



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Enhance Metro and SE MN Trout Stream Habitats, Phase 2
Laws of Minnesota 2023 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 06/08/2023

Project Title: Enhance Metro and SE MN Trout Stream Habitats, Phase 2

Funds Recommended: \$1,690,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2023, Ch. 40, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 5(o)

Appropriation Language: \$1,690,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Minnesota Trout Unlimited to restore and enhance habitat for trout and other species in and along coldwater rivers, lakes, and streams in the metro and southeast regions of Minnesota. A list of proposed restorations and enhancements must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: John Lenczewski

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Location Information

County Location(s): Scott, Dakota, Goodhue, Wabasha, Fillmore, Houston, Winona and Olmsted.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Metro / Urban
- Southeast Forest

Activity types:

- Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

Minnesota Trout Unlimited will enhance and restore degraded habitat for fish and diverse wildlife in and along priority trout streams located on existing public lands and conservation easements in the Metro area and southeast Minnesota. Increasing threats to these highly prized, yet relatively scarce, resources require accelerating habitat work to reduce the backlog of degraded stream reaches and buffer streams from the increased frequency and intensity of large rainfall and flood events. In addition to increased fish and wildlife populations, other outcomes include increased opportunities for anglers and wildlife enthusiasts to interact with high quality ecosystems close to home.

Design and Scope of Work

The popularity of trout fishing in southeast MN and the Metro area continues to soar. Anglers applaud our recent habitat projects but want to see many more undertaken. Badly degraded habitat on those trout streams that are most accessible to the public severely limits their productivity and public enjoyment. Minnesota Trout Unlimited (“MNTU”) will directly enhance or restore degraded habitat on priority streams with existing protections under the Aquatic Management Area system or other public ownership. We will also extend the work of the conservation corps, drawn from urban youth, to restore healthy prairie, wetland and forest vegetation (i.e., habitat) on the larger parcels surrounding Metro trout streams. We propose to restore or enhance habitat in and along these public waters (in these counties):

1. Eagle Creek (Scott);
2. Vermillion River (Dakota);
3. Little Cannon River (Goodhue);
4. Spring Creek (Wabasha)*;
5. South Branch Root River (Fillmore);
6. Crooked Creek* (Houston);
7. Garvin Brook* (Winona);
8. Southeast MN streams (additional enhancements in numerous counties); and
9. Numerous streams (vegetation in numerous counties).

Individual project descriptions are provided in an attachment. Work on streams with an asterisk will occur only if the appropriation amount increases or substantial leverage is secured.

Goals and scope of work:

The goals of projects are to increase the carrying capacity and trout population of the stream, increase angling access and participation, improve water quality, and provide other benefits to aquatic, terrestrial, and avian wildlife. Each project will accomplish one or more of these objectives: (a) increase adult trout abundance, (b) reduce stream bank erosion and associated sedimentation downstream, (c) reconnect the stream to its floodplains to reduce negative impacts from severe flooding, (d) increase natural reproduction of trout and other aquatic organisms, (e) increase habitat for invertebrates and non-game species, (f) improve connectivity of habitat along aquatic and riparian (terrestrial) corridors, (g) improve riparian forest health and function, (h) improve angler access and participation, and (i) protect productive trout waters from invasive species. The scope of work and methods utilized vary by project site conditions and are discussed in the individual project descriptions provided in the attachment.

How priorities were set:

MNTU focuses habitat enhancement and restoration efforts on those watersheds likely to continue to support viable, fishable populations of naturally reproducing trout fifty years and more from now. Work is done only where degraded habitat is a limiting factor for a quality, sustainable fishery. Priority locations are determined through consultations with MNDNR professionals, MNDNR management plans and surveys, other habitat and conservation planning efforts, MNTU members' knowledge of watersheds, and science-based criteria. All things being equal, we consider the potential to draw new anglers outdoors, increase public awareness, engage landowners in conservation, foster partnerships, and increase public support for OHF projects.

Stakeholder support:

We continue receiving strong support from anglers, landowners, rural communities, and local civic and sporting organizations. Local governments are approaching us to partner on habitat work and we continue gathering local input and developing partnerships in the planning and implementation stages.

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?

