

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2022 / ML 2021 Request for Funding



Date: May 27, 2020

Program or Project Title: MN Prairie Recovery Program Phase 11 (PA03)

Funds Requested: \$6,627,700

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County Locations: Becker, Big Stone, Chippewa, Clay, Cottonwood, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Mahnomon, Murray, Nobles, Norman, Pennington, Pipestone, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Rock, Roseau, Stearns, Swift, Traverse, Wilkin, and Yellow Medicine.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Restore
- Enhance
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Abstract:

The project will advance the protection, restoration and enhancement goals for prairie and grassland habitat as described in the 2018 update of the MN Prairie Conservation Plan. It builds upon the highly successful model established in prior Prairie Recovery Phases and seeks to protect 800 acres in fee without PILT obligations to be held by The Nature Conservancy, 400 acres in fee with PILT obligations to be held by the state, enhance 20,000 acres of permanently protected grasslands, and restore 500 acres of prairie and wetland habitat.

Design and scope of work:

Protect - An estimated 1,200 acres of prairie, wetlands, grasslands, and savanna will be permanently protected through fee-title acquisition from willing sellers in 5 prairie core/corridor landscapes as identified in the 2018 MN Prairie Conservation Plan. Acquired lands will be prioritized using prior approved criteria that include: percentage of native prairie on the parcel, proximity to other permanently protected areas, quality of habitat and species diversity, and suitability for public recreation. Protected acres without PILT will be held by The Nature Conservancy subject to a recorded notice of funding restrictions or transferred to state ownership. Protected acres with PILT obligations will be transferred to MN DNR.

Enhance - An estimated 20,000 acres of grassland/wetland complex will be enhanced on permanently protected lands, including lands purchased with OHF funds and held by the Conservancy, MN DNR Management Units, US Fish and Wildlife Service lands, and private lands subject to perpetual conservation easements. The primary objectives of the enhancement activities will be to increase native species diversity and improve critical wildlife habitat. A variety of practices and techniques will be implemented to accomplish the

objectives such as: prescribed fire; removal of trees and woody species; invasive species control including mechanical, biological, and chemical control; over-seeding degraded grasslands with native seed; and conservation grazing, mowing, or haying. The work will be conducted primarily through contracts with local vendors, Conservation Corps of Minnesota or Student Conservation Association crews and by using Nature Conservancy seasonal and permanent staff. Prairie Recovery Biologists, stationed in four landscapes within the Prairie region are responsible for identifying and prioritizing projects in cooperation with agency partners; selecting and overseeing contracted work; and leading and directing seasonal staff. The Biologists are also responsible for participating in and leading Prairie Plan Local Technical Team efforts to increase efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery by multiple partners at the landscape scale.

Restore - Approximately 500 acres of cropland will be restored to diverse local-ecotype grassland and grassland/wetland complexes. Practices to be implemented include those listed as enhancements above and the restoration of original wetland hydrology.

Results to date - Through previous Phases of the Prairie Recovery Program we have protected 7,553 acres of prairies, wetlands, and grasslands, enhanced more than 140,000 acres of permanently protected grasslands and restored approximately 1,500 acres with locally-sourced native seed. All parcels protected were directly adjacent to, or contributed to, the functional integrity of existing habitat complexes. Average per acre cost for acquired properties has averaged around \$2,000 per acre. Our enhancement projects have focused on accelerating the implementation of prescribed fire, woody vegetation removal, building the infrastructure for conservation grazing systems and treatment of invasive species. Costs for enhancement and restoration work vary depending on the practices being implemented but have averaged around \$100 per acre.

