wildlife habitat. Traditionally, as urban centers expand natural areas contract, diminishing habitat suitability for wildlife and accessibility for people. To prevent further loss of important native habitat, Audubon Dakota introduced a deliberate urban-based strategy to restore and conserve riparian habitat in 2014.

The Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative is a partnership between Audubon Dakota and multiple local landowning entities aimed at restoring and enhancing riparian grassland, wetland, and woodland habitats. Audubon Dakota and partners target flood buyout properties and idle parks that have the potential to become high quality habitat for birds and places of exploration for people.

HOW WE WORK

Restoring Riparian Habitat

Prairie restoration and woodland enhancements are dependent on long-term management techniques to ensure plant diversity and habitat health. Therefore, Audubon Dakota has partnered with Prairie Restorations, Inc. to deliver effective establishment and management of the UWP Initiative Nature Parks.

OUR TARGET SPECIES: Golden-winged warbler, Bobolink, Mallard duck, White-tailed deer, Monarch butterfly, Native bees

OUR GOAL: Impact over 6,000 urban acres through the UWP Initiative, and have a UWP Nature Park within walking distance of 70% of the North Dakota population.

Why Native Plants?

Native plants construct the foundation for healthy ecosystems. While providing wildlife with forage and shelter aboveground, native plant communities also have extensive underground root systems that bestow a myriad of ecological benefits.



For riparian habitats, native plants deliver important ecological functions such as:

- Erosion Control
- Flood Control and Resiliency
- Improved Water Quality
- Improved Soil Health and Stability
- Carbon Sequestration



Urban Stewards
Photo: Mike Fernandez, NAS

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

As the UWP Initiative grows, greater opportunity arises for community members to engage with and learn about local native habitats.

Through the **Urban Stewardship Program**, Audubon Dakota promotes educating the public on the importance of conserving native habitats within urban areas, and inspires community ownership of UWP Nature Parks by empowering volunteers to lead habitat management and education activities.

Our stewards come from many different backgrounds; students, birders, local business owners, to gardeners. All are welcome to explore their interest in native habitat and gain first-hand experience in land management and environmental outreach.

JOIN US!

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Urban Stewardship Program, please contact Mike Bush, communications and engagement coordinator, at mbush@audubon.org.



