



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

ML 2022 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/08/2021

Proposal Title: Martin County DNR WMA Phase 6

Funds Requested: \$6,803,600

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Doug Hartke

Title: Grant Coordinator

Organization: Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc.

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Location Information

County Location(s): Martin.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee
- Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie
- Wetlands
- Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

This program will continue our conservation partnership into Phase 6 and will continue to protect and restore diverse prairie and wetland habitat in areas that adjoin existing DNR WMAs. Parcels are identified with representatives of local government, Windom Area MN DNR, Ducks Unlimited (DU), The Conservation Fund (TCF), the Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc (FLCL), and other local partners. Wetland restoration and additional grasslands are needed to make our WMA habitats resilient. We will use the real estate expertise of TCF, wetland and grassland restoration expertise of DU, and the local conservation efforts of FLCL to ensure success.

Design and Scope of Work

Selected project sites will be targeted for protection and restoration by the habitat needs and availability in areas adjacent to existing protected habitat. Work is designed to provide the most habitat value. The landscape will be restored as close as possible to conditions that existed prior to its conversion to agricultural production. Wetlands will be restored without disruption of the natural drainage system. Native vegetation will be restored with a diverse range of species suitable to the landscape.

TCF will negotiate the acquisition and lead the real estate process for properties targeted in this proposal, FLCL will hold and monitor the properties during the restoration work, which will be completed by DU. The restored lands will then be conveyed to the MN DNR.

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 will protect threatened habitats in Martin and SE Watonwan Counties. Native prairie and high quality wetlands will be protected, buffered and expanded upon. Restoration sites will provide the opportunity to expand populations of at-risk and threatened plant species that Martin SWCD has propagated and introduced into permanent protected sites. The FLCL is continuing work initiated by Martin SWCD, by selecting locally rare, at-risk species for propagation and use on these and future habitat restoration projects to protect the local native seed source. While hundreds of Sullivant's milkweed (*Asclepia sullivantii*) and Tuberous Indian Plantain (*Cacalia tuberosa*) have been introduced into WMAs and other protected land, Small white lady's slipper (*Cypripedium candidum*) and Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) will continue to be propagated using local source plant material for use in this project. Parcels selected for this proposal expand habitat protection for the threatened Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) Perch Creek population that has been studied by the MN DNR and featured in the "MN Volunteer".

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

We continue to have great success with our previous funding by protecting over 800-acres in 2019 and 2020 alone. It can be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity when we find a willing seller that owns some of our highest priority native habitat and marginal agricultural lands in proximity to WMAs and other protected natural habitats. If we don't act immediately, these lands may never become available in the future and may be converted to other uses, with degradation or complete elimination of natural features and high-value resources that currently exist.

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:

Our "Martin County Conservation Alliance" has grown into a planning group that includes wildlife group representatives, NGO's, local government, and state agencies. There is a wide range of knowledge and interest within the group. Historic information, the MN County Biologic Survey, GIS spatial data, and local knowledge help identify areas where habitat restoration will likely be most beneficial for multiple reasons. Expanding habitat adjacent to existing high quality native habitat and habitat already protected by public ownership or perpetual conservation easements are targeted. Sites with threatened, endangered and species-in-decline are good targets to build upon, especially when these expansions can link sites to help extend corridors, expand blocks, and protect and enhance habitat buffers along water courses and lake chains. On our parcel list, we have the following tracts that have areas of biodiversity significance as identified by the MN County Biological Survey:

Perch Creek WMA: high level of biodiversity significance. Perch Creek is also part of a DNR Pheasant Habitat Complex.

Caron WMA: moderate level of biodiversity significance and also has a Priority Shallow Lake as identified by DNR Wildlife. Caron WMA is also part of a Pheasant Habitat Complex.

Gruven WMA: moderate biodiversity significance.

Additionally, some of the targeted parcels occur in landscapes that are estimated to hold 21-30 breeding ducks per square mile as per USFWS. Breeding pair accessibility will only increase with increased wetland restoration in these areas.