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:

Temperate grasslands are the most endangered and least protected habitat type on earth, and Minnesota's prairies are no exception. Activities identified in this project directly reflect implementation strategies identified in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan. Properties targeted for acquisition are identified and prioritized using MN County Biological Survey Rare Element Occurrences and Biodiversity Significance. The geographies we work within, in addition to being Prairie Plan Core areas, reflect areas with the highest density and highest quality remaining prairie systems left in the state. By focusing our work in these particular landscapes we increase the functionality of the overall prairie/grassland systems, including increasing water retention, improving breeding and nesting habitat and augmenting migratory corridors. While our work focuses on increasing and maintaining system functionality a number of individual species and suites of SPGCN will directly benefit from this project including:

Insects - habitat management and protection specifically for the federally-threatened Dakota skipper butterfly, potential restoration of habitat for the endangered Poweshiek skipperling and the declining regal fritillary butterflies

Mammals - American badger (an indicator species requiring intact blocks of quality habitat), elk (for herd management in NW MN)

Reptiles - hognose snake (primarily in western MN counties of Lac qui Parle, Big Stone and Yellow Medicine), 5-lined skink (rock outcroppings in the upper MN River Valley)

Birds - Grassland dependent birds have experienced precipitous population decline across Minnesota and the northern Great Plains, largely due to habitat loss on the breeding grounds. This project will provide permanently protected and enhanced habitat for a suite of grassland and wetland nesting birds, most notably the Meadowlark, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Grasshopper sparrow, Henslow's sparrow, Upland sandpiper, Black tern, Northern pintail, Greater Prairie-chicken, Sharp-tail grouse, and many others.

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

Less than 2% of Minnesota's original prairies remain and of these only about half are currently protected. The rest remain at risk for conversion to other uses such as row-crop production, gravel mining, and urban development. It is imperative that we permanently protect all the remaining native prairie as quickly as we can. The MN Prairie Conservation Plan sets an ambitious goal of protecting all of our remaining native prairies and annually enhancing significant acres of grassland habitat over the next 20 years. This project represents one tool designed to help the conservation community meet these goals. The enhancement component of the project greatly accelerates habitat improvement on public lands by bringing additional resources to bear, allowing for the treatment of rapidly expanding invasive species, developing infrastructure that facilitates future management using either conservation grazing or prescribed fire, and building a private vendor industry to accomplish enhancement work.

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:

The project focuses activities on core/corridor complexes as described in the MN Prairie Plan. The Prairie plan was developed using the best available information for identifying the highest quality/highest density remaining prairie and grassland complexes in the state. Individual parcels are prioritized using the attached criteria. Important considerations include % of native prairie on tract; adjacency to

other native prairie; proximity to other protected lands; and uniqueness and diversity of species present. MN County Biological Survey data and biodiversity rankings are key tools used to measure these criteria.

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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

By focusing our protection work in core/corridor areas as identified in the Prairie Plan, this project will advance the goal of targeting conservation dollars to restore functional grassland landscapes at meaningful scale throughout the Prairie region. The project will also accelerate the indicators for enhancement/restoration outlined in the plan including: increasing native plant diversity condition and cover; stable or decreasing cover of invasive woody vegetation; and supporting diverse populations of native birds and insects. Further, the project will result in decreased coverage of invasive species and increased cover dominated by native plants. Collectively these actions will provide increased acreage and quality of habitat for the prairie obligate species called out in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

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:

The Nature Conservancy has been actively protecting and managing prairies in Minnesota for more than 50 years. Funds available through this program provide critical resources for protecting the approximately 1% of currently unprotected native prairie remaining in the state. Given the continued pressure to convert prairie lands it is imperative that willing sellers of native prairie be given the chance to protect these increasingly rare systems. The Prairie Recovery Program represents one of the best tools the Conservancy has to afford such protection. Further, many of the lands in public ownership are in need of increased management to ensure healthy grassland systems. Investment in removing woody species, controlling invasive species and implementing prescribed fire regimes is akin to infrastructure development in that upfront costs are high but ongoing maintenance becomes more sustainable once those investments have been made. This project, and others that support the goals of the MN Prairie Conservation Plan, are critical to ensuring the long-term health and viability of Minnesota's prairie landscapes.

Relationship to other funds:

- TNC raised Private Funds

Describe the relationship of the funds:

Other funds represent private contributions to the Nature Conservancy which are used to offset un-recovered DSS; pay property tax obligations incurred on properties acquired with OHF funds and other land-management costs.

