



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Conservation Easement Program - Phase IV
ML 2023 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/23/2022

Proposal Title: Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Conservation Easement Program - Phase IV

Funds Requested: \$10,440,000

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Jon Schneider

Title: Director - Minnesota Conservation Programs

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Location Information

County Location(s): Pope, Big Stone, Swift, Douglas and Otter Tail.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Restore
- Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

DU and PF will help accelerate USFWS wildlife habitat easements by restoring and enhancing 4,000 acres of protected private grasslands and wetlands in Minnesota's Prairie and Transition Sections. These are "working lands" under permanent federal conservation easements that allow delayed haying and/or grazing while protecting restored wetlands and prairie grasslands for nesting ducks, pheasants, and other wildlife. By restoring and enhancing protected grassland and wetland habitat while allowing for continued landowner use of these working private lands, USFWS habitat easements buffer existing protected lands and provide important conservation easement options that complement more restrictive easements and public land.

Design and Scope of Work

Ducks Unlimited (DU) and Pheasants Forever (PF) will restore and enhance wetlands and prairie on private lands protected by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Minnesota through federal USFWS grassland habitat conservation easement. DU and PF will restore drained wetlands and cropland back to prairie grassland, and enhance existing habitats. USFWS currently has robust Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) budgets to purchase habitat conservation easements, but these funds cannot be used to restore or enhance lands protected. By restoring grasslands and wetlands for USFWS with OHF support, DU and PF will effectively accelerate the rate at which USFWS can protect grassland and wetlands in key focus landscapes in which there are also many state and federal wildlife lands owned and managed in fee-title, and other lands protected by more restrictive conservation easements. These are some of the most productive landscapes in the state for breeding waterfowl and other prairie wildlife including pheasants, and these private working land conservation easements complement other federal, state, and private conservation easement options available to landowners.

USFWS habitat conservation easements not only include protection measures that prevent wetland/prairie conversion and land development/subdivision, but importantly, they also secure rights to restore wetlands and prairie grassland where feasible too - which is the primary purpose of this OHF easement program. DU and PF will restore and enhance private lands eased by USFWS in partnership with the USFWS with technical guidance from their private lands biologists and using private contractors to seed native prairie grass, remove trees, and restore wetlands. DU engineers will survey/design larger complex wetland restorations, and manage restoration contracts to private earth-moving firms. Importantly, as some of these "working private land" easements allow managed livestock grazing, some restoration and enhancement work will include paying contractors to remove old fences and install new fences to facilitate managed rotational grazing systems that protect grassland and wetlands habitats while improving wildlife habitat cover by limiting trees and invasive plants and providing landowners with the opportunity to actively manage/maintain their land.

USFWS "Habitat Easements" have been purchased here for over three decades, and are designed as a habitat protection conservation tool to complement public lands habitat complexes such as federal Waterfowl Production Areas and state Wildlife Management Areas, by keeping privately owned restored grassland and wetland habitat intact and on county tax rolls while allowing for working use of the land. These easements provide landowners with the option of either delayed haying (after July 15) or both grazing and delayed haying, which results in adequate habitat for wetland and upland nesting birds and a working land use option that appeals to some private landowners. Importantly, these working land easements also help manage plant succession on their land, which is critical to prevent the encroachment of volunteer trees and invasive plant species. Well-managed grazing, delayed haying, and USFWS prescribed fire also benefits those grassland bird species that prefer more open prairie habitats, such as northern pintail, marbled godwit, snipe, and many other prairie species.

How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species?

This proposal will restore/enhance wetlands and grasslands to create/expand prairie wetland habitat complexes. USFWS easements can be grazed and delay hayed, land uses which are compatible with grassland nesting birds as per scientific research. Prairies and emergent marshes are identified as critical habitats for many “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” listed in Minnesota’s “Tomorrow’s Habitat for the Wild & Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife”. Grassland nesting birds have shown the largest population decline of any of the bird species. Specific species listed in the Action Plan as requiring prairie (page 255) include seven species of butterflies and three bird species that are native prairie specialists: chestnut-collared longspur, Sprague’s pipit, and Baird’s sparrow. Specific species listed in the Action Plan as requiring emergent marshes (page 267) include least bittern, American bittern, marsh wren, and Virginia rail. The Prairie Parkland has 139 species listed on the SGCN with 13 of these species being unique to the section. Grasslands are also critical to a diverse suite of declining pollinator species.