Which two sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are most applicable to this project?

- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- H7 Keep water on the landscape

Which two other plans are addressed in this proposal?

- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years

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

Our program is developed in coordination with MN DNR Wildlife staff to ensure the parcels selected and the restoration work planned meets the needs and guidelines outlined in the MN WMA Acquisition plan. With all of the partners who help plan our program, multiple uses are a major consideration in developing the parcels and restoration of the habitat on each parcel. With all of the drained prairie potholes on the landscape, elements of the Long Range Duck Recovery Plan can be easily addressed. The protection and enhancement of the prairie pothole landscape will provide quality breeding habitat as well as resting areas for migratory birds. This restored landscape will also provide multiple recreational opportunities for the future.

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:

Our program continues to build upon the protection and restoration of high quality prairie and wetland habitat. The planned acquisition, protection, and restoration projects expand existing areas that are already locally recognized as a significant, permanent conservation legacy. The many partners involved with permanent conservation work in Martin County, (MN DNR, USFWS, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, FLCL, and other local clubs) working to provide landowners with an acquisition option plus the MN BWSR working through SWCDs and the USDA working through FSA and NRCS to provide an easement option, has provided a network of over 10,000 acres of permanently-protected wildlife habitat in Martin County. With this program expanding our local priority area into Watonwan County, the Perch Creek habitat corridor is becoming a more significant and permanent conservation legacy, protecting threatened, endangered, and at-risk species and expanding fishing and hunting opportunities in this region of the state.

What other fund may contribute to this proposal?

- N/A

Does this proposal include leveraged funding?

No

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This proposal does not supplant or substitute previous funding for the same purpose.

Non-OHF Appropriations

Year	Source	Amount
2014	LCCMR	400000

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

Maintaining habitat after our restoration and donation to DNR is complete will be the responsibility of the MN DNR with support from project partner ECP CPL grants if and when available to continue to assist the MN DNR. Also, local groups within the "Martin County Conservation Alliance" will be there to assist the MN DNR with future dollars. Local partners will continue to install additional local source native plant species to enhance habitat to support more species, including pollinators. Local partner monitoring will assist in identifying invasive species threats and provide assistance with eradication or control when necessary.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Ongoing	MN DNR Budget	Monitoring	Maintenance	Management
Ongoing	Local	Monitor and add local species	Monitor for invasive species	Treat and plant as needed

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

With the restoration of highly diverse prairie and wetland habitat on these parcels, we expect to produce 200 rooster pheasants per year. By incorporating multiple species of native milkweeds we expect to produce 2,000 to 6,000 monarchs per year. Approximately 400 pairs of grasshopper sparrow and 300 pair of Bobolinks could potentially be found on this protected and restored prairie. With the number of trumpeter swans nesting in this

area, we would expect to find up to 4 pairs of swans on restored wetlands. Approximately 280 new pairs of mallard ducks should find a home on the restored highly diverse wetland/prairie complex.

How will the program directly involve, engage, and benefit BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and diverse communities:

Martin County is not a racially-diverse county (96.6% White) and considered rural, approximately 150 miles southwest of St Paul. All our of DNR WMAs are open to public hunting and enjoyment. .

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

Where does the activity take place?

- WMA

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program?

Yes

Explain what will be planted:

Food Plots could be utilized by the MN DNR as part of their WMA management plans. Also short term farming may be necessary in the time table to restore the uplands to native habitats.

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?

No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?

Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:

All of these lands will be part the DNR WMA system.

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the proposed acquisitions?

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 proposal's funding and availability?

Yes

Other OHF Appropriation Awards

Have you received OHF dollars in the past through LSOHC?