The projects will restore or enhance degraded habitat for fish and wildlife in and along coldwater streams and rivers which historically supported naturally reproducing trout populations highly valued by generations of anglers. While trout are the apex predator and key indicator species for the health of coldwater ecosystems, a host of rare aquatic and riparian species are uniquely associated with these systems. Well-functioning coldwater aquatic ecosystems are far fewer in number than the 6% of Minnesota's stream and river miles which theoretically can still support trout. Even many streams considered to be the best remaining trout streams have badly degraded segments which disrupt connectivity and significantly impact the productivity and long-term resilience and sustainability of the overall trout population. Streams face growing threats from warming temperatures, increased frequency of severe flooding, and rising demand for groundwater extraction from the aquifers which supply inputs of vitally important cold water. The proposed projects are focused on streams and stream segments which will benefit from improved connectivity and help ensure Minnesota retains at least some high quality coldwater fisheries for future generations. A small portion of an appropriation would be used to maintain or add enhancements to past projects to ensure continuing habitat benefits.

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:

In selecting project sites, MNTU reviews MNDNR watershed specific fisheries management plans and other conservation planning efforts, consults with MNDNR professionals, and applies ranking criteria developed by the MNDNR. Projects must have the potential to increase the carrying capacity (fish numbers), the streams have natural reproduction, and the public have access to them. Improving the connectivity of good aquatic and riparian habitat is an important consideration and the projects are selected to expand or connect gaps in these corridors. We are increasingly targeting stream segments which build off earlier habitat or protection work in the same stream or connected watershed.

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

- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation

Which two other plans are addressed in this program?

- Driftless Area Restoration Effort
- Strategic Plan for Coldwater Resources Management in Southeastern Minnesota

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Metro / Urban

- Enhance and restore coldwater fisheries systems

Southeast Forest

- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- Improved aquatic habitat indicators ~ *Measured through surveys of fish, macro invertebrates and/or exposed substrates. Abundance, size structure and species diversity are considered.*

Programs in southeast forest region:

- Rivers, streams, and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat ~ *Enhancement of in-stream and riparian corridor habitat creates miles of connected habitat. Outcomes in aquatic life are measured through surveys of fish, macro invertebrates and/or exposed substrates. Abundance, size structure and species diversity are considered.*

Does this program include leveraged funding?

Yes

Explain the leverage:

We will leverage private funding of Trout Unlimited, and local members and chapters will donate in-kind labor. Several partners (MNDNR, SWCD offices, etc.) will likely contribute significant amounts of time and/or dollars assisting on several projects. We also hope to leverage substantial federal and other funding, including NRCS funding on southeast Minnesota projects.

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.

The request is not supplanting or a substitution for previous funding. The work proposed for funding is for new or additional work.

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

MNTU's coldwater aquatic habitat restoration and enhancement projects are designed for long-term ecological and hydraulic stability. Construction contracts include maintenance/warranty provisions to ensure habitat work is well established. After this period and once riparian vegetation is well established, major maintenance work is not typically required in order to sustain the habitat outcomes for decades. Reconnected floodplains allow flood water to quickly spread out and dissipate energy, reducing the destructive impact of a flood. Flood waters typically

flatten streamside vegetation temporarily and do not damage the in-stream structures. The tenfold increase in trout populations and threefold increase in large trout which are common following completion of a southeast Minnesota project, are typically sustainable long-term through natural reproduction.

We anticipate that long-term monitoring of the integrity of the improvements will be done in conjunction with routine inspections and biological monitoring conducted by local MNDNR staff, MNTU members, and landowners as appropriate. This monitoring will not require separate OHF or other constitutional funding. In the event that there are other maintenance costs, potential sources of funding and volunteer labor include MNTU, MNDNR AMA maintenance funding, and other grant funds and organizations. MNTU volunteers will help provide long-term monitoring and periodic labor.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Every 3 years thereafter	MNTU volunteers and/or agency.	Inspect structural elements and vegetation.	If needed, develop action plan with DNR.	Perform or assist DNR with maintenance if needed.
One year after grant ends	MNTU volunteers or part of agency staff visits.	Inspect structural elements and vegetation.	If needed, alert DNR and develop action plans.	Conduct maintenance with volunteers and/or contractors if DNR does not.