In addition to these specific wildlife species listed as SGCN in the Action Plan, restored prairie and wetlands in the Prairie Parkland will provide habitat of significant value for other species listed in Appendix B of the Action Plan. Restored and protected prairie will provide habitat of significant value for other SGCN including bird species: upland sandpiper, bobolink, burrowing owl, Le Conte’s sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, eastern meadowlark, swamp sparrow, sharp-tailed grouse, short-eared owl, northern harrier, dickcissel, Henslow’s sparrow, and Nelson’s sharp-tailed sparrow. Upland nesting waterfowl will also benefit including waterfowl listed as SGCN; northern pintail and lesser scaup, which have both seen declines in continental populations. Wetland associated birds such as trumpeter swan, black tern, American bittern, Wilson’s phalarope, and marbled godwit will benefit from wetlands restored and buffered in the prairie landscape through the habitat easements. Mammals including northern grasshopper mouse and Richardson’s ground squirrels, reptiles such as lined snake and Blanding’s turtle, and amphibians such as northern cricket frog and common mudpuppy are SGCN in the Prairie Parkland.

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

USFWS currently has a list of many landowners with thousands of acres who are very interested in protecting their grasslands and wetlands with USFWS habitat conservation easements. Increased interest has resulted through word of mouth, especially with many CRP contracts now expiring, but USFWS needs help and funding to restore/enhance all the lands they protect.

Timing is critical for many landowners with expiring CRP contracts, business decisions related to expanding livestock operations, and sometimes estate planning or other family decisions. When USFWS is not able to move forward quickly enough, landowners may choose less ecologically desirable uses for their land that often include putting land back into row crop production, especially in the case of expiring CRP. Often, landowners cannot afford to forego annual income after CRP contracts expire, and without other options, are forced to return land to row crop production, even when doing so is not desired.

Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

USFWS biologists score and rank each grassland habitat easement proposal based on ecological site attributes and landscape juxtaposition of protected lands. This ranking process was designed to be relatively simple and evaluate the capability of the proposed easement to provide biological benefits for wetland and grassland dependent wildlife species by considering the habitat on the easement tract as well as its contribution and benefits to other

protected lands in the surrounding area. Periodically, the USFWS Minnesota Wetland Acquisition Office in Fergus Falls uses these rankings to re-prioritize the proposals to assure that the USFWS is working on and purchasing the highest ranking proposals throughout the year. DU and PF will rely on the high level of science-based expertise of the USFWS to ensure that easement opportunities are prioritized, and will work closely as a partnership to share the workload and accelerate the easement program in west-central Minnesota. Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and USFWS will work together to use science-based targeting to focus promotion of this accelerated habitat conservation easement program, with focus on tracts near existing federal WPAs, state WMAs, and other permanent private land easements. High priority tracts will be those with restorable drained wetlands and converted prairie or expiring CRP that, once fully restored, will build and expand prairie-wetland complexes for ducks, pheasants, and migratory birds in landscapes with a high density of other protected habitats. Science-based models such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) “Thunderstorm Maps” and “Restorable Wetlands Inventory” will help us determine landscape importance to breeding waterfowl, as will the state Pheasant Plan and Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan that helps guide prairie conservation efforts within Complexes, Core, and Corridor areas of western Minnesota. Finally, parcels near sites with relatively high biological diversity and significance based on the Minnesota DNR County Biological Survey (MCBS) will be a priority, and parcels with unique ecological values will be shared with other conservation easement program partners to ensure collaboration, avoid duplication of effort, and that the best conservation easement program option is offered to private landowners.

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 proposal?

- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN

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

The goal of these State Conservation Plans is to restore and protect prairie grasslands and wetlands in landscapes with existing prairie-wetland habitat complexes, which USFWS habitat conservation easements are designed to accomplish. Breeding ducks and pheasants require prairie-wetland complexes containing at least 20% upland nesting cover and small wetlands. Restoring and protecting viable patches of grassland with small wetlands around existing patches of habitat will create functioning prairie-wetland habitat complexes. By focusing our efforts to restore and protect grasslands and wetlands in close proximity to existing federal WPAs and state WMAs, and other private lands under restrictive conservation easements, restoring USFWS habitat easements will increase the amount of permanently protected grassland and wetland habitat in close proximity to prairie-wetland habitat complexes that will directly benefit breeding migratory birds, pollinators, and resident wildlife species. Breeding habitat is the most limiting factor for both ducks, pheasants, and most other prairie birds.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Forest / Prairie Transition

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

Prairie

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

Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:

This program will restore wetlands and grasslands on private lands under existing permanent USFWS easement protection to increase habitat patch size and functional viability as prairie-wetland habitat complexes for prairie wildlife. The goal of this work is to create permanently protected and functioning prairie-wetland complexes for breeding and migrating waterfowl and other prairie wildlife species. Therefore, our work will result in a significant and permanent conservation legacy for the public, and in the long-term will result in improved and viable functioning habitat patches and complexes for both wildlife and people alike. By allowing for grazing and delayed haying land use, these permanently protected "working lands" habitat easements produce conservation legacy that complements other publicly-funded conservation easements and public lands.