Yes

Approp Year	Approp Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Leverage Reported in AP	Leverage Realized to Date	Acres Affected in AP	Acres Affected to Date	Complete/Final Report Approved?
2021	\$2,864,000	-	-	-	-	-	No
2020	\$2,613,000	\$6,000	-	-	-	-	No
2019	\$3,650,000	\$2,698,000	-	-	462	462	No
2018	\$2,447,000	\$1,825,000	-	-	352	352	No
2016	\$1,000,000	\$1,035,000	-	\$35,000	140	140	No

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Begin Parcel qualification and review	Spring 2022
Acquire Parcel (s)	Fall 2022-Fall 2023
Plan Restoration	Winter 2022 and Winter 2023
Complete Restoration	2024-2026
Transfer to MN DNR	2024
Follow-up/Maintenance/Weed Control	2024 and Beyond

Budget

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$227,500	-	-	\$227,500
Contracts	\$900,000	-	-	\$900,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$5,000,000	-	-	\$5,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$18,500	-	-	\$18,500
Professional Services	\$96,000	-	-	\$96,000
Direct Support Services	\$16,600	-	-	\$16,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$80,000	-	-	\$80,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$425,000	-	-	\$425,000
DNR IDP	\$35,000	-	-	\$35,000
Grand Total	\$6,803,600	-	-	\$6,803,600

Partner: Fox Lake Conservation League

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$50,000	-	-	\$50,000
Contracts	\$150,000	-	-	\$150,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$5,000,000	-	-	\$5,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$2,500	-	-	\$2,500
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$80,000	-	-	\$80,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$5,282,500	-	-	\$5,282,500

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personell	0.25	3.0	50000	-	-	\$50,000

Partner: Ducks Unlimited**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$137,500	-	-	\$137,500
Contracts	\$750,000	-	-	\$750,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$14,000	-	-	\$14,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$11,000	-	-	\$11,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$425,000	-	-	\$425,000
DNR IDP	\$35,000	-	-	\$35,000
Grand Total	\$1,377,500	-	-	\$1,377,500

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Ducks Unlimited Conservation Staff - Biologists and Engineers	0.3	3.0	137500	-	-	\$137,500

Partner: The Conservation Fund

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$40,000	-	-	\$40,000
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
Professional Services	\$96,000	-	-	\$96,000
Direct Support Services	\$5,600	-	-	\$5,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$143,600	-	-	\$143,600

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MN TCF staff	0.08	4.0	40000	-	-	\$40,000

Amount of Request: \$6,803,600

Amount of Leverage: -

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%

DSS + Personnel: \$244,100

As a % of the total request: 3.59%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?

Yes

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?

The number of projects and acres would be reduced proportionately. Sometimes multiple parcels can be grouped for professional services, such as appraisals, surveys, and an economy of scale can be achieved for project savings.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?

Personnel would be reduced, nearly proportionally. Personnel and DSS are budgeted by number of projects in this program.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?

The number of projects and acres would be reduced proportionately. Sometimes multiple parcels can be grouped for professional services, such as appraisals, surveys, and an economy of scale can be achieved for project savings.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?

Personnel would be reduced, nearly proportionally. Personnel and DSS are budgeted by number of projects in this program.

Personnel

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?

TCF: Each project has a unique project account and time is tracked by individual to assure accurate personnel costs by project.

DU: DU assigns site-specific, unique project numbers to each land acquisition or wetland restoration project, and biologist/engineering staff charge time and expenses to these specific project number codes so charges are tracked to specific sites by each individual.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

Contracts are for private contractor charges to restore/enhance wetlands (earthmoving) and grasslands (native seeding) on lands acquired. Wetland restoration in Martin County is very expensive and requires engineering due to intensive landscape drainage via complex networks of private/public tile/ditches that affect private neighbors and public roads.

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?

There are eight parcels in this request.

Travel

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

DU - travel costs consist of in-state mileage and lodging for land manager, biologists, and engineering field staff. DU generally does not spend OHF grant funds on food.

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

Yes

Direct Support Services

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

FLCL- we will not charge DSS.

TCF: Direct Support Services has been reviewed and approved by Minnesota DNR grants staff, and is determined using our Federally-approved and audited rate as the basis for calculating Direct Support Services as a percentage of the budgeted personnel costs.

