



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Martin County DNR WMA Phase 7
Laws of Minnesota 2023 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 03/05/2024

Project Title: Martin County DNR WMA Phase 7

Funds Recommended: \$2,137,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2023, Ch. 40, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 2(b)

Appropriation Language: \$2,137,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for agreements to acquire land in fee and restore and enhance strategic prairie grassland, wetland, and other wildlife habitat in Martin and Watonwan Counties for wildlife management area purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, as follows: \$1,670,000 to Fox Lake Conservation League Inc.; \$421,000 to Ducks Unlimited; and \$46,000 to The Conservation Fund. A list of proposed acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

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 7 and will continue to protect and restore diverse prairie and wetland habitat in areas that adjoin existing DNR WMA. 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.

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.

Our partnership brings together the expertise of three organizations with a strong history working in the area. 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 plan 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 County. 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 County 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 (*Asclepias 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".

Describe how the plan 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.

Center Creek WMA: outstanding level of biodiversity significance.

Additionally, some of the targeted parcels occur in landscapes that are estimated to support 10-25 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 program?

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

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Prairie

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

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 restoring valuable grasslands to the WMAs of Southern Minnesota. These added diverse upland prairies will provide much needed habitat for many wildlife species. This program 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.*

Does this program include leveraged funding?

Yes

Explain the leverage:

some NAWCA funding is being sought.

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	\$400,000

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

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

Martin County is not a racially-diverse county (96.6% White) and considered rural, approximately 150 miles southwest of St Paul. Restoration of wetlands and grasslands will help create more, and better-quality habitat to support healthy wildlife populations in the area for all people to enjoy. These actions will help improve air quality, water quality, support pollinator populations and help fight climate change and the disproportionate effects it has on BIPOC communities. These newly restored lands will be open to the public and will provide numerous opportunities for BIPOC communities to enjoy through hunting, wildlife viewing, kayaking, canoeing, and various other forms of outdoor recreation and education.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program 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 or on lands to be acquired in this program?

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, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?

Yes

Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:

Food Plots could be utilized by the MN DNR as part of their WMA management plans. Short-term farming may be necessary in the timetable 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.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

- State of MN

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

- WMA

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?

we anticipated to close 1 or 2 parcels.

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 acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?

Yes

Grassland and wetland restorations will be completed.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?

Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Follow-up/Maintenance/Weed Control	2026 and Beyond
Complete Restoration	2025-2027
Transfer to MN DNR	2025 and 2026
Plan Restoration	Winter 2023 and Winter 2024
Acquire Parcel (s)	Fall 2023 - Fall 2024
Begin Parcel qualification and review	Spring 2023

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2028

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation

(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated to acquire land in fee may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.

(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:

- (1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2027;
- (2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this act is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2031;
- (3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2028;
- (4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
- (5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$72,000	\$5,000	NAWCA and DU Private	\$77,000
Contracts	\$393,400	\$24,000	-, NAWCA and DU Private	\$417,400
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,597,000	-	-	\$1,597,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$5,000	\$1,000	-, NAWCA and DU Private	\$6,000
Professional Services	\$20,000	-	-	\$20,000
Direct Support Services	\$7,100	-	-	\$7,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$7,500	-	-	\$7,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$2,137,000	\$30,000	-	\$2,167,000

Partner: Ducks Unlimited**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$40,000	\$5,000	NAWCA and DU Private	\$45,000
Contracts	\$360,900	\$24,000	NAWCA and DU Private	\$384,900
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$4,000	\$1,000	NAWCA and DU Private	\$5,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$4,000	-	-	\$4,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$7,500	-	-	\$7,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$421,400	\$30,000	-	\$451,400

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Ducks Unlimited Conservation Staff - Biologists and engineers	0.1	4.0	\$40,000	\$5,000	NAWCA and DU Private	\$45,000

Partner: The Conservation Fund**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$22,000	-	-	\$22,000
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$500	-	-	\$500
Professional Services	\$20,000	-	-	\$20,000
Direct Support Services	\$3,100	-	-	\$3,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$45,600	-	-	\$45,600

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MN TCF staff	0.05	4.0	\$22,000	-	-	\$22,000

Partner: Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc.**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$10,000	-	-	\$10,000
Contracts	\$32,500	-	-	\$32,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,597,000	-	-	\$1,597,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$500	-	-	\$500
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$1,670,000	-	-	\$1,670,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Grant Management	0.25	4.0	\$10,000	-	-	\$10,000

Amount of Request: \$2,137,000

Amount of Leverage: \$30,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 1.4%

DSS + Personnel: \$79,100

As a % of the total request: 3.7%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?

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

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Beginning in 2023 the partners will apply for future NAWCA grants to help restore lands acquired via OHF. This first requires expenditures of state OHF grant funds on land acquisitions to leverage federal NAWCA grant funds to restore lands acquired.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?

Yes

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, which would be fewer with less funding.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?

Yes

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?

We anticipate the ability to do 1 or 2 acquisitions with this funding.

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 managers, biologists, and engineering field staff. DU generally does not spend OHF grant funds on food.

FLCL - Instate mileage.

TCF - Instate mileage

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 MN DNR grants staff, and is determined using our

Federally approved and audited rate as the basis for calculating DSS as a percentage of the budgeted personnel costs.

DU-MN DNR grants staff previously reviewed and approved DU accounting methodology for DSS, which are calculated and included in DU Staff Costs. DU DSS constitute approximately 10% of DU overall staff costs on average among DU conservation staff building 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?