The critical conservation need in Minnesota's prairie region is more prairie grasslands and wetlands in landscapes with existing patches of prairie-wetland habitat. Breeding ducks and pheasants require prairie-wetland complexes containing at least 20% upland nesting cover and small wetlands. Restoring and protecting viable patches of grassland with small wetlands around existing patches of habitat will create functioning prairie-wetland habitat complexes. By focusing our efforts to restore and protect grasslands and wetlands in close proximity to existing federal WPAs and state WMAs, and other private lands under restrictive conservation easements, USFWS habitat easements on working private lands will increase the amount of permanently protected grassland and wetland habitat in close proximity to prairie-wetland habitat complexes that will directly benefit breeding migratory birds, pollinators, and resident wildlife species.

What other fund may contribute to this proposal?

- N/A

Does this proposal include leveraged funding?

Yes

Explain the leverage:

To help leverage this state request, the USFWS pledges to spend at least \$1 million in federal Migratory Bird Conservation Funds (federal "duck stamp") to directly purchase additional easements, and \$100,000 in federal staff time to purchase and help guide DU and PF restoration and enhancement of easements acquired. DU and PF strive to use our non-federal private and state OHF grant expense as often as possible as match to leverage other funds to achieve our conservation missions, including private gifts and federal NAWCA grants.

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 OHF funding request does not supplant or substitute for any previous funding. This new OHF funding will be used for new conservation work to accelerate USFWS conservation easement delivery in Minnesota to accelerate protection and restoration of wetlands and prairie, and provide "working land" conservation easements options for landowners.

Non-OHF Appropriations

Year	Source	Amount
2010-2019	U.S. Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (federal Duck Stamp)	Over \$6 million

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

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is responsible for long-term annual monitoring and enforcement. The terms of the easement allow limited delayed haying after July 15 or delayed haying and grazing, but require wetlands and grasslands to be maintained by the private landowner. The easement terms allow DU and PF, under the direction of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, to restore and help enhance wetland restorations or improve grasslands in the future when determined by the Service to be necessary for wildlife habitat management purposes. Through this proposal, DU and PF will assist USFWS in restoring and enhancing easements with state OHF grant funds after USFWS protects the land through easement acquisition with MBCF funding. Long-term habitat management and compliance with easement provisions will be the responsibility of the federal USFWS.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Annually Monitor Easements	Identify Problems, if any	Work with Private Landowners to Resolve

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

Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever will restore or enhance 4,000 acres of prairie grasslands and wetlands on USFWS Habitat Easements, with an estimated 1,200 acres of prairie pothole wetlands and 2,800 grass uplands, near existing federal WPAs and state WMAs to improve their function as prairie-wetland habitat complexes for waterfowl and many other prairie and wetland-dependent wildlife species. Science-based guidance provided by Minnesota DNR suggests that 1,200 acres of wetlands and 2,800 acres of prairie are estimated to:

Support approximately 486 pairs of breeding mallard ducks based on the biological model of the Upper Mississippi River Great Lakes Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan that indicates one pair of mallards needs 2.47 acres of wetlands with adequate adjacent upland nesting habitat to support population growth;

Support at least 8 or more pairs of trumpeter swans assuming one pair for every 150 wetland acres, depending on the size, type, and number of wetland basins restored or enhanced;

Support up to 1,647 pairs of bobolinks and 1,333 pairs of grasshopper sparrows, based on guidance that breeding territory size of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows is 1.7 and 2.1 acres, respectively, in high quality habitat in Wisconsin;

Produce approximately 933 harvested rooster pheasants based on ratios of CRP acres to pheasant harvest in Minnesota, and possible prairie chicken habitat too;

Contribute to 8,400 to 22,400 monarch butterflies to the overwintering population, assuming 100-250 stems of milkweed plants per acre.

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

DU, PF, and USFWS conserve wetlands and prairie for wildlife and people alike. Our habitat projects restore natural infrastructure, which helps to alleviate society's climate impacts and provide clean water for BIPOC communities, who are disproportionately impacted by the effects of wetland loss and climate change. PF and DU have organizational initiatives to increase the inclusion of BIPOC and to ensure a sense of belonging among all people. USFWS purchases easements from willing sellers, including individuals that identify as BIPOC and other underserved citizens.

Wetlands recharge groundwater in aquifers that provide clean, dependable water supplies while removing pollutants and reducing downstream flooding. Generational wealth in BIPOC communities is compromised by a lack of natural infrastructure such as wetlands. BIPOC community resiliency is enhanced by the function of wetlands and adjacent grassland habitats that clean water and help absorb impacts from severe weather events.