UWP Seeding
Photo: Mike Fernandez, NAS

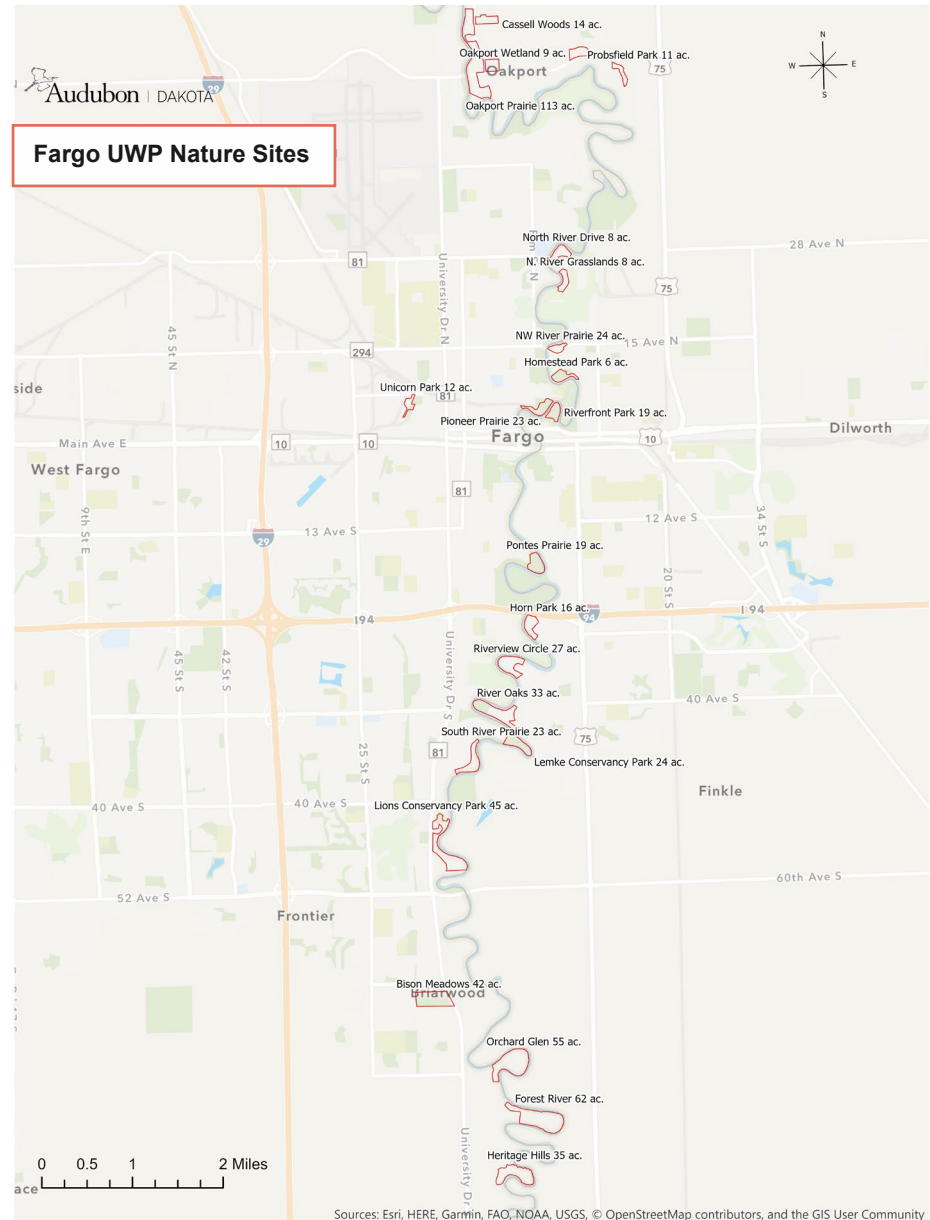
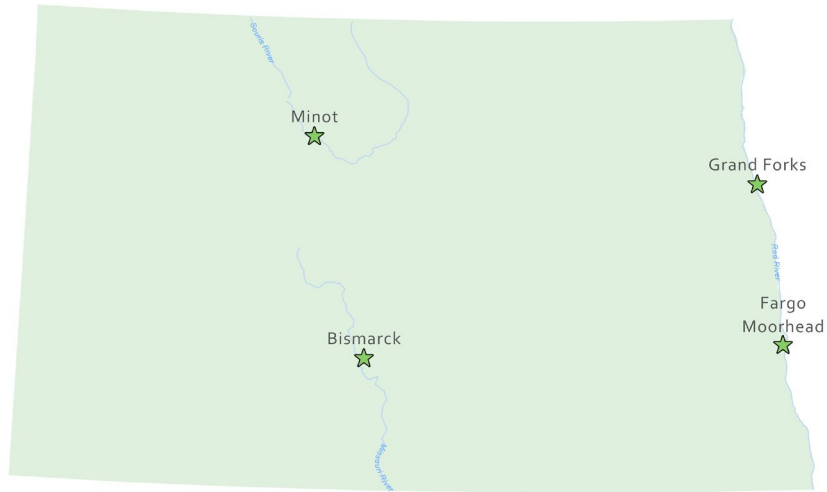
NatureFargo

The Fargo Street Fair (FSF) attracts 120,000 visitors annually, providing a partnership opportunity between Audubon and the Downtown Community Partnership which enhances the Street Fair experience for kids and families through focused nature and wildlife-based programming. Audubon Dakota will invest more than \$40,000 into realizing the ambitious interactive NatureFargo.

By integrating NatureFargo throughout the six blocks of Fargo Street Fair, each visitor will walk away with a more family-friendly and interactive experience.



NatureFargo at 2019 Fargo Street Fair
Photo: Audubon Dakota



BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

BARNESVILLE, MINNESOTA 56514

1303 4th AVE NE
Email: general@brrwd.org

PO BOX 341

PHONE 218-354-7710
Website: www.brrwd.org

May 27, 2020

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

I write on behalf of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District in support of the Audubon Dakota Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant proposal, titled Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative Moorhead, MN Land Acquisition. This project aims to acquire a 70-acre Moorhead, MN parcel named Tessa Terrace composed of riparian woodlands and urban uplands to enroll in the Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative. Once acquired, Audubon Dakota will restore Tessa Terrace to create habitat for urban birds/wildlife, promote flood resiliency, and provide the Moorhead, MN community a connection to nature. We strongly support this grant application and the focus on acquiring a new UWP nature park in Moorhead, MN.

The Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative is a restoration project along the Red River in Moorhead, MN and Fargo, ND. Beginning in 2014, Audubon Dakota and partners began restoring wetlands, grasslands, and riparian woodland areas in an urban landscape, primarily focused on enhancing habitat for target bird species and increasing flood resiliency and water quality. Today, 29 sites are enrolled within the UWP Initiative across nearly 1,000 acres in Minnesota and North Dakota.

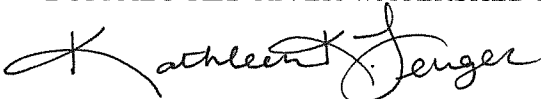
As an organization which has partnered with Audubon Dakota previously on more than 110 acres of the UWP Initiative, we know firsthand the successful results of our combined efforts.

The Buffalo-Red River Watershed District therefore fully supports the goals and commitments presented within Audubon Dakota's Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant application, and we look forward to seeing the program continue its success in the coming years.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

BUFFALO-RED RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT



Kathleen K. Fenger
Interim Administrator

KKF/rb

cc: Sarah Hewitt & Marshall E. Johnson, Audubon Dakota (via email)

May 28, 2020

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Room 65, State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

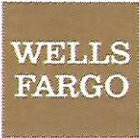
My name is Matthew Cullen, and I write in support of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant proposal, titled Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative Moorhead, MN Land Acquisition. This project aims to acquire a 70-acre Moorhead, MN parcel within my neighborhood, Tessa Terrace. The project area is composed of riparian woodlands and urban uplands to enroll in the Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative. Once acquired, Audubon Dakota will restore Tessa Terrace to create habitat for urban birds/wildlife, promote flood resiliency, and provide the Moorhead, MN community a connection to nature. As local residents, my family and I strongly support this grant application and have committed funds of \$300,000 to assist the acquisition.

As a professional hockey player (22 years as a center, Minnesota Wild), I recognize the importance of communities having recreational infrastructure and amenities, especially in my hometown of Moorhead, where my wife and family once again call home. I therefore fully support the goals and commitments presented within Audubon Dakota's LSOHC grant application, and we look forward to seeing the program continue its success in the coming years.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Matthew Cullen
Moorhead, MN



Wealth Management
730 Center Avenue
PO Box 340
Moorhead, MN 56561-0340
218-287-3543
888-868-8688

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

This letter is written in support of the Audubon Dakota and Buffalo Red River Watershed District Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant proposal, titled Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative Moorhead, MN Land Acquisition. This project aims to acquire a 70-acre Moorhead, MN parcel named "Tessa Terrace" composed of riparian woodlands and urban uplands to enroll in the Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative.

As a local Moorhead, MN landowner, the Eileen and Leland Vette Trust owns 37 acres within the "Tessa Terrace" area and it plans to extend its ownership rights to the Carey Land Company for use in protecting and enhancing wildlife. Carey Land Company will then be selling the property to the Buffalo Red River Watershed District with the intent of creating the Tessa Terrace UWP Nature Park. Once acquired, Audubon Dakota will restore the "Tessa Terrace" area to create habitat for urban birds/wildlife, promote flood resiliency, and provide the Moorhead, MN community a connection to nature.

We strongly support this grant application and the focus on acquiring a new UWP nature park in Moorhead, MN. We look forward to seeing the program continue its success in the coming years.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Camrud".

David R. Camrud, Vice President
Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. as trustee of the Eileen and Leland Vette GST Trust

May 27, 2020

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

I write as a local Moorhead, MN landowner in support of the Audubon Dakota and Buffalo Red River Watershed District Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant proposal, titled Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative Moorhead, MN Land Acquisition. This project aims to acquire a 70-acre Moorhead, MN parcel named Tessa Terrace composed of riparian woodlands and urban uplands to enroll in the Urban Woods and Prairies (UWP) Initiative.

I currently own approximately 70 acres that I fully intend to extend the ownership rights to Tessa Terrace LLC and Tessa Terrace, Inc. which will be selling the property to Buffalo Red River Watershed District with the intent of creating the Tessa Terrace UWP Nature Park. Once acquired, Audubon Dakota will restore Tessa Terrace to create habitat for urban birds/wildlife, promote flood resiliency, and provide the Moorhead, MN community a connection to nature.

We strongly support this grant application and the focus on acquiring a new UWP nature park in Moorhead, MN. We look forward to seeing the program continue its success in the coming years.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Tessa Terrace LLC
Tessa Terrace Inc.
R. Scott Carey
Owner and President
1615 SE Main Avenue
Moorhead, MN 56560