DU: Minnesota DNR grants staff previously reviewed and approved DU accounting methodology for Direct Support Services, which are calculated and included in DU staff costs. DU Direct Support Services constitute approximately 8% of DU overall staff costs on average among DU conservation staff billing categories.

Other Equipment/Tools

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

GPS survey equipment for performing engineering wetland restoration survey work and engineering surveys of shallow lake and large wetland enhancement projects, including survey equipment lease charges instead of actual outright equipment purchases to avoid buying equipment that becomes obsolete due to upgrades and advancements. Other examples include hand tools and other field equipment as needs arise.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?

No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	90	830	0	0	920
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	90	830	0	0	920

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$1,060,000	\$5,743,600	-	-	\$6,803,600
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$1,060,000	\$5,743,600	-	-	\$6,803,600

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	920	0	920
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	-	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	920	0	920

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$6,803,600	-	\$6,803,600
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	\$6,803,600	-	\$6,803,600

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$11,777	\$6,920	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$7,395	-
Protect in Fee w/o State	-	-	-	-	-

PILT Liability					
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *By adding these important parcels to the Martin County WMA complexes we are adding valuable grasslands to the WMAs of Southern Minnesota. This additional diverse upland habitat will provide much needed habitat for many wildlife species. This project will also add valuable acres for public hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities with all of the fish, game, and rare species that will be found on this new public land. The measurable habitat value will be based on the diversity of habitat protected and restored and the volume of public use these new acres receive.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

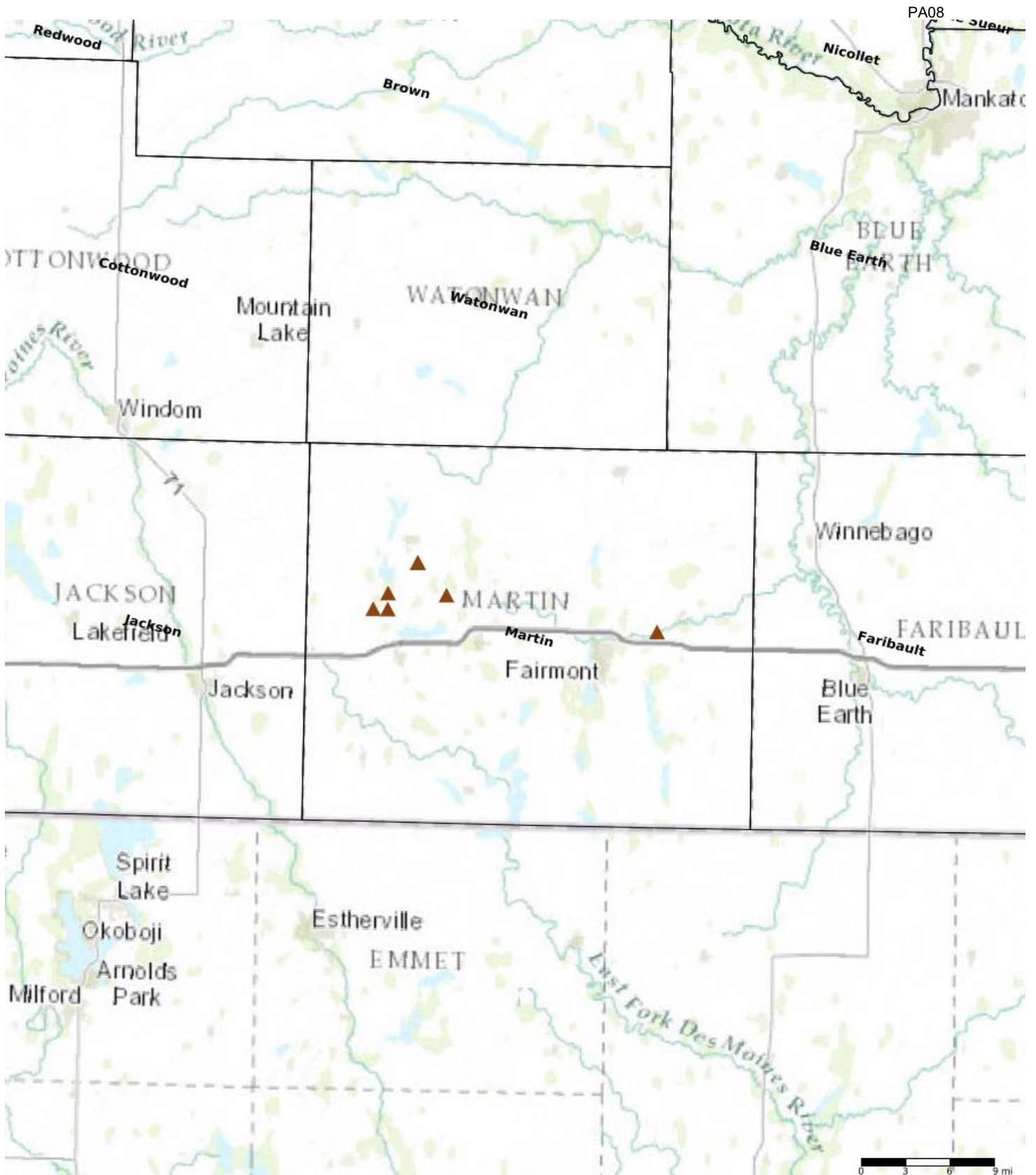
Fox Lake Conservation is a leader in public lands acquisitions in Martin County and is continually working with the MN DNR to best qualify parcels that need to be acquired to improve the state WMA holdings in Martin County.

