

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2022 / ML 2021 Request for Funding



Date: May 28, 2020

Program or Project Title: Enhanced Public Land – Grasslands - Phase V (PRE02)

Funds Requested: \$3,915,500

Manager's Name: Alexander Nelson
Title: MN Restoration Manager
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County Locations: Not Listed

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Restore
- Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Abstract:

10,000 acres of grassland and wetland habitat will be enhanced or restored through this proposal to benefit upland dependent species on Minnesota lands open to public hunting. These include Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA), and National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). We will accomplish this by working with our partners to follow best practices to conduct wetland restorations, conservation grazing, invasive tree removal, prescribed fire, and diversity seeding in the prairie, forest/prairie transition, and metro regions.

Design and scope of work:

Restoration and enhancement of prairie and wetland habitat remains as one of the core strategies of the MN Prairie Conservation Plan. Many native and restored prairies are degraded from lack of disturbance, low diversity and spread of invasive trees. There are wetlands in these landscapes that need be to restored and many previously restored basins that are in need of repair. This proposal aims to build on past investments to improve habitat on WPAs, WMAs, and NWRs so they can reach their full potential for wildlife production.

Activities include the following:

- 1) Wetlands will be restored/enhanced by removing drain tile, constructing/repairing earthen dams and/or water control structures, and invasive narrow leaf cattail control. Wetlands targeted for enhancement are vital to providing food, cover, and space required for breeding waterfowl and are essential to water quality and aquifer recharge.
- 2) A diverse mixture of native grasses and forbs is ideal for nesting and brood rearing of upland nesting birds and essential for pollinator species. Many WMAs, WPAs, or NWRs were purchased in sub-optimal habitat condition (e.g. monotype of brome grass). We will use a site-specific combination of techniques (e.g. cultivation, tree removal, herbicide, and prescribed fire) to bring back productivity to

these public lands. In close collaboration with the land managers, we will seed a diverse mix of native grasses and forbs that are well adapted to site conditions. Mowing will be used as needed to manage annual weed pressure to ensure establishment.

3) Prescribed burning is the primary tool for managing grassland habitat. It increases vigor, sets back invasive woody species, and removes built up residue.

4) Conservation grazing is an important enhancement tool for sites that are difficult to conduct prescribed fires or need to target specific enhancement needs (e.g. cool season grass suppression, tree invasion, etc.). Permanent infrastructure with a lifespan of 30+ years will be installed to conduct conservation grazing plans written to benefit wildlife.

5) Research has shown that invasive trees are detrimental to prairie/grassland wildlife and thus will be removed with this proposal. These trees reduce nesting success and provide perches and dens for predators. These predators are highly effective at predateding both nests and nesting birds, especially in fragmented low quality habitat.

By creating the best possible habitat on WPAs, NWRs and WMAs, we will strive to help our public land management entities by reducing future investments for management.

A RFP and ranking process has been developed in previous phases that allows us to identify, rank and deliver the projects that have the most impact for grassland and wetland wildlife.

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:

This project directly addresses the loss of quality habitat on reconstructed and native prairies through restoration and enhancement best practices. By increasing the quality of existing remnant and reconstructed prairie habitat we benefit numerous species that are of special concern, threatened, or endangered. This proposal targets grassland species, including but not limited to, greater prairie chickens, ring-necked pheasants, monarch butterflies, honey bees and dakota skippers.

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

Grasslands naturally degrade over time. The longer grasslands are allowed to degrade the more expensive and difficult they are to correct. This project aims to enhance public lands to produce at maximum capacity for the benefit of the public and as such is worthy and necessary for public money.

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 science and strategy of habitat enhancement in this part of Minnesota is to build functional complexes of habitat where it once existed. The quantity and spatial arrangement of habitat is important; each project that falls into a conservation plan corridor or complex receives a higher score on the attached scoring sheet. Another important aspect relates to the quality of habitat found there. By enhancing and restoring grasslands and wetlands in key landscapes, we aim to make every acre as productive as possible to provide the most benefit to wildlife and the people of Minnesota. To maximize efficiency and effectiveness, projects will be developed in conjunction with MNDNR and USFWS land managers.

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:

- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (MPCP) - This proposal fulfills many goals of the MPCP. It increases the rate of restoration and enhancement on public lands that directly contributes to the goals of public land enhancement in cores, corridors, and agriculture matrix.

