



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Hennepin County Habitat Conservation Program - Phase 3  
Laws of Minnesota 2023 Accomplishment Plan

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### General Information

**Date:** 12/27/2022

**Project Title:** Hennepin County Habitat Conservation Program - Phase 3

**Funds Recommended:** \$4,524,000

**Legislative Citation:** ML 2023, Ch. X, Article 2, Section 2, subd

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Kristine Maurer

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**Organization:** Hennepin County

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):**

**Eco regions in which work will take place:**

- Metro / Urban

**Activity types:**

- Enhance
- Restore
- Protect in Easement

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Habitat

## Narrative

### Abstract

In partnership, Hennepin County and Minnesota Land Trust, will permanently protect, through conservation easement, 245 acres of the most important natural areas remaining in the county. We will also initiate habitat improvement activities on 513 acres of protected habitat.

Intense development pressure is a persistent threat to remaining habitat and undeveloped land in Hennepin County. This grant will allow this partnership to continue implementation of the conservation actions taken through Outdoor Heritage Fund grants awarded in 2018 and 2021 and keep up with high landowner demand.

### Design and Scope of Work

The Twin Cities metro area is rapidly losing ecologically significant and floristically diverse habitat as land development pressure increases. MET Council estimates open space in Hennepin County to decline by 14,000 acres by 2040, resulting in immediate consequences for Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) which rely on critical habitats in Hennepin County.

Since 2018, Hennepin County and Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) have been awarded \$4.6 million from the Outdoor Heritage Fund to support the goals of the Habitat Conservation Program (HCP). Across both phases, the partners have completed acquisition of 182 acres of easement, have an additional 364 acres poised for completion, and habitat improvement activities have been initiated on 76 acres of protected land. Phase 1 grant funds have been fully encumbered and will be spent by June 30, 2023.

HCP promotion, outreach, and proposal solicitation efforts have resulted in consistent landowner inquiries and high-quality easement opportunities. Easement projects in development will soon exhaust Phase 2 protection funding. Phase 3 funding is necessary to continue accepting and developing new projects and maintain program momentum.

The sophistication of our tools and our approach has grown along with our experience doing this work including:

- In-depth modeling of the entire county to identify priority focus areas.
- A growing focus on easement acquisitions with a restoration focus. Our interest in protecting the best remaining habitat remains, and we will continue to pursue those opportunities. We also know that buffering and connecting those areas and capitalizing on opportunities to create new habitat, is necessary and strategic to creating contiguous core habitat and corridors.
- New engagement and communication strategies devoted to connecting meaningfully with easement landowners and the public with the goal of instilling an understanding of each individual's unique role in lifelong stewardship of natural resources.
- A biological monitoring program to inventory wildlife and plant communities, measure and evaluate habitat improvement actions and inform adaptive management priorities, and report back meaningfully on the impact of our program's work on the species that use the protected and improved habitat.

During the period of 2020-2040, Hennepin County plans to add 6,000 acres of permanently protected habitat; resulting in permanent protection of 41 percent (or 24,600 acres) of the best remaining natural areas and the restorable corridors. Combined with our anticipated Phase 1 & 2 outputs, we will be 9% of the way to that goal with this proposal.

The county will continue to work with MLT, watershed organizations, cities, park districts, MN DNR, NPS, and

USFWS to identify easement opportunities and build connections. MLT will bring the experience of its land protection and legal team to negotiate the purchase of conservation easements. An RFP approach will identify high value protection opportunities and encourage a competitive marketplace for scarce monetary resources. All opportunities for easement acquisition will be scored based on six categories: spatial context, size, habitat quality and diversity, water resources, wildlife and plant conservation, and risk of conversion. Management factors, partner involvement, and professional judgement will also be considered.

### **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?**

Hennepin County is located in the Big Woods Subsection of Minnesota and is home to remnants of deciduous forests, oak savannas, prairies, rivers, streams, lakes, and was historically dotted by abundant wetlands of many types; more than 50 percent of which have been lost. The great diversity of habitat types and the resulting fish, game, and wildlife species found in Hennepin County presents unique and unparalleled opportunities for protection, restoration, and enhancement. Some of the county's remaining natural resources include remnant maple-basswood forest, oak woodlands, floodplain forest, oak savannas, bluff prairie, rich and poor peatlands like fens and tamarack bogs, and shallow lakes, all of which are critically essential habitat for a variety of wildlife.