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Rooney Run WMA Parcel 4	Martin	10332222	160	\$1,000,000	No
East Fork WMA Parcel 2A	Martin	10332208	110	\$500,000	No
East Fork WMA Parcel 1A	Martin	10332208	120	\$800,000	No
Gruven WMA Parcel #6	Martin	10330236	181	\$750,000	No
Caron WMA Parcel 13B	Martin	10333226	209	\$1,600,000	No
Caron WMA Parcel 14	Martin	10333224	80	\$580,000	No
Caron WMA Parcel 15	Martin	10333225	50	\$335,000	No

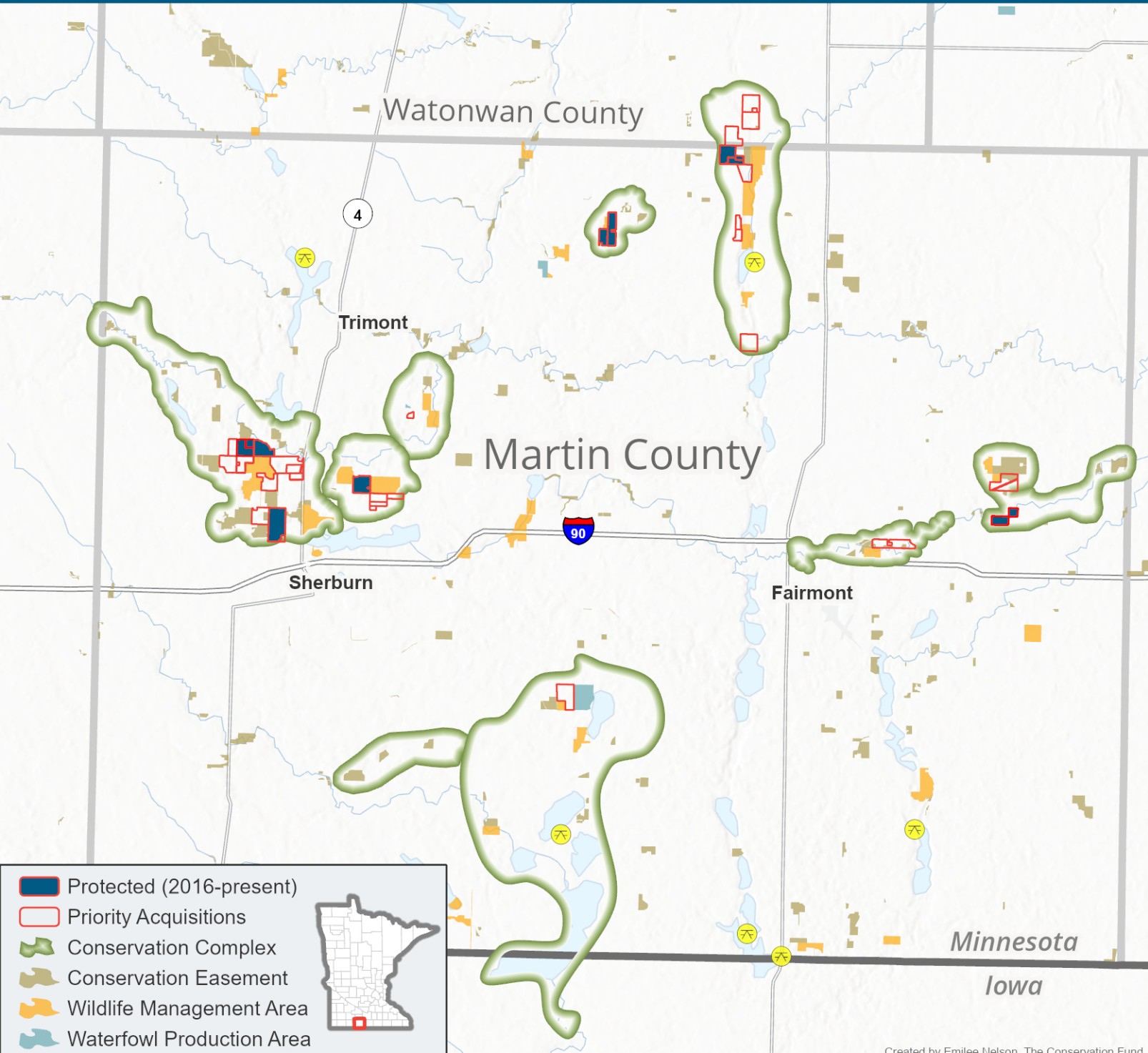
Protect Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