Yes

Are the funds confirmed?

No

What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds?

Beginning in 2023 via future NAWCA grants leveraged to help restore lands acquired via OHF. This first requires expenditures of state OHF grant funds on land acquisitions to leverage federal NAWCA grant funds to restore lands acquired.

Output Tables**Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	40	120	-	-	160
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	40	120	-	-	160

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$550,000	\$1,587,000	-	-	\$2,137,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$550,000	\$1,587,000	-	-	\$2,137,000

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	160	-	160
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	160	-	160

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	-	-	-	\$2,137,000	-	\$2,137,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	\$2,137,000	-	\$2,137,000

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$13,750	\$13,225	-	-
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	-	-	-	\$13,356	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Parcels

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Parcel Information

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.

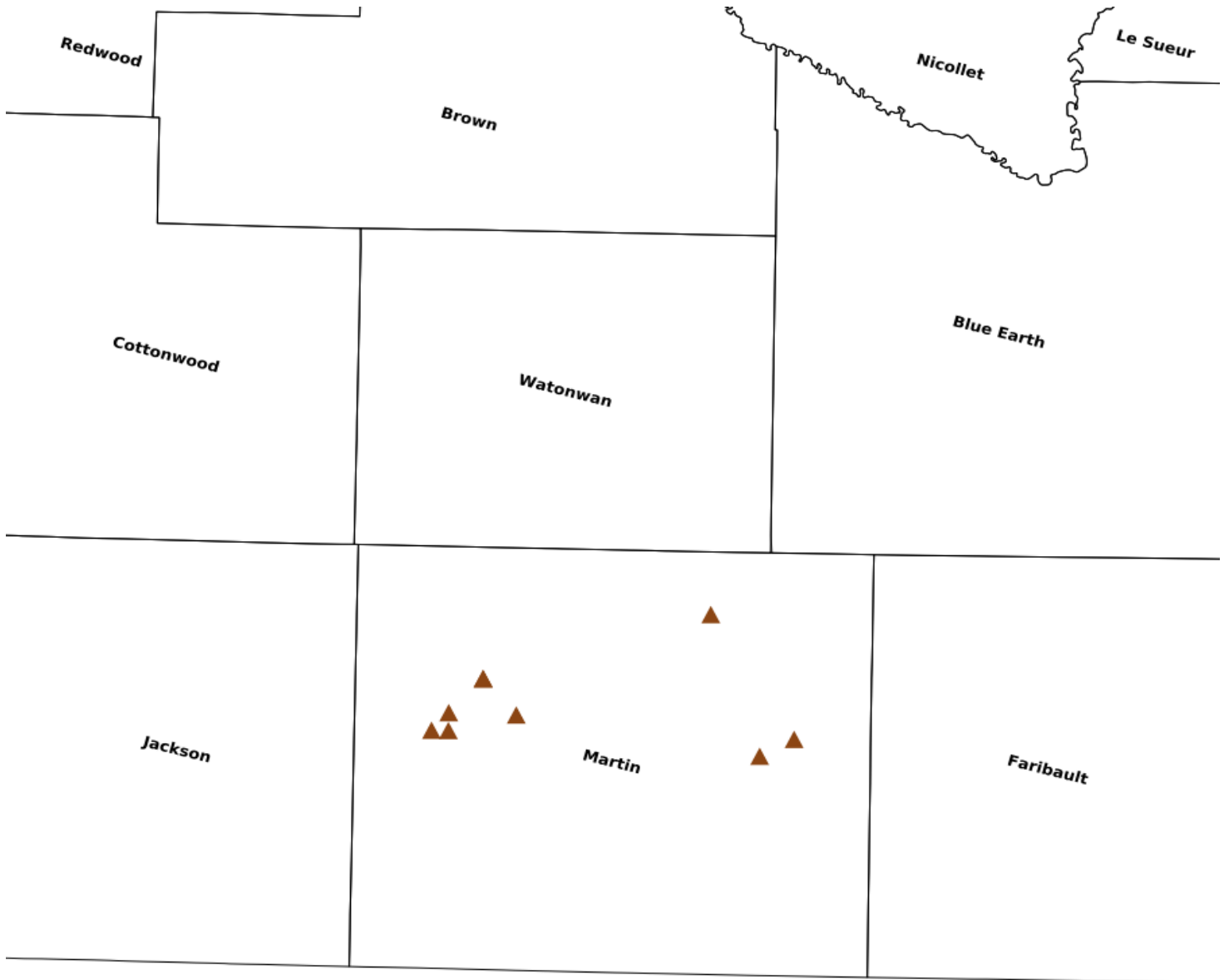
Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Armbrust WMA Tract #4	Martin	10430221	145	\$1,607,000	No
Center Creek WMA Parcel 13	Martin	10329229	107	\$800,000	No
Gruven WMA Parcel 6	Martin	10330236	181	\$750,000	No
Rooney Run WMA Parcel 4	Martin	10332222	160	\$1,000,000	No
East Fork WMA Parcel 2A	Martin	10332208	110	\$650,000	No
East Fork WMA Parcel 1A	Martin	10332208	120	\$900,000	No
Caron WMA Parcel 15	Martin	10333225	50	\$335,000	No
Caron WMA Parcel 14	Martin	10333224	80	\$580,000	No
Caron WMA Parcel 13B	Martin	10333226	209	\$1,600,000	No

Fee 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



- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✕ Enhance
- ⊕ Other