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

We are leveraging state funds with private funds by depositing private donations amounting to 20% of the value of fee-title without PILT obligation acquisitions in a permanent stewardship account that guarantees our ability to maintain acquired properties over time. Further, we track any revenues generated from the properties in the form of lease or CRP payments in a separate restricted account that is used to pay property taxes or management costs on the acquired parcels. This account generates less than 50% of our annual property tax obligation, with the remaining taxes paid by the Conservancy using other private funds.

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:

All work undertaken utilizing OHF allocations is supplemental to core work normally done by the Conservancy. OHF dollars allow us to increase the pace and scale of protection, restoration, and enhancement of native prairies and critical grasslands identified as priorities in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2010	TNC Private Contributions	1,228,100
2011	TNC Private Contributions	1,427,700
2012	TNC Private Contributions	851,000
2013	TNC Private Contributions	1,119,900
2014	TNC Private Contributions	467,400
2015	TNC Private Contributions	171,500
2017	TNC Private Contributions	144,600

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

Protection, restoration, and enhancement are all critical tools for the long-term viability of Minnesota's prairie/wetland systems. The prairie pothole landscape can only be sustained through the regular application of disturbance, including fire, grazing and haying. A primary purpose of this proposal is to continue a highly successful collaborative and coordinated partnership that accelerates the use of these practices across multiple landscapes. In many cases requested funds will develop infrastructure and enable completion of one-time large expenses such as woody species removal and installation of fencing for conservation grazing. Once the initial activities are completed we expect long-term maintenance costs to moderate. The Nature Conservancy will continue to seek mechanisms that derive revenue from grazing, haying and seed production consistent with our conservation goals. All resulting income will be placed in a dedicated account for future property tax payments and management of properties acquired with Outdoor Heritage Funds. Our past efforts show that revenue generation is insufficient to pay for all associated expenses, therefore we plan to seek future funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund along with private contributions for long-term stewardship needs.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Once every 4-5 years	OHF, TNC private funds	Prescribed Fire		
Annually	OHF/TNC private funds	Invasive search/treatment		
As appropriate	OHF/TNC private funds, lease payments	Conservation grazing		

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

To maintain consistency with our Prairie Plan partners we will use the five indicator species/metrics identified by MNDNR to represent the prairie/grassland habitats: pheasant, prairie chicken, bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, and monarch butterfly.

Pheasant

By looking at the ratios of CRP acres in Minnesota to pheasant harvest, we estimate that every three acres of grassland habitat has the potential to produce one harvested pheasant rooster.

Prairie Chickens

According to the literature and professional observations in Minnesota, prairie chickens require a minimum of 320 acres of high quality grasslands with no areas hostile to grassland wildlife (woodlots, farmsteads, etc) near these grasslands. For every 320 acre patch of high quality grassland in the prairie chicken range in the northwest part of the state, we expect there to be a lek, or booming ground. The average size of booming grounds in Minnesota is roughly 11 males.

Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrow

The breeding territory size of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows is 1.7 and 2.1 acres respectively in high quality habitat in Wisconsin. If all of the habitat was occupied, 100 acres of habitat could hold approximately 60 and 48 pairs of bobolinks and

grasshopper sparrows respectively.

Monarch Butterfly

Research from the University MN has shown that it takes approximately 30 milkweed plants to result in one monarch butterfly contributing to the overwintering Mexican population. Grasslands can have between 100-250 milkweed stems per acre. An acre of restored or enhanced grassland could potentially contribute 3 to 8 monarchs to the population.

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**

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, WPA, Permanently Protected Conservation Easements, Refuge Lands, TNC owned lands purchased with OHF dollars)**

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

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 or other commercial crops can 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. Neonicitinoide treated seed will not be used. We would not expect agricultural crop use to exceed 3 years on any given OHF acquired property. We continue to explore the viability of alternative restoration techniques to minimize the need to farm restoration sites, including expanded use of cover crops.