Hennepin County is home to over 350 species of migratory and breeding birds like trumpeter swans and common loons and multiple occurrences of rare animal assemblages like rookeries. Many Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) would be impacted by this proposal including dozens of rare invertebrates like the regal fritillary butterfly and monarchs and a variety of rare vertebrate species like Blanding's turtles, cerulean warblers, mudpuppies, least darters, and several species of rare and declining bats. Additionally, many rare and sensitive plant community types occur in Hennepin County which support rare plants and fungi including kitten-tails and several rare orchids. Wildlife on the federal list of endangered and threatened species that can be found in Hennepin County and that would be impacted by this proposal include the northern long-eared bat, Higgin's eye pearly mussel, and the rusty-patched bumble bee.

Our rigorous selection criteria and scoring methodology considers a variety of datasets, metrics, and professional and partner knowledge, of rare and SGCN species. Furthermore, by focusing on priority areas and emphasizing the expansion of existing natural areas and creating habitat connections, this program is especially well-designed to promote habitat protection that will benefit such species. Restoration project selection and actions of the HCP also focus on increasing and enhancing diversity of sensitive, rare, and important habitat.

### **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:**

Hennepin County's ecologically significant areas and natural resource corridors were established as part of the DNR's Minnesota Land Cover Classification System comprehensive land cover inventory completed in 2008. Natural vegetative communities evaluated as High, Good, or Moderate quality were identified as ecologically significant areas. They contain habitats comprised primarily of native vegetation that have not been significantly altered. These are the best remaining and ecologically intact areas in the county and some of the finest habitat of their kind anywhere in the state. Natural resource corridors were identified by spatial analysis, focused on areas with high concentrations of ecologically significant areas which created connections between ecologically significant areas, and expanded large complexes of high-quality habitat. Additionally, the county has employed zonation modeling to further specify targeted conservation areas.

About 15 percent of the land area in the county - 60,000 acres - are ecologically significant areas and natural

resource corridors. Of these, about 41,400 acres are private property that are partially or entirely unprotected. Priority areas for program outreach have been developed using available data related to spatial context, size, habitat quality and diversity, water resources, wildlife and plant conservation, and risk of conversion in addition to local knowledge. The highest priority areas are generally areas adjacent to large core areas of already protected habitat.

All easement opportunities (identified through targeted outreach to landowners and via an RFP process) will be quantifiably evaluated using ecological factors including but not limited to proximity to protected natural areas (e.g., USFW, NPS, and DNR lands, conservation easements, parks and preserves), habitat diversity and quality (e.g., MLCCS ranking, MND Sites of Biodiversity significance), size, proximity to important wildlife areas and rare species occurrences (e.g., MN DNR rare feature inventory, endangered species habitat areas, bird habitat, pollinator habitat, lakes of biological significance, Wildlife Action Network), threats of development (e.g., zoning and potential development), and proximity to important surface and groundwater areas (e.g., shoreland, wetland, floodplain, sensitive groundwater). In addition, donation values, nearness to partner planning areas, community interest, and restoration and management requirements will be considered.

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

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

### **Which two other plans are addressed in this program?**

- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

### **Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?**

#### **Metro / Urban**

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

### **Does this program include leveraged funding?**

Yes

#### **Explain the leverage:**

Hennepin County will provide a portion of the staff time required to complete grant deliverables, 2.5 FTE staff time over the course of the grant with an estimated value of \$526,500. Hennepin County will also provide an estimated \$192,000 cash toward costs associated with easement acquisition.

The Minnesota Land Trust will encourage private landowners to fully or partially donate the value of their conservation easements, thereby receiving less than the appraised value might otherwise allow. This donated value (\$224,000) is a conservative estimate of what we expect from landowners. The Land Trust has a strong track record of incentivizing landowner to participate in this fashion.