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

Our metro trout stream projects will provide opportunities to racially, ethnically, and economically diverse people to learn conservation skills and work in the outdoors. We will actively recruit young people from BIPOC communities to participate in this project. Opportunities to join the habitat crew will be open to all, but we will specifically target recruitment efforts in the high schools, community colleges and community organizations serving the urban center. We hope this will be a gateway for members of the BIPOC communities to enjoy the outdoors who previously have had few opportunities to do so. Hopefully, participation as a member of a work crew will inspire the members to pursue education and careers in natural resource management and conservation. Since these metro area habitat projects will be close to home, we hope crew members will inspire friends and community members to also engage with these natural resources.

Activity Details

Requirements

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

Yes

Where does the activity take place?

- AMA
- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements
- County/Municipal
- Public Waters
- State Forests
- WMA

Land Use

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

No

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Complete implementation of habitat enhancements, including tree plantings and vegetation work.	June 2028
Begin planning, design and implementation of habitat enhancements.	July 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.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$280,000	-	-	\$280,000
Contracts	\$594,000	\$80,000	USFWS, NRCS, SWCD, MNDNR	\$674,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$13,000	-	-	\$13,000
Professional Services	\$290,000	-	-	\$290,000
Direct Support Services	\$65,000	\$7,000	Trout Unlimited	\$72,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$10,000	-	-	\$10,000
Supplies/Materials	\$438,000	\$80,000	USFWS, NRCS, SWCD, MNDNR	\$518,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$1,690,000	\$167,000	-	\$1,857,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Metro habitat crew staff	2.0	1.5	\$150,000	-	-	\$150,000
Habitat Enhancement Staff	1.0	5.0	\$130,000	-	-	\$130,000

Amount of Request: \$1,690,000

Amount of Leverage: \$167,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 9.88%

DSS + Personnel: \$345,000

As a % of the total request: 20.41%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

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

The program includes several stand alone projects. Some will not be implemented and the scope (acres) of others will be reduced. The costs of the retained Metro conservation corps project (members recruited from BIPOC community) are largely personnel costs. Consequently total personnel costs (and DSS) cannot be proportionally reduced.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Leverage estimates are estimates only. TU will contribute funding to cover a portion of its direct support service costs. Members will donate in-kind labor. Partners will likely contribute time or dollars. Reduced funding requires cutting several southeast projects, which significantly reduces the chance of NRCS funding.

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?

Funding for the metro habitat crew, recruited from the BIPOC community, was requested last year and this request extends the crew's work another year or more. Funding for the current personnel who perform similar work to that required to implement the other FY2024 projects has been requested in the past. All staff code each hour they work to the particular OHF grant which funds the particular project worked on. The personnel costs in each OHF grant are estimates. Any unused dollars budgeted for personnel and travel in a given grant will be shifted into contracts and materials budget categories to do additional habitat work under that grant.

Contracts**What is included in the contracts line?**

This is for contracted services on habitat enhancement construction projects, and includes contractor work with heavy equipment, other construction site labor, tree planting labor (site preparation, planting, protection), and more.

Travel**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

None.

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?**

The Direct Support Services requested represents a portion of Trout Unlimited's federal rate, which is approved annually. The requested amount is less than we would be eligible to claim based upon DNR approval of earlier grant agreements. Trout Unlimited is donating the other portion.

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

Primarily hand tools for cutting trees and brush, raking and seeding areas, treating invasive plants, etc.

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	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	135	135
Total	-	-	-	135	135

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	\$1,690,000	\$1,690,000
Total	-	-	-	\$1,690,000	\$1,690,000

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	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	54	-	81	-	0	135
Total	54	-	81	-	0	135

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	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$531,000	-	\$1,159,000	-	-	\$1,690,000
Total	\$531,000	-	\$1,159,000	-	-	\$1,690,000

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	\$12,518

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	-	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$9,833	-	\$14,308	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