Long Range Plan For the Ring-necked Pheasant in MN -This proposal increases the productivity of WMAs, WPAs, and NWRs open to hunting which will contribute to achieving an average ring-necked pheasant harvest of 750,000 birds by 2025.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

- Restore or enhance habitat on public lands

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

Metro / Urban:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity

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:

This proposal significantly increases the quality of habitat for game birds and other wildlife on public lands in the prairie, forest/prairie transition, and metro regions. These efforts provide increased opportunities for the public and improve the quality of the experience on our public lands for all users.

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

Does this program include leverage in funds:

Yes

\$250,000 is expected in leverage from multiple sources including but not limited to federal sources, contractor donations and PF.

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Any state agency or organization requesting a direct appropriation from the OHF must inform the LSOHC at the time of the request for funding is made, whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose:

This proposal supplements past investments and is aimed at accelerating the existing enhancement and restoration of strategic public lands.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2002-2010	Heritage Enhancement Grants	\$145,000 HE / \$14,500 PF
2015-2019	NAWCA	\$450,000 HE

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

The portions of enhancement work that will be completed by this proposal will generally allow the unit to be managed more effectively by the resource manager, whether that be the USFWS or the MNDNR. However, with limited funds and constant pressure to our public land grasslands/wetlands from volunteer invasive trees, water quality decline, aging grasslands, etc., we also expect continued opportunity to supplement local agency efforts. While it's difficult for a third party like us to provide an analysis of future costs on existing public land, according to the Long-Range Budget Analysis of Land Management Needs, the cost of long-term management ranges from \$11-16/acre annually. We expect that average need to be the same for the parcels we worked on.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Post Project Completion - WMA	MN DNR - Game and Fish Funds	Monitoring	Maintenance	
Post Project Completion - WPA	USFWS - Federal	Monitoring	Maintenance	
Post Project Completion - NWR	USFWS-Federal	Monitoring	Maintenance	

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

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

Prairie Chickens: According to the research literature and personal 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 can 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, a 100 acres of habitat could potentially hold approximately 60 and 48 pairs of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows respectively.

Monarch Butterfly: Research from the University of Minnesota 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 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, Refuge Lands)**

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

Are the funds confirmed - **No**

What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds - **07/01/2021**

Land Use:

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **No**

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?
2012	1320000	1308000	0	700	18500	21553	Yes
2015	1120000	1030600	0	156000	7845	8227	No
2018	2160000	685300	43400	0	6500	3148	No

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Distribute Project Request for Proposals to Area Land Managers	Fall 2021
Review Project RFPs with project selection committee	Winter 2021-22
Select Projects for completion and hire contractors to complete habitat work	Winter 2021-22
Enhancement / Restoration work begins	Spring 2022
Re-evaluate project status/budget and solicit additional projects as needed	Winter 2022
Enhancement / Restoration work completed	Summer 2026

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$3,915,500

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$250,000	\$0		\$250,000
Contracts	\$3,550,000	\$250,000	Federal, Private, PF	\$3,800,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$20,000	\$0		\$20,000
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$95,500	\$0		\$95,500
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	\$3,915,500	\$250,000	-	\$4,165,500

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
PF Grants Staff	0.26	3.00	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
State Coordinator - MN	0.03	3.00	\$10,000	\$0		\$10,000
PF Field Staff	0.77	3.00	\$180,000	\$0		\$180,000
Total	1.06	9.00	\$250,000	\$0	-	\$250,000

Amount of Request: \$3,915,500
 Amount of Leverage: \$250,000
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 6.38%
 DSS + Personnel: \$345,500
 As a % of the total request: 8.82%
 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:

PF utilizes the Total Modified Direct Cost method. This methodology is annually approved by the U.S. Department of Interior's National Business Center as the basis for the organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. PF's allowable direct support services cost is 5.09%. In this proposal, PF has discounted its rate to 2.5% of the sum of personnel, contracts, and travel. We are donating the difference in-kind.

What is included in the contracts line?

We anticipate that all of the contract funding will be used for restoration and enhancement activities.

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental? - No

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

n/a

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:

Leverage is expected from multiple sources including, but not limited to, federal sources, land value donations, contractor donations

and PF. Not every source is 100% confirmed at this point. However, PF has an exemplary track record of delivery and over-achievement of match commitments that further stretch OHF funding.

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:

If scaled back, this proposal would be reduced proportionately across all categories of the budget and output tables.

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?