Finally, although it is not quantified in this proposal, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Three Rivers Park District, Watershed Districts, Cities, and the Minnesota Waterfowl Association will be engaged as a restoration partner in

this program. All have committed to providing leveraged funds through their services, the amount of which will depend on the specific restoration and protection 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.**

This proposal does not supplant or substitute for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund used for the same purpose.

**Non-OHF Appropriations**

Year	Source	Amount
NA	Hennepin County, MPCA, MDH, landowner (special project to restore and conservation easement)	\$180,000
NA	Hennepin County (operating budget for natural resources program 2003-2016)	\$180,000
NA	Hennepin County (Stewardship funds for easements co-held with MLT)	\$54,000
NA	Hennepin County (1 FTE Natural Resource Specialist, 2003-2021)	\$1,995,000
NA	City of Bloomington, City of Plymouth, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (for Natural Resources Inventory)	\$160,000
2006	LCCMR (for Natural Resources Inventory)	\$80,000

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

Both partners are experienced land and easement managers; co-holding easements provides another level of assurance that the habitat protected and restored will be sustained using the best standards and practices of conservation easement stewardship.

The Minnesota Land Trust is a nationally-accredited and insured land trust with a successful stewardship program that includes property monitoring, effective records management, addressing inquiries and interpretations, tracking changes in ownership, investigating potential violations and defending the easement in case of a true violation. Hennepin County successfully co-holds 10 conservation easements with MLT, holds or co-holds 11 other perpetual easements, and manages 21 perpetual RIM and flowage easements and 17 perpetual PWP easements.

To ensure that the protected resources will be managed to support biological integrity, Habitat Management Plans and Action Plans are developed for each conservation easement and habitat improvement project.

Hennepin County and the Land Trust are committed to maintaining relationships with project landowners and securing the technical and financial resources to undertake prescribed activities. The County will also continue to work with MLT, its 11 watershed organizations, 45 cities, two park districts, the MN DNR, NPS, and USFWS to maintain and build landowner connections.

**Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2021-2029	Hennepin County Solid Waste Enterprise Fund	•Establishment of project specific habitat improvement standards	Make adaptive management changes as needed to meet habitat improvement	Ongoing biomonitoring of easements and habitat improvement projects

		•Biomonitoring pre and post habitat improvement project actions	performance standards	to assess wildlife and plant communities and ensure objectives are sustained
2024 (and in perpetuity)	MLT Stewardship & Enforcement Fun; Hennepin County Enterprise Fund	Annual Monitoring of property in perpetuity	Enforcement as needed	-

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

Hennepin County and the Minnesota Land Trust share commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core value.

One relevant Hennepin County example of this is the Tree Trek Nature Trail. This experiential learning project was developed by county staff in partnership with the Voyageur Environmental Center, a property owned and operated by the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities, and adjacent to a complex of land protected under conservation easement using Phase 1 & 2 HCP funding. This is an in-person and online (developed during the COVID-19 pandemic) opportunity for Boys and Girls Club participants and the community to learn about the trees, ecology, and natural history of the Big Woods. It has become a favorite experience of campers and tool for Voyageur staff.

Another example is a HCP Phase 1 prairie restoration effort along the Mississippi River at River Park in the City of Brooklyn Park. Objectives of this project are to create a diverse native prairie example in an underserved urban community, and to improve pollinator and wildlife habitat. We hope to work with the city and project partner USFWS to increase educational opportunities and signage in the future.

Land Trust examples include projects to protect the camps and nature centers serving diverse Minnesota youth and a partnership with the Fond du Lac Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa on wild rice restoration. Going forward, the partners intend to use diversity, equity, and inclusion as a lens in project and contractor selection.

The Land Trust is exploring an "Ambassador Lands Program" which would connect willing conservation landowners to diverse community groups that need access for programming like youth mentor hunts, cultural or ceremonial use, and more. This would add to the variety of universal public benefits of conserved lands.

The biological monitoring program being piloted in 2022 is also an important element to engage the public more broadly in HCP work. In particular, we intend to collect engaging images and video of the critters using protected habitat to help promote greater awareness of the incredible biodiversity that exists in Hennepin County.

### Activity Details

#### Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**

Yes

**Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?**

Yes

**Who will manage the easement?**

Management of the easements will involve both Hennepin County and the MLT. MLT and Hennepin County will

coordinate to ensure annual inspections are completed to manage and mitigate for potential violations and encroachments.