6.9 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

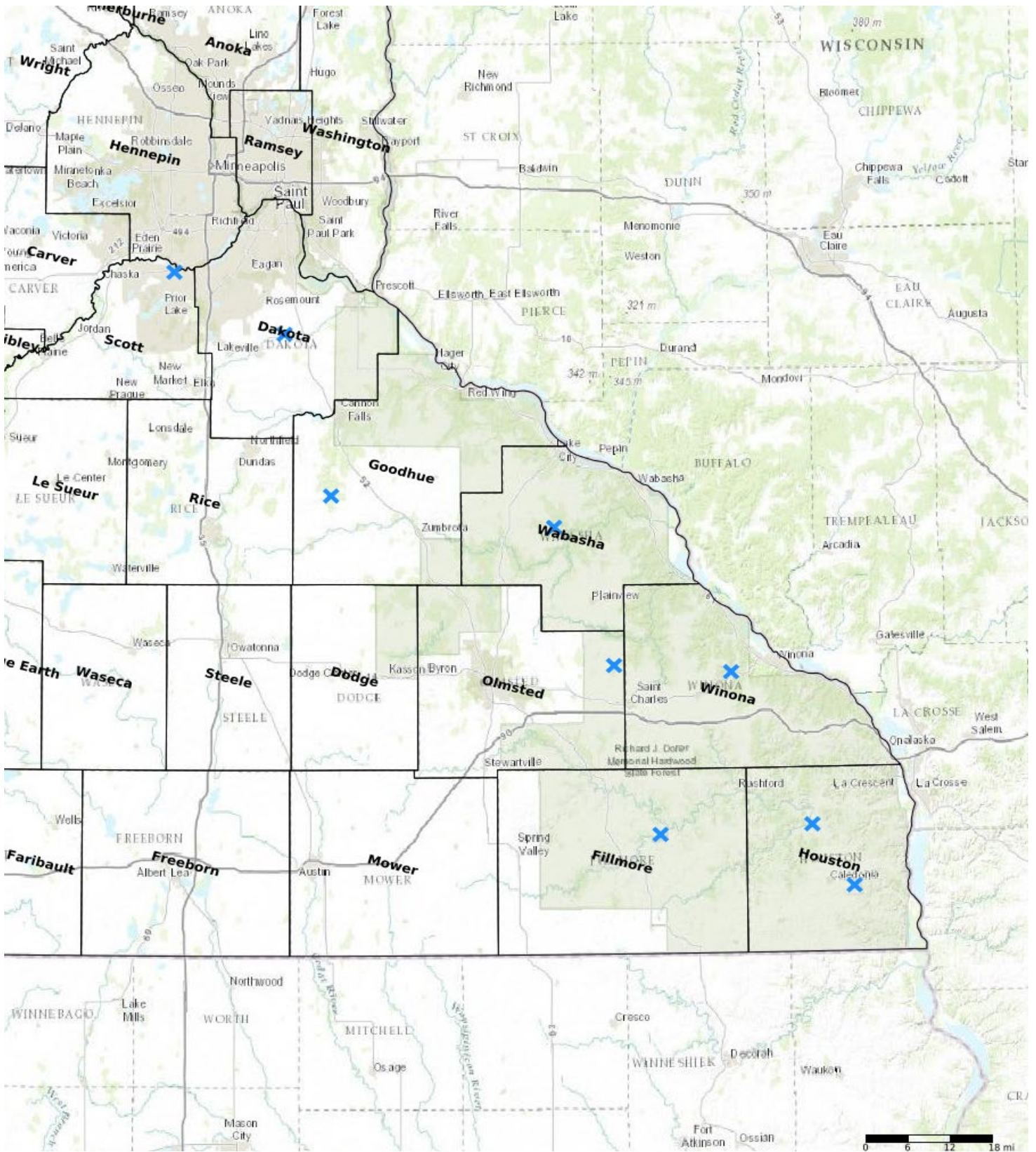
Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

MNTU focuses habitat enhancement and restoration efforts on those watersheds likely to continue to support viable, fishable populations of naturally reproducing trout fifty years and more from now. Work is done only where degraded habitat is a limiting factor for a quality, sustainable fishery. Priority locations are determined through consultations with MNDNR professionals, MNDNR management plans and surveys, other habitat and conservation planning efforts, MNTU members' knowledge of watersheds, and science-based criteria.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Vermillion River & other metro	Dakota	11419223	50	\$0	Yes
So. Branch Root River	Fillmore	10310213	7	\$0	Yes
Little Cannon River	Goodhue	11018201	4	\$0	Yes
Numerous streams - SE & N	Houston	10306210	29	\$0	Yes
Crooked Creek	Houston	10205222	0	\$0	Yes
Southeast Maintenance & Additional Enhancements	Olmsted	10711226	36	\$0	Yes
Eagle Creek	Scott	11521207	5	\$0	Yes
Spring Creek	Wabasha	11012229	0	\$0	Yes
Garvin Brook	Winona	10708234	0	\$0	Yes

Parcel Map



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