East Fork WMA Parcel 1B	Martin	10332208	10	\$75,000	No	3	\$0

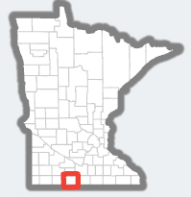


Parcel Map
Martin County DNR WMA Phase 6
(Data Generated From Parcel List)

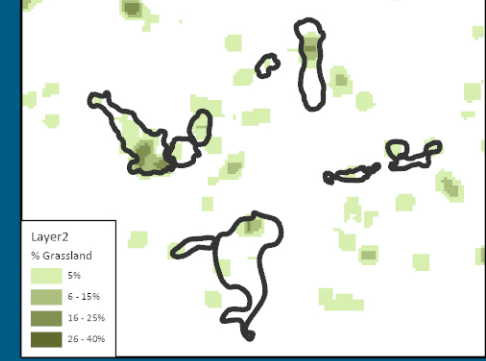
Martin County WMA Priorities



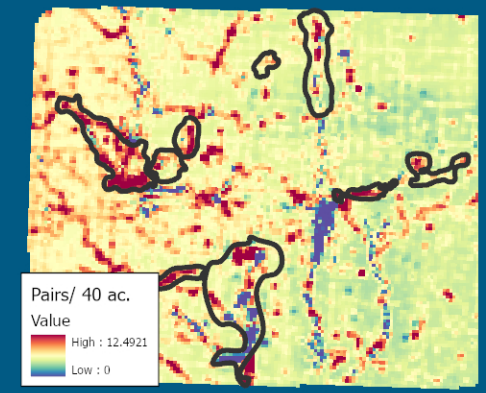
- Protected (2016-present)
- Priority Acquisitions
- Conservation Complex
- Conservation Easement
- Wildlife Management Area
- Waterfowl Production Area



Percent Landscape in Grassland



Bobolink Nesting Suitability per 40 acres



Waterfowl Pairs per Sq. Mile