**Who will be the easement holder?**

Easements will be co-held by Hennepin County and MLT.

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

Anticipated number of easements we plan to accomplish under this appropriation is 5-8, depending on size and cost.

**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?**

- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements
- County/Municipal
- Other : Fee-title or easement area associated with Watersheds (e.g., WD and WMO) and Park Districts

**Land Use**

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

Yes

**Explain what will be planted:**

The purpose of the Hennepin County Conservation Program is to protect and restore/enhance existing high quality natural habitat and to preserve opportunities for future restoration.

In cases where there are agricultural lands (hayfields, row crops, pasture, specialty crops) associated with the larger property, we will either exclude the agricultural area from the conservation easement, or in some limited cases, we may target agricultural lands for restoration purposes.

Existing cropped acres are not included in the easement value paid to landowners.

Additionally, crops like turnips may be planted within easements as part of habitat improvement activities (allowable based on Habitat Management Plan recommendations and co-holder approval) to improve soils and prepare areas for successful native seeding.

**Will the eased land be open for public use?**

No

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

Yes



**Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:**

Conservation easements established on private lands often have driveways, field roads and trails located on them. These established trails and roads will be permitted in the terms of the conservation easement and can be maintained for personal use, provided that they do not interfere with the conservation value of the property. Creation of new roads or trails or expansion of existing ones is typically not allowed.

**Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition?**

Yes

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**

Existing trails and roads will be identified in the project baseline reports and will be monitored annually as part of the Land Trust's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads/trails will be the responsibility of the landowner.

**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

Habitat improvement of recently acquired easements is a high priority. We will utilize available funds from this appropriation and previous phases to accomplish prioritized habitat improvement work.

**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
Restoration & enhancement of new conservation easements: 1) select projects; 2) draft restoration plan and performance standards and pre-activity monitoring,3) perform habitat improvement activities; 4) post activity monitoring; 5) adaptive management and additional restoration activities as needed to meet performance standards	June 2027
Restoration & enhancement of existing permanently protected areas: 1) select projects; 2) draft restoration plan and performance standards and pre-activity monitoring,3) perform habitat improvement activities; 4) post activity monitoring; 5) adaptive management and additional restoration activities as needed to meet performance standards	June 2027
Acquire conservation easements: 1) identify landowners; 2) negotiate, draft, and complete easements; 3) dedicate fund for stewardship	June 2027

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 11/01/2027

**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**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Funding Request</b>	<b>Antic. Leverage</b>	<b>Leverage Source</b>	<b>Total</b>
Personnel	\$445,500	\$526,500	NA, Hennepin County	\$972,000
Contracts	\$1,380,300	-	-	\$1,380,300
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$2,243,000	\$224,000	Landowners	\$2,467,000
Easement Stewardship	\$192,000	\$192,000	Hennepin County	\$384,000
Travel	\$8,000	-	-	\$8,000
Professional Services	\$138,000	-	-	\$138,000
Direct Support Services	\$92,200	-	-	\$92,200
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
Supplies/Materials	\$23,000	-	-	\$23,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$4,524,000</b>	<b>\$942,500</b>	-	<b>\$5,466,500</b>

**Partner: MN Land Trust**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$162,000	-	NA	\$162,000
Contracts	\$48,000	-	-	\$48,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$2,243,000	\$224,000	Landowners	\$2,467,000
Easement Stewardship	\$192,000	-	-	\$192,000
Travel	\$8,000	-	-	\$8,000
Professional Services	\$138,000	-	-	\$138,000
Direct Support Services	\$44,000	-	-	\$44,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,837,000</b>	<b>\$224,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,061,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Land Protection Staff	0.41	4.0	\$162,000	-	NA	\$162,000

**Partner: Hennepin County****Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$283,500	\$526,500	Hennepin County	\$810,000
Contracts	\$1,332,300	-	-	\$1,332,300
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	\$192,000	Hennepin County	\$192,000
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$48,200	-	-	\$48,200
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$23,000	-	-	\$23,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,687,000</b>	<b>\$718,500</b>	-	<b>\$2,405,500</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Natural Resources Specialist	1.5	4.0	\$283,500	\$526,500	Hennepin County	\$810,000

**Amount of Request:** \$4,524,000

**Amount of Leverage:** \$942,500

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 20.83%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$537,700

**As a % of the total request:** 11.89%

**Easement Stewardship:** \$192,000

**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 8.56%

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

Project outcomes were adjusted to reflect the appropriation recommendation. Project and acreage outcomes are less than the original proposal and reflect reduced economy of scale. Budget was split between partners proportional to original proposal.

**Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:**

Hennepin County Environment and Energy Department operations are funded by the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund (money received from the sale of energy and recovered materials) as allowed by Minnesota Statute. The Land Trust encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements.

## 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?**

FTEs listed in the proposal are an estimate of the personnel time required to deliver the grant outputs included in this proposal. An array of staff may work on projects to complete legal review, sub-contracts, negotiating with landowners, drafting conservation easements, completing baseline reports and managing the grant. MLT's basis for billing is the individual Protection or Restoration project we work on, ensuring allocation to the appropriate grant award, and by using a timesheet-based approach we use only those personnel funds actually expended to achieve the goals of the grant. Similarly, although Hennepin has not previously requested funding for positions in the past, Hennepin also uses a timesheet-based approach with codes tied directly to grant activities and deliverables and has been tracking staffing-related leverage contributions using this system.

## Contracts

### What is included in the contracts line?

Hennepin County will manage \$1,332,300 worth of restoration and enhancement activities under contracts with restoration partners. Another \$48,000 will be managed by the Land Trust for various needs related to easement development like Habitat Management Plans.

## Easement Stewardship

### What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?

The program budget is built around the closing of up to 8 conservation easements. The average cost per easement to fund the Minnesota Land Trust's perpetual monitoring and enforcement obligations is \$24,000. This figure is derived from MLT's detailed stewardship funding "cost analysis" which is consistent with Land Trust Accreditation standards. MLT shares periodic updates to this cost analysis with LSOHC staff.

## 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

From time to time, Land Trust staff may rent vehicles for grant-related purposes.

### 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?

In a process that was approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, Minnesota Land Trust determined our direct support services rate to include all of the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in

other line items in the budget, which is similar to the Land Trust's proposed federal indirect rate. We will apply this DNR-approved rate only to personnel expenses to determine the total amount of direct support services.

### **Other Equipment/Tools**

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

Field safety gear, GPS units, 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	-	-	-	195	195
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	245	245
Enhance	-	-	-	318	318
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	<b>758</b>	<b>758</b>

### Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	\$742,300	\$742,300
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$2,837,000	\$2,837,000
Enhance	-	-	-	\$944,700	\$944,700
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	<b>\$4,524,000</b>	<b>\$4,524,000</b>

### Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	195	-	-	-	-	195
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	245	-	-	-	-	245
Enhance	318	-	-	-	-	318
<b>Total</b>	<b>758</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>758</b>

### Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	\$742,300	-	-	-	-	\$742,300
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$2,837,000	-	-	-	-	\$2,837,000
Enhance	\$944,700	-	-	-	-	\$944,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,524,000</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>\$4,524,000</b>

### Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	\$3,806
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$11,579
Enhance	-	-	-	\$2,970

### Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	\$3,806	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-



Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$11,579	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$2,970	-	-	-	-

### Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

## Outcomes

### Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *With this request, 245 acres of the county's best remaining habitat will be permanently protected, buffered, and connected through 5-8 easement projects, and 513 more acres will be significantly improved through restoration or enhancement. To measure program impacts and inform adaptive management, Hennepin County staff initiated a biological monitoring program in 2022. Biomonitoring efforts include relevé plots and transect surveys for birds and plants as well as wildlife surveys for pollinators, aquatic invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. By 2027, 5 years of data from this effort will be available to begin evaluating the efficacy of HCP work.*

## 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?**

[Yes](#)

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

See sign-up criteria.