Restoring wetlands in the Mississippi River watershed benefits BIPOC communities who draw their water from the river such as Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Cloud. Minneapolis alone draws 21 billion gallons of water a year from the Mississippi River to produce 57 million gallons of drinking water each day.

Protected conservation lands and waters also provide numerous opportunities for fishing, hunting, canoeing, kayaking, birding, and outdoor education for BIPOC communities that may not otherwise have access to natural open spaces. Indigenous communities may benefit from DU wetland enhancements and restorations that create suitable conditions for wild rice to proliferate. Wetlands deliver a return on investment that helps to support the health, resiliency, and well-being of BIPOC communities.

USFWS works strategically to purchase easements on lands with drained wetlands and restorable prairie that are important to both waterfowl, other prairie wildlife, and people too. DU and PF will restore drained pothole wetlands and adjacent uplands back to native prairie grasslands for both wildlife habitat and the public using competitively-selected contractors following state procurement guidelines, including minority and women-owned businesses.

Activity Details

Requirements

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

Yes

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?

Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15?

Yes

Where does the activity take place?

- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

Land Use

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

Yes

Explain what will be planted:

Some very temporary 1-2 years of crop planting may be required as site preparation for prairie restoration on parcels where herbicides with long (18+ month) residual carryover have been used, where conversion of old fields infested with invasive plants such as smooth brome and reed canary grass may require a year of cropping with herbicides for restoration purposes. No food plots are planned through this program.

Other OHF Appropriation Awards

Have you received OHF dollars in the past through LSOHC?

Yes

Approp Year	Approp Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Leverage Reported in AP	Leverage Realized to Date	Acres Affected in AP	Acres Affected to Date	Complete/Final Report Approved?
2021	\$4,752,000	\$1,000	\$510,400	\$500	1,540	0	No
2020	\$3,187,000	\$850,000	\$264,000	\$100,000	825	954	No
2018	\$2,960,000	\$2,413,200	\$300,000	\$899,700	720	1,170	No

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Easements closed by USFWS and restoration plans drafted.	December 2023
Some easement restoration plans finalized by DU and PF.	June 2024
Some easements restored or enhanced while other restoration plans continue being developed by DU and PF.	December 2025
Remaining easements restored or enhanced by DU and PF.	June 2027

Budget**Grand Totals Across All Partnerships**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$900,000	\$100,000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	\$1,000,000
Contracts	\$9,000,000	-	-	\$9,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	\$1,000,000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	\$1,000,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$114,000	-	-	\$114,000
Professional Services	\$15,000	-	-	\$15,000
Direct Support Services	\$111,000	-	-	\$111,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000
Other Equipment/Tools	\$130,000	-	-	\$130,000
Supplies/Materials	\$140,000	-	-	\$140,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$10,440,000	\$1,100,000	-	\$11,540,000

Partner: Pheasants Forever

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$300,000	-	-	\$300,000
Contracts	\$3,000,000	-	-	\$3,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$24,000	-	-	\$24,000
Professional Services	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Direct Support Services	\$51,000	-	-	\$51,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$40,000	-	-	\$40,000
Supplies/Materials	\$50,000	-	-	\$50,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$3,470,000	-	-	\$3,470,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Pheasants Forever Biologist, Land, and Legal Staff	0.33	3.0	\$300,000	-	-	\$300,000

Partner: Ducks Unlimited**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$600,000	\$100,000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	\$700,000
Contracts	\$6,000,000	-	-	\$6,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	\$1,000,000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	\$1,000,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$90,000	-	-	\$90,000
Professional Services	\$10,000	-	-	\$10,000
Direct Support Services	\$60,000	-	-	\$60,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000
Other Equipment/Tools	\$90,000	-	-	\$90,000
Supplies/Materials	\$90,000	-	-	\$90,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$6,970,000	\$1,100,000	-	\$8,070,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Ducks Unlimited Biologists, Land Specialist, and Wetland Engineers	1.2	3.0	\$600,000	\$100,000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	\$700,000

Capital Equipment

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
UTV with Trailer for Survey and Construction Management	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000

Amount of Request: \$10,440,000**Amount of Leverage:** \$1,100,000**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 10.54%**DSS + Personnel:** \$1,011,000**As a % of the total request:** 9.68%**Easement Stewardship:** -**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -**Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:**

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will spend \$1,000,000 or more of federal funds appropriated from the Migratory

Bird Conservation Fund to purchase additional conservation easements directly, and will provide at least \$100,000 in-kind federal USFWS staff cost to assist the purchase, restoration, and transfer of easements.