In general PF staffing is existing and only partially funded by OHF and specifically this request. Billing to any appropriation would only be for time spent on direct and necessary costs incurred as outlined in an Accomplishment Plan.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	50	150	0	0	200
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	50	9,750	0	0	9,800
Total	100	9,900	0	0	10,000

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	20
Total	20

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$225,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$50,000	\$3,640,500	\$0	\$0	\$3,690,500
Total	\$200,000	\$3,715,500	\$0	\$0	\$3,915,500

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	25	35	0	140	0	200
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	250	1,400	0	8,150	0	9,800
Total	275	1,435	0	8,290	0	10,000

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$28,100	\$39,400	\$0	\$157,500	\$0	\$225,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$94,200	\$527,200	\$0	\$3,069,100	\$0	\$3,690,500
Total	\$122,300	\$566,600	\$0	\$3,226,600	\$0	\$3,915,500

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$3,000	\$500	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$1,000	\$373	\$0	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$1,124	\$1,126	\$0	\$1,125	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$377	\$377	\$0	\$377	\$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:

- Increased waterfowl and upland bird migratory and breeding success *Outcomes will be measured by resource professionals and evaluated by using the best science available to land managers.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- Improved condition of habitat on public lands. Outcomes will be measured by resource professionals and evaluated by using the best science available to land managers.

Programs in prairie region:

- Improved condition of habitat on public lands *Outcomes will be measured by resource professionals and evaluated by using the best science available to land managers.*

Parcel List

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

A request for proposals will be sent to all land managers within the prairie, prairie/forest transition, and metro regions. Submitted projects will be reviewed for eligibility, scored on attached scoring sheet and ranked by a committee that will consist of staff from USFWS, MN DNR, and PF.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

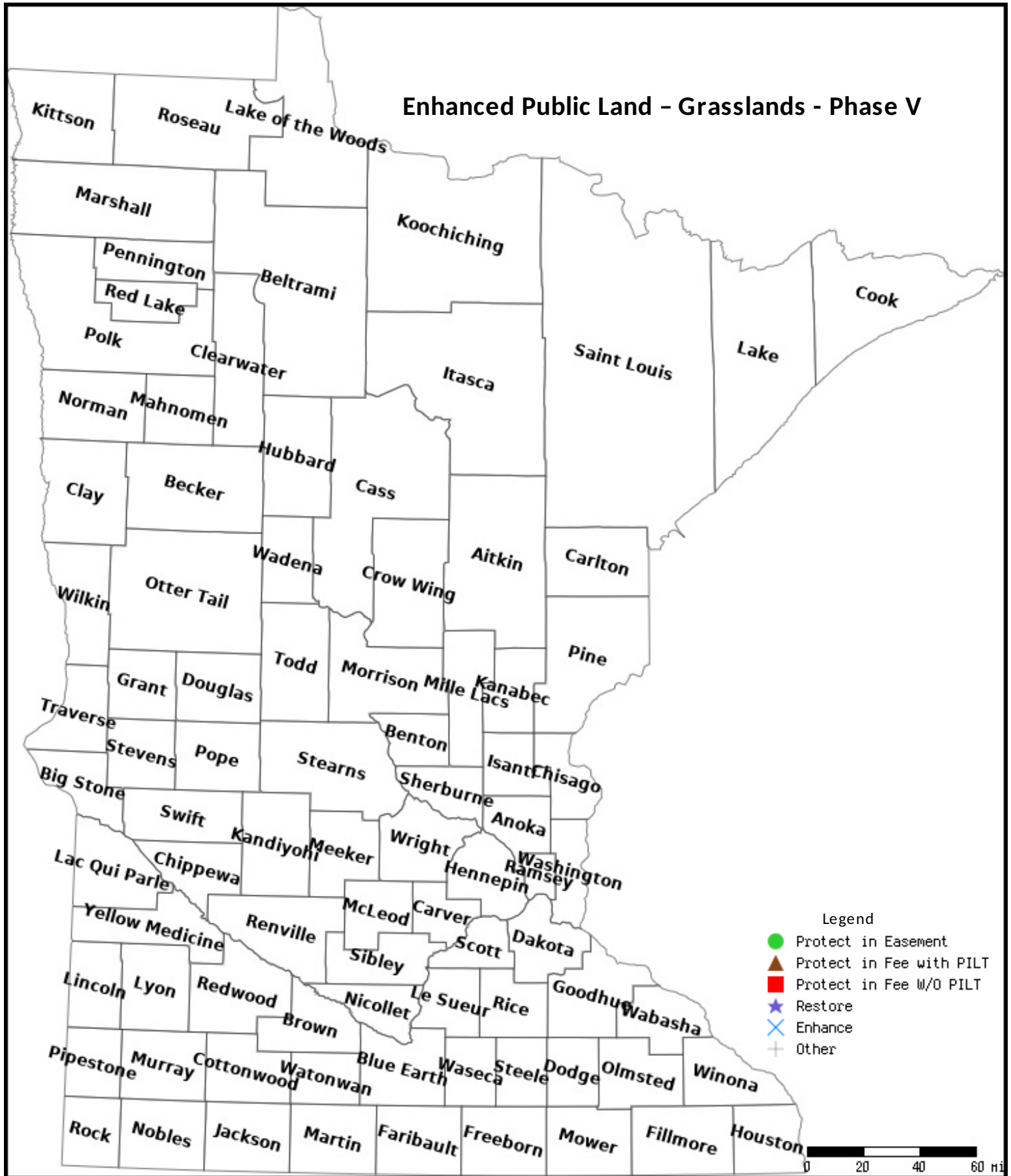
Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