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

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

No variation anticipated

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? - **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?
ML2010	3653000	3653000	0	1228100	9250	22133	Yes
ML2011	4500100	4499500	1613800	1427700	7450	16552	Yes
ML 2012	4610000	4607900	748500	851000	7450	23833	Yes
ML 2013	5310000	5310000	810500	1119900	9250	39714	Yes
ML 2014	3940000	3940000	459200	467400	6050	20233	Yes
ML 2015	4032000	3999200	282300	171500	6700	25481	No
ML 2017	1901000	1023100	211600	144600	7900	554	No
ML 2018	2001000	10000	280600	0	12950		No
ML 2019	3058000	1000	421000	0	14600	0	No

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Co mpleted
500 acres restored to native prairie/wetland	June 2026
200 acres protected in Fee w/PILT	June 2024
400 acres protected in Fee w/out PILT	June 2024
200 acres protected in Fee w/PILT	June 2024
400 acres protected in Fee w/out PILT	June 2025
5,000 acres enhanced	June 2023
5,000 acres enhanced	June 2024
10,000 acres enhanced	June 2026

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$6,627,700

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$974,700	\$0		\$974,700
Contracts	\$1,400,000	\$0		\$1,400,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,000,000	\$0		\$1,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,000,000	\$400,000	TNC	\$2,400,000
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$74,800	\$0		\$74,800
Professional Services	\$108,000	\$0		\$108,000
Direct Support Services	\$228,700	\$0		\$228,700
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$150,000	\$0		\$150,000
Capital Equipment	\$59,000	\$0		\$59,000
Other Equipment/Tools	\$213,000	\$0		\$213,000
Supplies/Materials	\$219,500	\$0		\$219,500
DNR IDP	\$200,000	\$0		\$200,000
Total	\$6,627,700	\$400,000	-	\$7,027,700

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Prairie Recovery Biologists	2.00	2.00	\$331,800	\$0		\$331,800
Protection Specialist	1.00	2.00	\$213,100	\$0		\$213,100
Habitat Crews	5.00	2.00	\$334,400	\$0		\$334,400
Project Management	0.50	2.00	\$60,500	\$0		\$60,500
Grant Administration	0.12	2.00	\$14,500	\$0		\$14,500
TNC Science Staff	0.08	2.00	\$20,400	\$0		\$20,400
Total	8.70	12.00	\$974,700	\$0	-	\$974,700

Capital Equipment

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Replacement UTV w/tracks	\$35,000	\$0		\$35,000
Replacement UTV	\$24,000	\$0		\$24,000
Total	\$59,000	\$0	-	\$59,000

Amount of Request: \$6,627,700
 Amount of Leverage: \$400,000
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 6.04%
 DSS + Personnel: \$1,203,400
 As a % of the total request: 18.16%
 Easement Stewardship: \$0
 As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -%

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

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

What is included in the contracts line?

The entire contract line item is dedicated to enhancement and restoration work. Typical contractors include private vendors and Conservation Corps of MN/IA.

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:

Travel line item includes funds for short term vehicle rentals, primarily for Project coordinator and Protection Specialists. Long term truck lease costs for the Prairie Recovery Biologists are reflected in the Other Equipment line item

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:

The leverage offered represents private contributions equal to 20% of acquisition costs for Fee w/out PILT acquisitions. The funds will be placed in an endowment helping to ensuring long-term management and property tax obligations are met.

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:

Scaling down will result in a proportional reduction in on-the-ground accomplishments and the loss of momentum built over the last several years.

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 11 is a component of the larger MN Prairie Recovery 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.

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

Equipment and tools run the gamut of necessary field supplies ranging from power tools to hand tools. Examples may include chain saws, brush saws, trailers, ATV's, personal protection equipment for prescribed fire, and fencing/watering materials for conservation grazing. The equipment line item also includes herbicide and related application equipment, which are important tools for controlling invasive and noxious weeds in grasslands.

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?