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?

Yes

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

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

This Phase 4 funding request will be scaled proportionately to the funding provided. Acres and Activity Outcomes would be reduced proportionately.

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

This Phase 4 funding request will be scaled proportionately to the funding provided. Acres and Activity Outcomes would be reduced proportionately.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

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

This Phase 4 funding request will be scaled proportionately to the funding provided. Acres and Activity Outcomes would be reduced proportionately.

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

This Phase 4 funding request will be scaled proportionately to the funding provided. Acres and Activity Outcomes would be reduced proportionately.

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?

DU and PF strive to complete one phase of this program before starting the next, to minimize overlap. Furthermore, staff charge time to site specific easement projects with unique numbers, which are only billed to one grant or another, therefore staff charges can be spread among multiple projects funded by multiple grants.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

Contracts are for prairie and wetland restoration/enhancement work contracted to private sector firms, including activities such as field site preparation, tree removal, prairie grass and wetland seeding, old fence removal and new fence installation, ditch plugging, drain tile and sediment removal, dike and berm construction, and water control structures.

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 - all travel funding will be used for in-state mileage, meals, and lodging, as necessary.

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?

Minnesota DNR grants staff previously reviewed and approved DU accounting methodology for Direct Support Services, which are calculated and included in DU staff costs. DU Direct Support Services constitute approximately 10% of DU overall staff costs on average among DU conservation staff billing categories. DU breaks out and invoices for Direct Support Service expenses approved by DNR for reimbursement separately from Personnel expenses. In accordance with 2 CFR 200, DU uses the direct allocation method of allocating costs to programs and final cost objectives. This process of allocating costs is accomplished through the use of hourly rates. The direct cost of activities, including direct support expenses, is included in these hourly rates. The rates are comprised of costs for salaries, benefits, office space, general insurance, support staff, office supplies, and other various direct expenses incurred at the regional offices and conservation department at the home office. All costs are assigned to conservation projects (net of applicable personnel and other costs that are non-conservation related). Hourly charges represent the amount that DU charges conservation projects per hour for each staff member working on the project. These costs represent expenses that directly support the labor cost necessary for the development of a specific water/wetlands conservation project.

PF utilizes the Total Modified Direct Cost method. This methodology is annually approved by the U.S. Department of Interior's National Business Center as the basis for the organization's Indirect Cost Rate agreement. PF's allowable direct support services cost is 3.9%. In this proposal, PF has discounted its rate to 1.5% of the sum of personnel, contracts, professional services, and travel, and will donate the difference in-kind.

Other Equipment/Tools

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

Equipment and Tools include gear used to survey and design wetland restorations such as laser levels and GPS survey devices. This may also include rent of GPS survey equipment.

Federal Funds

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

Yes

Are the funds confirmed?

Yes

- Cash : \$1,000,000
- In Kind : \$100,000

Is Confirmation Document attached?

[Yes](#)

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	600	1,400	0	0	2,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	600	1,400	0	0	2,000
Total	1,200	2,800	0	0	4,000

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	\$3,132,000	\$2,088,000	-	-	\$5,220,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$3,132,000	\$2,088,000	-	-	\$5,220,000
Total	\$6,264,000	\$4,176,000	-	-	\$10,440,000

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	1,000	0	1,000	0	2,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	1,000	0	1,000	0	2,000
Total	0	2,000	0	2,000	0	4,000

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$2,610,000	-	\$2,610,000	-	\$5,220,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$2,610,000	-	\$2,610,000	-	\$5,220,000
Total	-	\$5,220,000	-	\$5,220,000	-	\$10,440,000

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	\$5,220	\$1,491	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$5,220	\$1,491	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	\$2,610	-	\$2,610	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$2,610	-	\$2,610	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Wetland and upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands, and restored shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *USFWS habitat easements will add restored and protected grassland and small wetland acres to augment existing public lands and other permanent easements to create prairie-wetland complexes with a more diverse mix of habitats and conservation options for private landowners. The measure of success will be the number of functioning prairie wetland complexes that provide adequate wetland and grassland acres within a landscape. This is a long-term, programmatic landscape conservation effort that will take time to achieve.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected ~ *This outcome will be measured by the sheer number of expiring CRP acres that will be protected through USFWS easements, and the protected grassland and wetland habitat that will not be subject to future conversion to intensive row crop agriculture. By offering private landowners a working lands conservation easement option, landowners in need of an annual income stream from their land will be incentivized to keep grasslands intact and restore wetlands.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

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

Easements are selected by USFWS biologists who score and rank each grassland habitat easement proposed based on ecological site attributes and landscape juxtaposition using a scoring process that is developed internally with science-based guidance from their Habitat & Population Evaluation Team science staff in Fergus Falls. This ranking process was designed to be relatively simple and evaluate the capability of the proposed easement to provide biological benefits for wetland and grassland dependent wildlife species by considering the habitat on the easement tract as well as its contribution and benefits to other protected lands in the surrounding area.