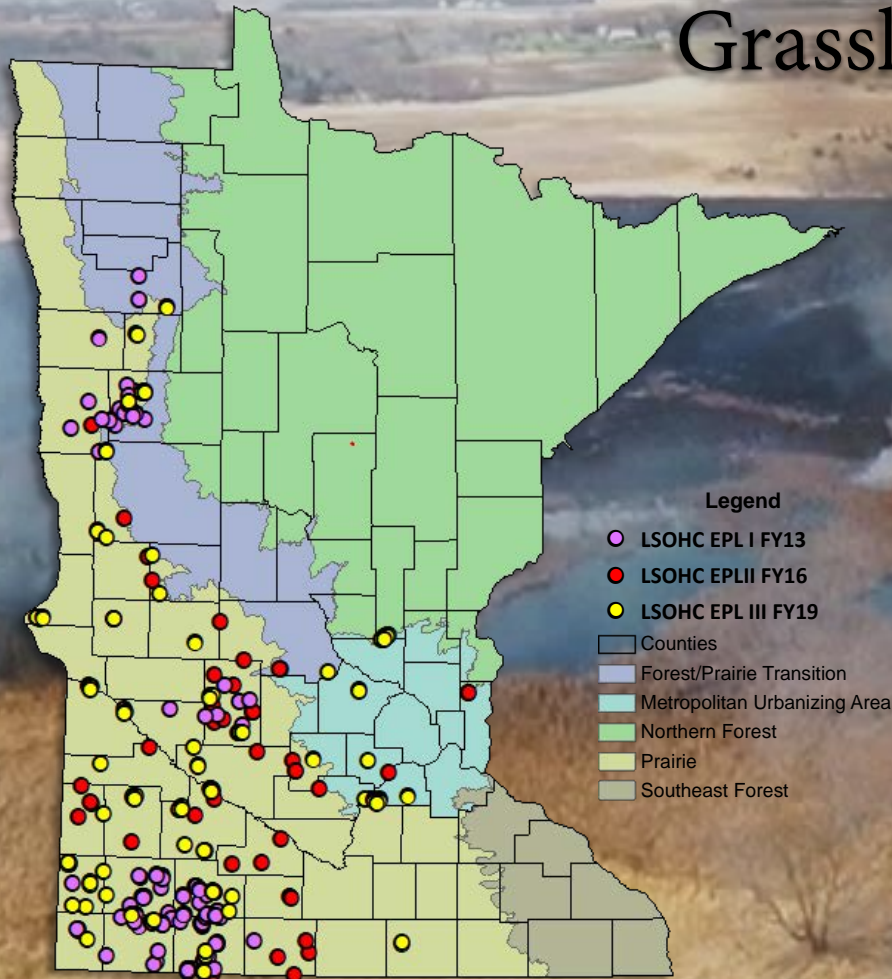
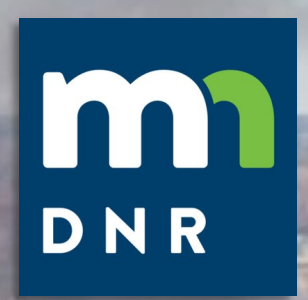
No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List

Enhanced Public Lands Grasslands: Phase V



- Legend**
- LSOHC EPL I FY13
 - LSOHC EPL II FY16
 - LSOHC EPL III FY19
 - ▭ Counties
 - ▭ Forest/Prairie Transition
 - ▭ Metropolitan Urbanizing Area
 - ▭ Northern Forest
 - ▭ Prairie
 - ▭ Southeast Forest

Fig.1 Map shows all projects on public lands open hunting in phases one (purple), two (red) and three (yellow) of the Enhanced Public Lands: Grasslands Program. An RFP for phase IV projects will be sent to managers in July of 2020.