Anticipated 4 Fee w/out PILT and 2 Fee w/PILT. Final number of transactions will vary depending on size of individual acquisition parcels.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	200	300	0	0	500
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	100	300	0	0	400
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	200	600	0	0	800
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	4,000	16,000	0	0	20,000
Total	4,500	17,200	0	0	21,700

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

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	200
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	600
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	12,000
Total	12,800

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$200,000	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$500,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$337,500	\$1,012,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,350,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$500,000	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$530,400	\$2,247,300	\$0	\$0	\$2,777,700
Total	\$1,567,900	\$5,059,800	\$0	\$0	\$6,627,700

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	250	0	250	0	500
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	200	0	200	0	400
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	400	0	400	0	800
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	20,000
Total	0	10,850	0	10,850	0	21,700

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$500,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$675,000	\$0	\$675,000	\$0	\$1,350,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$1,387,900	\$0	\$1,389,800	\$0	\$2,777,700
Total	\$0	\$3,312,900	\$0	\$3,314,800	\$0	\$6,627,700

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$3,375	\$3,375	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$133	\$140	\$0	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$3,375	\$0	\$3,375	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,500	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$139	\$0	\$139	\$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 forest-prairie transition region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands *Protection results will be measured against MN Prairie Conservation Plan goals for protected acres of native prairie and associated grassland for each geography. Enhancement results will be measured using protocols developed for the multi-agency Grassland Monitoring Network.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Remnant native prairies and wetlands are perpetually protected and adequately buffered *Protection results will be measured against MN Prairie Conservation Plan goals for protected acres of native prairie and associated grassland for each geography. Enhancement results will be measured using protocols developed for the multi-agency Grassland Monitoring Network.*

Parcel List

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

Parcel selection for Protection projects, both with and without PILT obligations, are prioritized according to the goals found within the MN Prairie Plan and specifically using the attached criteria. Parcels that the Conservancy intends to own and manage are located within core portfolio sites, while parcels intended for transfer will be selected in consultation with MN DNR managers. Enhancement parcels consist of permanently protected grasslands primarily, USFWS WPAs and MN DNR WMAs, and are selected for funding in close consultation with the partner responsible for ultimate management. Parcels proposed on the parcel list do not reflect actual parcels, rather are illustrative of the areas in which our work is to be conducted. Maintaining anonymity of parcels is an important consideration for the organization in order to protect landowner privacy rights and to maintain the integrity of good faith negotiations. All actual protection parcels will be submitted to the LSOHC for approval prior to acquiring through an Accomplishment Plan amendment request. All completed restoration and enhancement projects will be reported to the Council on the Status Updates and the Final Report.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

Becker

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	13942201	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	13942201	99	\$1,000	Yes

Big Stone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	12446210	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	12446210	99	\$1,000	Yes

Chippewa

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	11739213	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	11739213	99	\$1,000	Yes

Clay

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	14247204	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	14247204	99	\$1,000	Yes

Cottonwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	10734220	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	10734220	99	\$1,000	Yes

Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	12233215	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	12233215	99	\$1,000	Yes

Kittson

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	16045206	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	16045206	99	\$1,000	Yes

Lac qui Parle

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	11943211	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	11943211	99	\$1,000	Yes

Lincoln

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	10 945217	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	10 945217	99	\$1,000	Yes

Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	11243218	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	11243218	99	\$1,000	Yes

Mahnomen

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	14642208	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	14642208	99	\$1,000	Yes

Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	10 740 210	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	10 740 210	99	\$1,000	Yes

Nobles

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	10 140 225	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	10 140 225	99	\$1,000	Yes

Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	14647203	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	14647203	99	\$1,000	Yes

Pennington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	15345230	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	15345230	99	\$1,000	Yes

Pipestone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	10 846219	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	10 846219	99	\$1,000	Yes

Polk

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	15449201	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	15449201	99	\$1,000	Yes

Pope

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	12336214	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	12336214	99	\$1,000	Yes

Red Lake

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	15144202	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	15144202	99	\$1,000	Yes

Rock

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	10 345227	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	10 345227	99	\$1,000	Yes

Roseau

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	16242207	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	16242207	99	\$1,000	Yes

Stearns

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	12335216	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	12335216	99	\$1,000	Yes

Swift

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	12042212	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	12042212	99	\$1,000	Yes

Traverse

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	12548220	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	12548220	99	\$1,000	Yes

Wilkin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	13647205	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	13647205	99	\$1,000	Yes

Yellow Medicine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
NA	11546221	99	\$1,000	Yes
NA	11546221	99	\$1,000	Yes