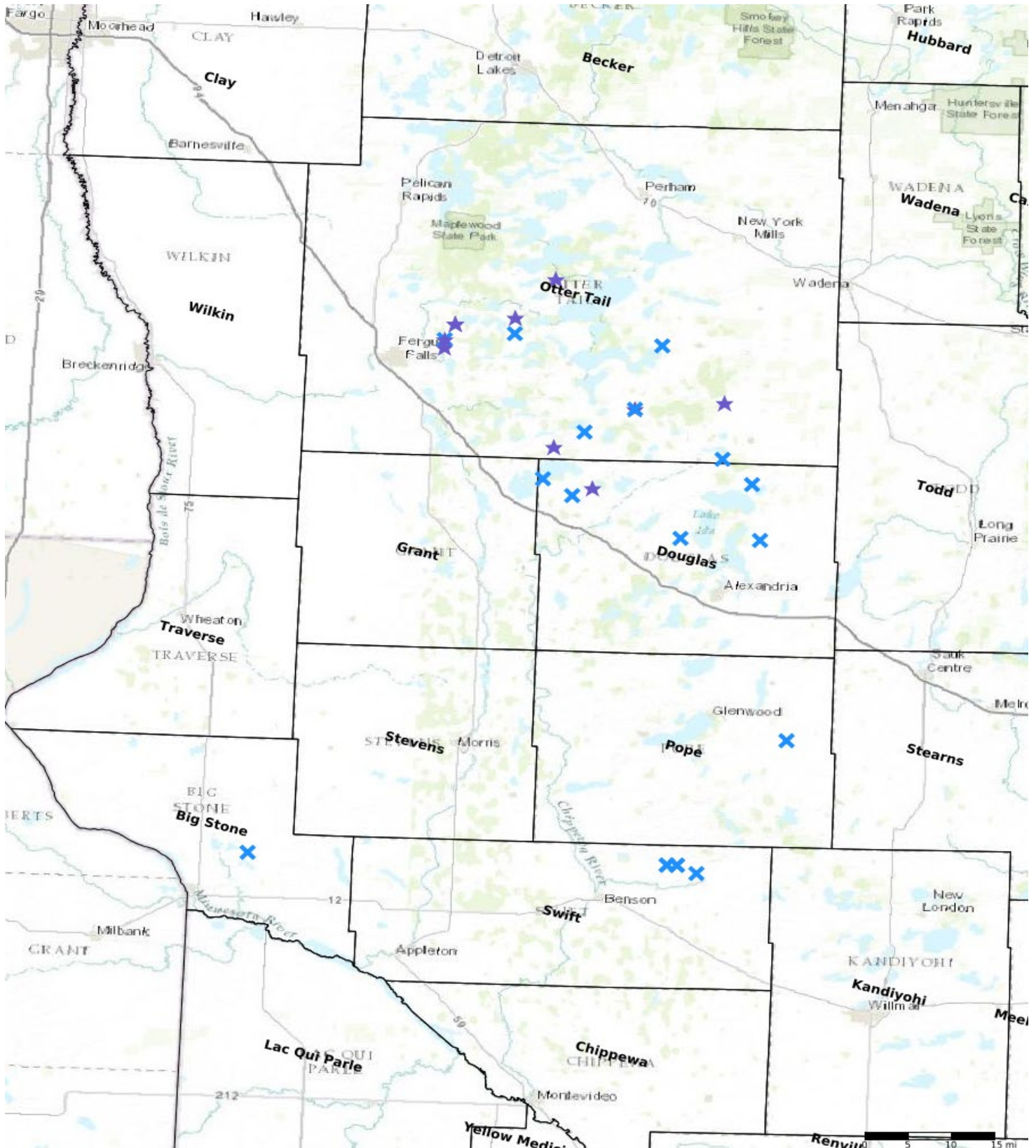
Periodically through out the year, the USFWS Minnesota Wetland Acquisition Office in Fergus Falls uses these rankings to re-prioritize the proposals to assure that the USFWS is working on and purchasing the highest ranking proposals throughout the year. DU and PF will rely on the high level of science-based conservation expertise and rigorous easement selection process of the USFWS to ensure that easements acquired prioritized appropriately and therefore subsequently already prioritized for wetland and grassland habitat restoration and enhancement activities by DU and PF.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Bentsen Bay Farm Easement Enhancement	Big Stone	12245217	237	\$240,000	Yes
Doug Kloehn Easement Enhancement	Douglas	12938221	75	\$140,000	Yes
BJ Bjorge S Easement Enhancement	Douglas	12937223	80	\$140,000	Yes
Rod Palmquist Easement Enhancement	Douglas	13040218	40	\$80,000	Yes
Roger Holtberg Easement Enhancement	Douglas	13040227	140	\$140,000	Yes
Tim Zunker Easement Enhancement	Douglas	13037215	45	\$70,000	Yes
Dan and Justin Evavold Easement Restoration	Douglas	13040224	65	\$125,000	Yes
John Olesen Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13239234	80	\$140,000	Yes
Kathy Evavold NW Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13140214	100	\$150,000	Yes
Shane Finkelson Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13140229	50	\$110,000	Yes
Clambey/Truax Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13342210	170	\$250,000	Yes
Todd Kvern Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13342221	18	\$60,000	Yes
Steve Misegades Easement Enhancement - Part 2	Otter Tail	13338219	275	\$325,000	Yes
Tim Hawthorne Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13237230	55	\$100,000	Yes
Scott Korkowski Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13137231	140	\$140,000	Yes
Dan Stenoien Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13341215	50	\$125,000	Yes
Mark Jacobs Trust Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13342228	20	\$60,000	Yes
Kristi Wentworth Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13342221	50	\$100,000	Yes
Abby Volden Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13239234	85	\$140,000	Yes
Leigh Barry Easement Restoration - Amor Tract	Otter Tail	13440208	42	\$70,000	Yes
Melanie Cole Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13341203	37	\$75,000	Yes
Gary and Susan Clambey Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13342210	14	\$30,000	Yes
Carlson Easement Enhancement	Pope	12536229	331	\$400,000	Yes
Chippewa River Ranch Easement Enhancement - Part 1	Swift	12238223	182	\$275,000	Yes
Pritchett Easement Enhancement	Swift	12238216	39	\$60,000	Yes
Chippewa River Ranch Easement Enhancement - Part 2	Swift	12238216	31	\$50,000	Yes
Kerkeide Easement Enhancement	Swift	12238217	40	\$60,000	Yes