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

### Hennepin County Habitat Conservation Program - Phase 3

#### Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2023 - Hennepin County Habitat Conservation Program - Phase 3

**Organization:** Hennepin County

**Manager:** Kristine Maurer

### Budget

**Requested Amount:** \$12,276,600

**Appropriated Amount:** \$4,524,000

**Percentage:** 36.85%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	\$1,010,000	\$1,177,000	\$445,500	\$526,500	44.11%	44.73%
Contracts	\$3,679,600	-	\$1,380,300	-	37.51%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$6,400,000	\$1,504,000	\$2,243,000	\$224,000	35.05%	14.89%
Easement Stewardship	\$504,000	-	\$192,000	\$192,000	38.1%	-
Travel	\$12,000	-	\$8,000	-	66.67%	-
Professional Services	\$399,000	-	\$138,000	-	34.59%	-
Direct Support Services	\$207,000	-	\$92,200	-	44.54%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	\$2,000	-	40.0%	-
Supplies/Materials	\$60,000	-	\$23,000	-	38.33%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$12,276,600</b>	<b>\$2,681,000</b>	<b>\$4,524,000</b>	<b>\$942,500</b>	<b>36.85%</b>	<b>35.15%</b>

#### **If the project received 70% of the requested funding**

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

In general, we would expect that acres and number of projects would be reduced a bit more than proportionately, as necessary to accommodate fixed administrative, outreach/marketing and other costs (see below).

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

Most personnel and DSS costs are directly project related, however, administrative and outreach/marketing costs are somewhat fixed. There is an economy of scale to doing more projects per

appropriation. Personnel and DSS expenses would be reduced a bit less than proportionately, about 20-25%.

### **If the project received 50% of the requested funding**

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

In general, we would expect that acres and number of projects would be reduced a bit more than proportionately, as necessary to accommodate fixed administrative, outreach/marketing and other costs (see below).

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

Most personnel and DSS costs are directly project related, however, administrative and outreach/marketing costs are somewhat fixed. There is an economy of scale to doing more projects per appropriation. Personnel and DSS expenses would be reduced a bit less than proportionately, about 40-45%.

## Output

### Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	510	195	38.24%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	740	245	33.11%
Enhance	830	318	38.31%

### Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	\$1,956,600	\$742,300	37.94%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$7,865,000	\$2,837,000	36.07%
Enhance	\$2,455,000	\$944,700	38.48%

### Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	510	195	38.24%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	740	245	33.11%
Enhance	830	318	38.31%

### Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	\$1,956,600	\$742,300	37.94%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$7,865,000	\$2,837,000	36.07%
Enhance	\$2,455,000	\$944,700	38.48%

# Hennepin County Habitat Conservation Program

## [Conservation easement selection criteria summary](#)

The Hennepin County Habitat Conservation Program (HCP) is a partnership between Hennepin County and the Minnesota Land Trust that protects the best remaining wildlife habitat within the county's ecologically significant areas and natural resource corridors. This program works with willing landowners to secure conservation easements that protect the county's forests, wetlands, grasslands, and riparian and shoreland areas and the wildlife that rely on these habitats. The program also enhances existing habitat and restores degraded habitat. Easements completed through this program will be co-held by Hennepin County and the Minnesota Land Trust.

Through an open Request for Proposal (RFP) process, landowners submit a simple project application. This application collects basic location information of the proposed project, and asks about the landowner's willingness to donate some or all of the conservation easement value. Program promotion and targeted outreach activities have resulted in a concentration of project applications from our highest priority areas, but any landowner may apply. Project applications trigger initial site visits and landowner conversations, followed by project scoring.

Each proposed project and scores are presented to and discussed with the HCP's Technical Advisory Committee. The entirety of this process guides the partners in deciding to proceed with a proposed parcel, to decline to proceed, or to consider a proposed parcel again at a later time.

## [Minimum Criteria](#)

Hennepin County and the Minnesota Land Trust have set the following minimum criteria for inclusion into the program:

- The proposed easement area must contain high-quality native plant communities (e.g., forests, prairies, woodlands, etc.), shoreland along rivers and streams, or rare and threatened species. Consideration may be given to land not containing high-quality areas if it is adjacent to critically important protected properties and restoration is a required element of the easement.
- The proposed easement area cannot be enrolled previously in permanent protection programs, such as the Reinvest in Minnesota program.