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List**Becker**

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	13942201	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Big Stone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	12446210	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Chippewa

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	11739213	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Clay

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	14247204	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Cottonwood

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	10734220	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	12233215	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Kittson

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	16045206	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Lac qui Parle

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	11943211	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Lincoln

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	10945217	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	11243218	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Mahnomen

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	14642208	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	10740210	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Nobles

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	10140225	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	14647203	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Pennington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	15345230	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Pipestone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	10846219	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Polk

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	15449201	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Pope

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	12336214	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Red Lake

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	15144202	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Rock

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	10345227	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Roseau

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	16242207	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Stearns

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	12335216	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Swift

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	12042212	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Traverse

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	12548220	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Wilkin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	13647205	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Yellow Medicine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
NA	11546221	99	\$1,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

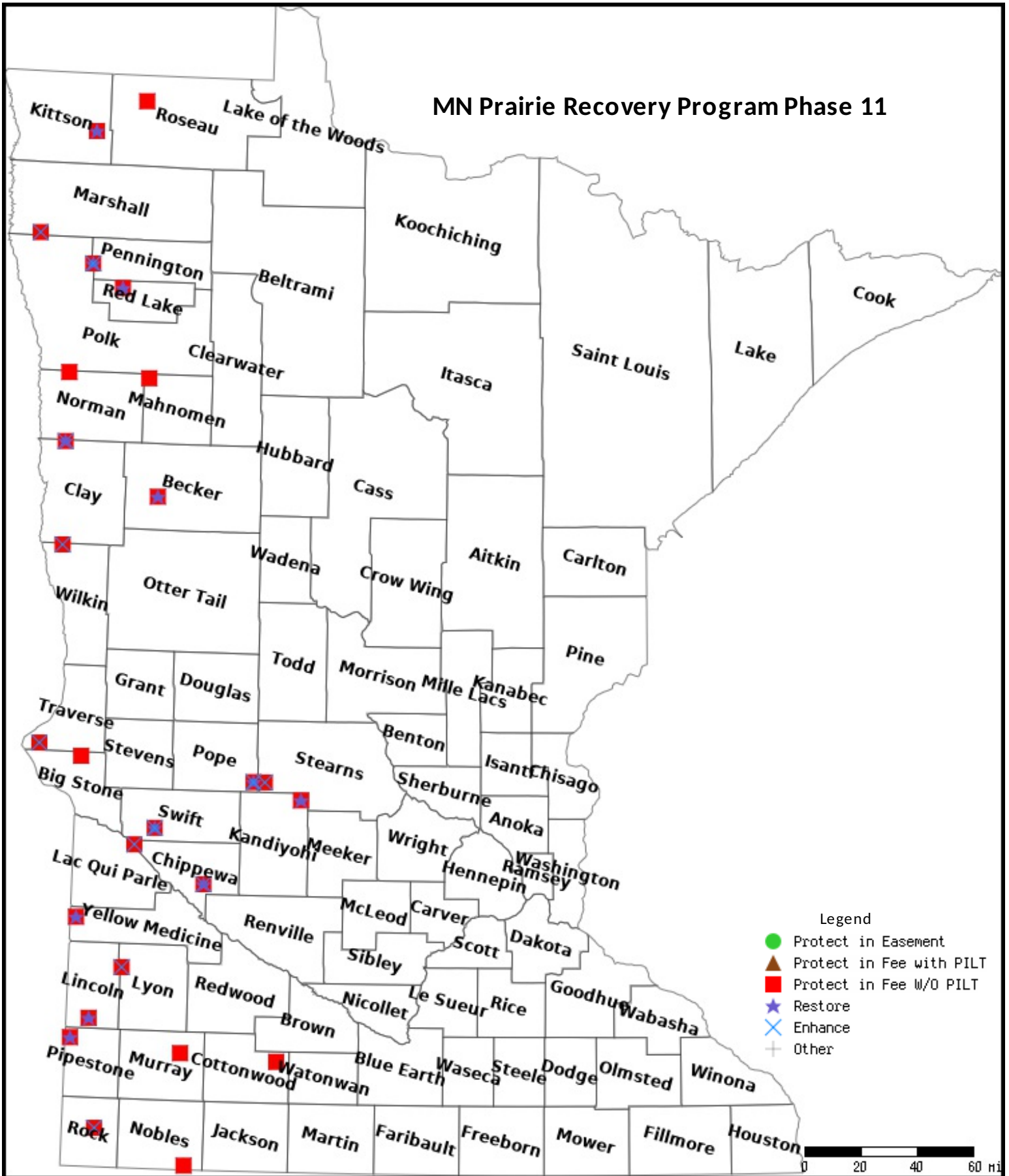
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