Skarsten Easement Enhancement	Swift	12238217	40	\$60,000	Yes
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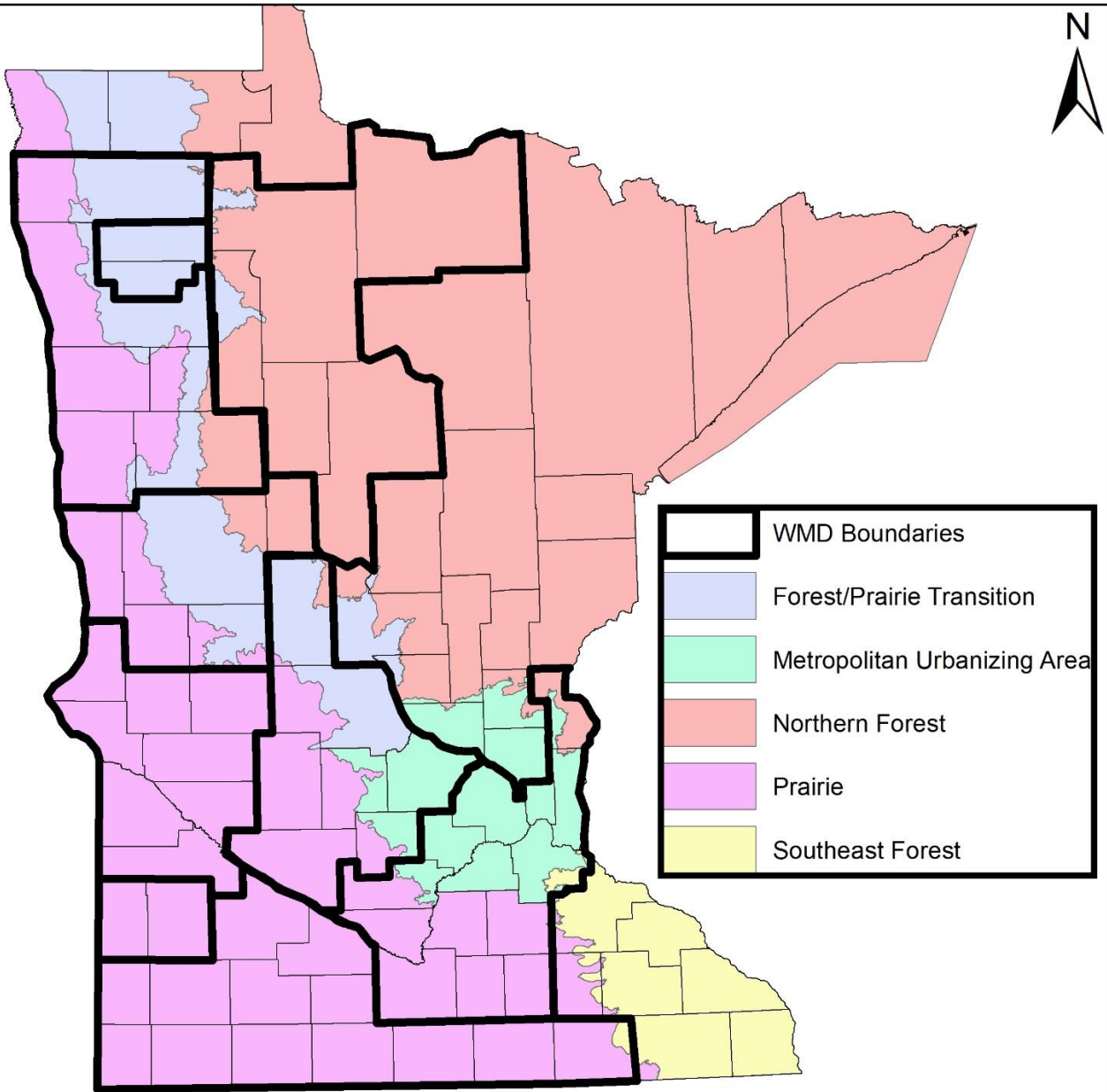
Parcel Map