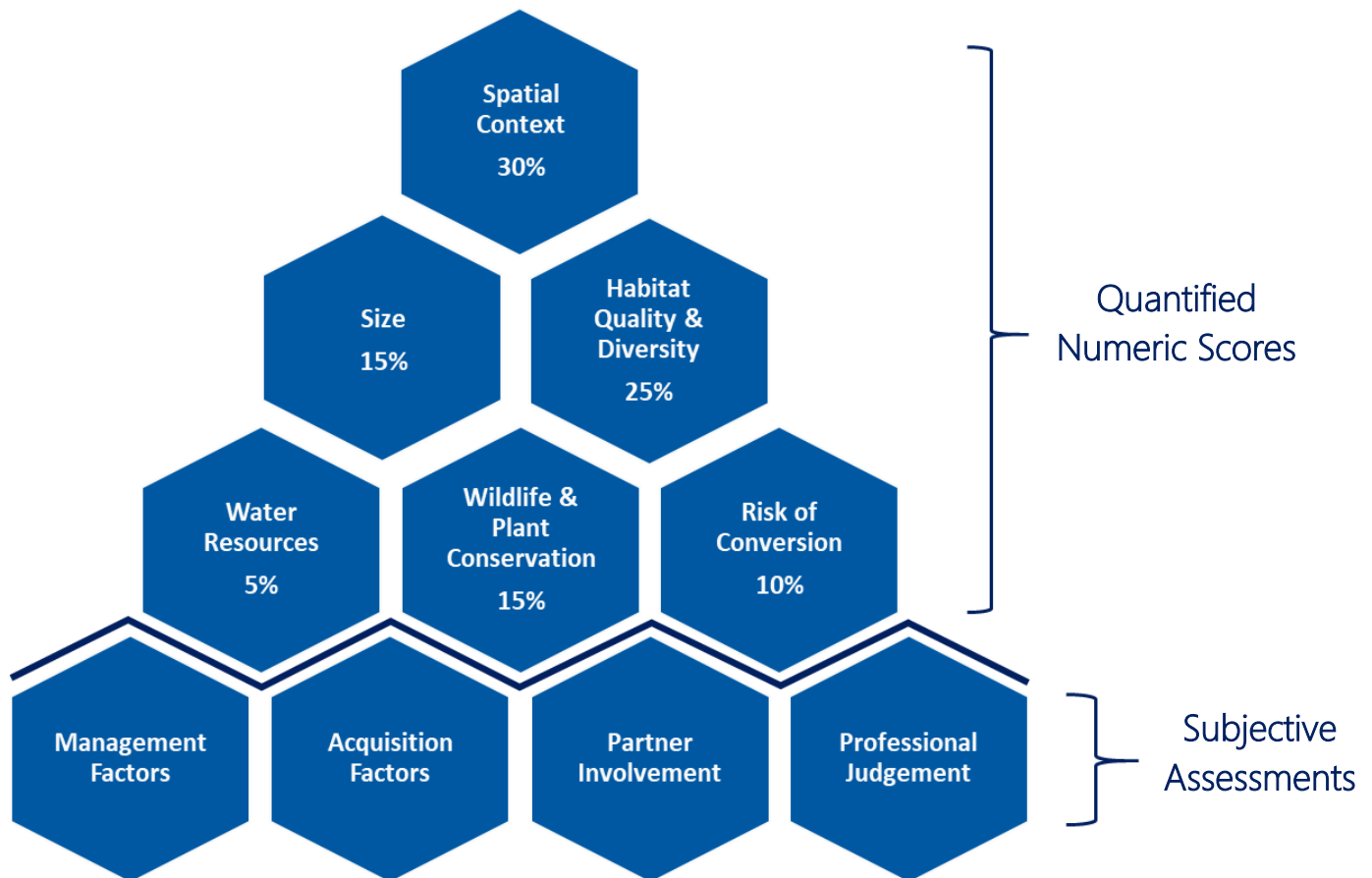
Additional land use requirements will be stipulated within each conservation easement agreement as it relates to the special characteristics of the land and the particular situation of the landowner.