MN Prairie Recovery Program Phase 11



Data Generated From Parcel List

MN Prairie Recovery Project

Phase 11

Funds Requested— \$6,627,700

Objective: To advance the protection, restoration and enhancement of prairie and grassland habitat within prairie core and corridor landscapes as identified in the 2018 Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan.

Outcomes

Protect - An estimated 1,200 acres of prairie, wetlands, grasslands, and savanna permanently protected through fee-title acquisition (800 w/out PILT & 400 with PILT). Lands w/out PILT will be held and managed by TNC and those with PILT obligation will be transferred to MN DNR. All lands will be open to public use per constitutional requirements.

Enhance - Accelerated management on permanently protected lands encompassing an estimated 20,000 acres of grassland/wetland complex with the goal of increasing species diversity and improving critical wildlife habitat.

Restore - Approximately 500 acres of cropland restored to grassland and grassland/wetland complexes using diverse local ecotype seed and through restoration of wetland hydrology.

The Nature Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.®



MN Prairie Recovery Program

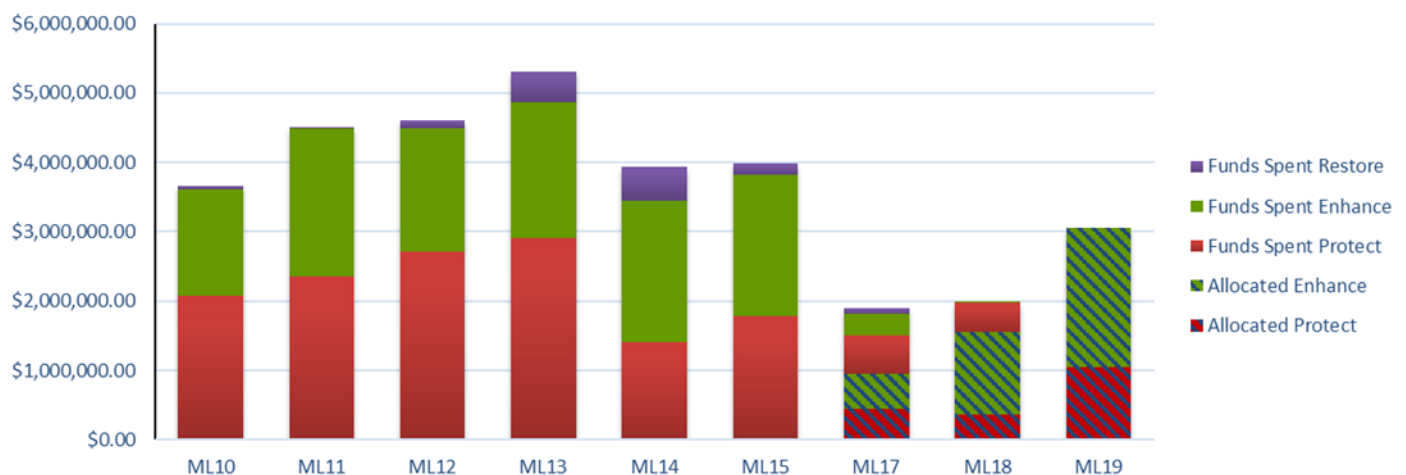
Results To Date

2012-2020

Protect - 7,553 acres native prairie, wetlands and other habitat permanently protected in fee-title. 44 total transactions completed with willing sellers in prairie core/corridor landscapes at an average cost of approximately \$2,000/acre