The Enhanced Public Lands Grasslands program benefits numerous grassland dependent species by partnering with MN Department of Natural Resources and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to enhance habitat on public lands open to hunting in the prairie, prairie/forest transition, and metro regions. Activities include tree removal, prescribed fire, wetland restoration, diversity seeding, and conservation grazing

Acton WPA Wetland Restoration



Before



During



After



Pictured Left: The progression of a wetland restoration on Acton WPA in Meeker County that was an EPL Phase II project. Partnering with adjacent landowners, ACGC schools, NAWCA and USFWS this partially drained wetland was able to be restored to its full potential.

Pictured Right: Work is completed by hiring local, private contractors using a competitive bid process.



DRAFT-Enhanced Public Grasslands Phase V Scoring Sheet-DRAFT

Updated 5/28/2020

WMA/WPA/NWR Project Name	County	Township/Range/Section	Date:

Project Type- Select all that apply

Tree Removal
 Prescribed Fire
 Diversity Seeding
 Conservation Grazing
 Wetland Restoration

Must meet all these requirements to be eligible

- 1 Project is located in an eligible priority region (Prairie, Forest/Prairie Transition, Metro)
- 2 Project will occur on existing WMA, NWR, or WPA
- 3 Project is approved by appropriate public land manager
- 4 Project is open to public hunting
- 5 Without these funds, project would not be completed
- 6 Project can be completed by private contractor

Are you Eligible	NO
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Factors	Possible Points	Score
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Will project affect increase wildlife productivity of upland and wetland habitat	5 pts	0
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Will project benefit any T&E or SGCN species?	10 pts	0
3 <input type="checkbox"/> How large is existing contiguous public lands habitat complex? <input type="checkbox"/> >240 acres <input type="checkbox"/> 81 - 240 acres <input type="checkbox"/> < 80 acres	25 pts 15 pts 5 pts	0
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Will project help reduce future management costs?	10 pts	0
6 <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetative Diversity (existing or to be planted) <input type="checkbox"/> >20 native species exist or planted <input type="checkbox"/> 11-19 native species exist or planted <input type="checkbox"/> <10 native species exist or planted	15 pts 10 pts 0 pts	0
7 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Factors <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Conservation Plan core area <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Conservation Plan corridor or complex area <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant Plan Complex <input type="checkbox"/> Site contains native prairie	15 pts 10 pts 15 pts 10 pts	0

TOTAL	0
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Enhanced Public Lands – Grasslands Phase V

DRAFT- Proposal Worksheet - DRAFT

Project Name _____

Description of Work- circle the primary activity and cross out any secondary activities if any.

Prescribed fire ____ **Tree Removal** ____ **Diversity Seeding** ____ **Conservation Grazing** ____ **Wetland Restoration**

Number of Different sites for this project _____

Does project meet the following criteria A- G: YES / NO

- A. Project is located within the focus areas identified on map.
- B. Project will occur on existing Wildlife Management Area, Waterfowl Production Area or National Wildlife Refuge.
- C. Project is approved by appropriate public land manager.
- D. Project is open to public hunting.
- E. Without these funds, project would not be completed.
- F. Project can be completed by private contractor.
- G. Project cannot have been previously protected using LSOHC funding

Circle the focus area(s) that apply to the project (see attached map): Metro ____ Prairie ____ Prairie/Forest

Provide a short narrative of the project. Provide details of what will be done and the wildlife benefits of the project.

What species (game and non-game) will benefit from this work?

Will any T&E species or SGCN be negatively impacted by this work? YES / NO
If so, which species?

Will any match be provided? YES / NO

If Yes, please identify funding source and dollar amount or if in-kind:

Please Attach:

- Map (aerial photo) of the WMA/WPA/NWR clearly defining work area with polygon. Please label acres of work area and township, range sections.
- Completed project list on the .excel document.

Additional information may be requested if the project is funded (i.e. shapefiles, project pictures, etc.)

Primary Contact For This Request _____

Public Land Manager _____ Phone _____

Signature of Manager _____