## [Selection and Scoring Criteria](#)

The ranking and selection methodology for easement selection is informed by primary literature review of existing prioritization methods used in Minnesota and other states for conservation project selection including the ecological ranking framework used by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, and the University of Minnesota. In addition, methodologies were informed by feedback from the HCP's Technical Advisory Committee. This methodology will continue to evolve as advancements in science, information, and data become available to ensure the selection of the best projects.

Submitted projects are selected based on several quantified factors and also based on professional assessments. Using a ranking system that prioritizes projects based on ecological value and willingness to donate enables this program to secure conservation easements that protect Hennepin County's most critical wildlife resources in the most cost-effective way.

The diagram below depicts the criteria categories considered. Also identified are percent weights of the numerical categories and a description of each selection criteria categories:



### Quantitative Numeric Scoring Criteria

- **Spatial Context** *Premise: Identify areas which create local abundance of open space and improves habitat connectivity; aggregation of lands affects local dynamics and occupancy of wildlife populations and results in greater buffering of interior habitat spaces.*

Considers existing protected areas (e.g., conservation easements, wildlife refuges and USFWS lands, regional parks, nature preserves, Wildlife Management Areas, Scientific and Natural Areas, Aquatic Management Areas, National Parks lands, other state and federally protected natural areas) and identified natural areas and open spaces (e.g., Ecologically Significant Natural Areas, Hennepin County Natural Resource Corridors, Mississippi River Critical Area open spaces, and nearness to current and potential easement projects).



- **Habitat Quality and Diversity** *Premise: Identify areas that meet multiple habitat criteria to prioritize high quality resource protection; also affects carrying capacity and ability to support diverse wildlife populations.*  
Looks at habitat ranking data (e.g., A, B, and C ranking on Minnesota Land Cover Classification System, Moderate, High, and Outstanding MN DNR Sites of Biological Significance) and diversity indices (e.g., richness, Simpson's Diversity Index).
- **Size** *Premise: Sufficient size such that conservation resources likely to remain intact and provide value, effects carrying capacity of wildlife populations and reduces edge habitat.*  
Considers absolute and relative acreage of potential easement area.
- **Wildlife and Plant Conservation** *Premise: Identify areas which likely to provide the greatest benefit to wildlife and protect rare resources.*  
Considers rare resources and conservation planning data (e.g., Natural History Information System, Wildlife Action Network, Important Bird Areas, Important Duck Habitat, federal-listed species habitat, Lakes of Biological Significance, pollinator habitat).
- **Water Resources** *Premise: Identify areas which can protect water resources for public and wildlife benefit.*  
Considers presence of floodplains (e.g., FEMA data), water resources (e.g., Public Waters and National Wetland Inventory, Shoreland), sensitive waters, and groundwater sensitivity (e.g., springs, recharge rate, contamination susceptibility).
- **Risk of Conversation** *Premise: Identify lands most susceptible to land use change.*  
Identifies proximity to existing and future development (e.g., location within MUSA 2040, potential change in development density).

### Subjective Assessment Criteria

- **Acquisition Factors** *Premise: Identify land that is affordable with available financial resources and is reasonable relative to other available land.*  
This category considers landowner willingness to donate. Landowners are asked whether they are willing to donate none, some, or all of the value of a conservation easement. In project ranking, landowners willing to donate some or all of the value of a conservation easement are given additional consideration, because their donation makes the easement a more cost-effective conservation option. Also considered here is the relative cost and available funds.
- **Partnership** *Premise: Identify areas which foster opportunity for partnership.*  
This category considers the proximity to partner planning areas, the neighborhood or community interest and involvement, and partner involvement or matching funds.

- **Management Factors** *Premise: Identify land that is manageable based on available resources.*

This category considers feasibility of restoration and enhancement efforts (e.g. impact to neighbors, level of invasive species infestation) and ongoing management needs (e.g. proximity to neighbors for a property that will need to be burned).

- **Professional Judgement & Other Considerations** *Premise: Sometimes other factors can create important benefits or challenging barriers.*

This category considers potential ecosystem services, ethical and public image concerns, and landowner engagement.

An Example:

Below are example outputs of quantitative scoring for potential easement projects under review by the TAC during one of the project reporting and selection meetings Hennepin County Hosts each year. This figure depicts the sub - category scores (colored bars) that comprise the overall project score (blue number).