Enhance - Over 140,000 acres of publicly owned grassland/wetland habitat enhanced on state WMA/SNA and federal WPA/NWR through prescribed fire, invasive species control, tree removal and conservation grazing. More than 1,200 unique projects at an average implementation cost of \$100/acre

Restore - 1500+ acres marginal cropland restored to diverse plant community through 39 individual projects at a cost of approximately \$1,000/acre



Minnesota Prairie Recovery Program Spend Down

**Parcel Selection Criteria used by The Nature Conservancy for
the Minnesota Prairie Recovery project funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund**

The purpose of the Minnesota Prairie Recovery Project is to accelerate and coordinate conservation activities in the prairie regions of Minnesota, and to ensure that the remaining 200,000 acres of remnant native prairie are protected, that restorations complement these remnants and provide critical buffers and corridors, and that all remnant habitats are effectively enhanced with proper use of prescribed fire and control of undesirable species.

To accomplish this purpose, The Nature Conservancy proposes to acquire in fee key tracts of prairies and associated lands to provide maximum protection and opportunity for restoration and enhancement. In looking at restoring prairie functions at a landscape scale, the following criteria will be considered in our identification of appropriate parcels for acquisition:

1. **Native prairie on all or most of tract, or adjacency to existing native prairie.** Emphasis of the project is protecting and enhancing native prairie, as identified by DNR County Biological Survey or site inspection by trained biologist. Protecting native prairie includes the need to buffer and connect native remnants via restoration of non-native lands. We will identify and work with private landowners to acquire tracts that further our goal of native prairie conservation, and in particular, those that meet the other criteria listed below.
2. **Within core area boundary or in critical corridors between core areas.** The project will attempt to build "functioning landscapes" by concentrating in areas with a good core of existing native prairie. We are using the DNR County Biological Survey as a starting point for identifying these core areas. While CBS has identified 38 possible core areas, we will focus within or adjacent to one of 5 areas including: Tallgrass Aspen Parkland, northern Agassiz Beach Ridge, upper Minnesota River Valley, Ordway-Glacial Lakes area, or the Prairie Coteau. Priority will be given to those parcels that are within core areas or that help form critical corridors to maintain landscape function. Selection of tracts will also be guided by the strategies and objectives outlined in TNC's ecoregional conservation action plans.
3. **Near existing protected lands.** Building larger protected complexes is preferred to simplify and reduce overall management costs. In general, larger protected blocks are more effective at conserving the full array of wildlife species and biological diversity. Tracts near existing protected lands will be prioritized higher than those that are isolated.
4. **Greater habitat and species diversity, or host to unique species.** Parcels that host a rare habitat or a continuum of habitats, such as interconnected upland, wetland, riparian, and stream features, will be recognized as having added ecological value and given greater priority. Tracts with underrepresented, small-scale features (e.g., threatened species), will also be prioritized.
5. **Suitability for ultimate assumption by DNR (WMA or SNA).** The Conservancy is proposing to hold these lands for an indefinite period of time. However, we recognize that public ownership of some or all of the acquired properties may be preferable in the future. In order to facilitate this, we will consult with the DNR prior to acquisition regarding the suitability of proposed acquisition tracts for future consideration as a Wildlife Management Area or Scientific and Natural Area.
6. **No buildings or CRP issues.** Existing buildings pose a challenge because they may not be eligible for Outdoor Heritage Fund use and they require additional effort to demolish or sell. Similarly, lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program can complicate the appraisal and

acquisition process. We will give priority to those parcels that have neither buildings nor existing long term CRP leases.

7. **Suitable for grazing.** A principal element of this proposal is to use conservation grazing as a way to meet ecological objectives and to generate income. Lands that are suitable for grazing, or that have recently been used for grazing, will be prioritized.
8. **Willing seller.** We will only work with willing sellers, and those that can abide by the statutory process laid out for use of public funds.
9. **Suitability for public recreation.** Constitutional language requires that these lands be open to public taking of fish and game. We will prioritize those parcels that can foster those public uses.
10. **Additional restrictions or conditions** as specified by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, public laws and rules, and program policies that direct acquisition priorities.