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

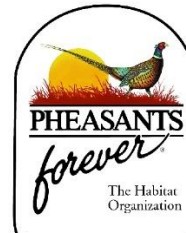
Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Easement Program

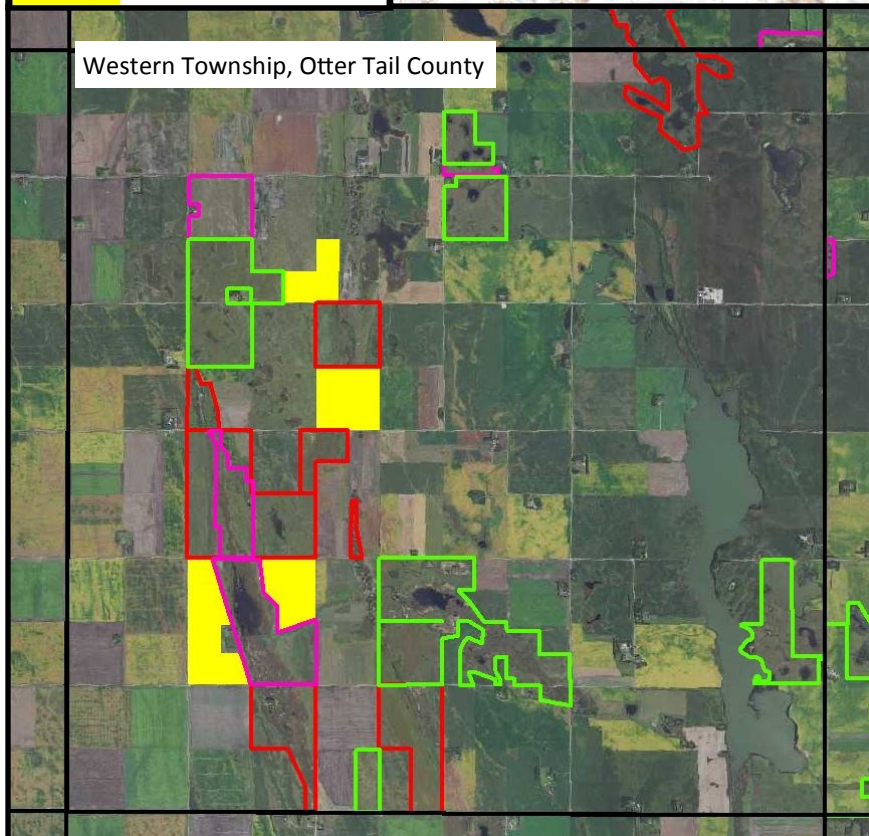
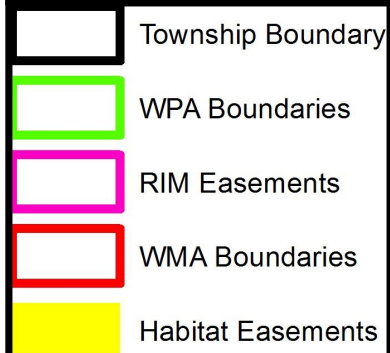
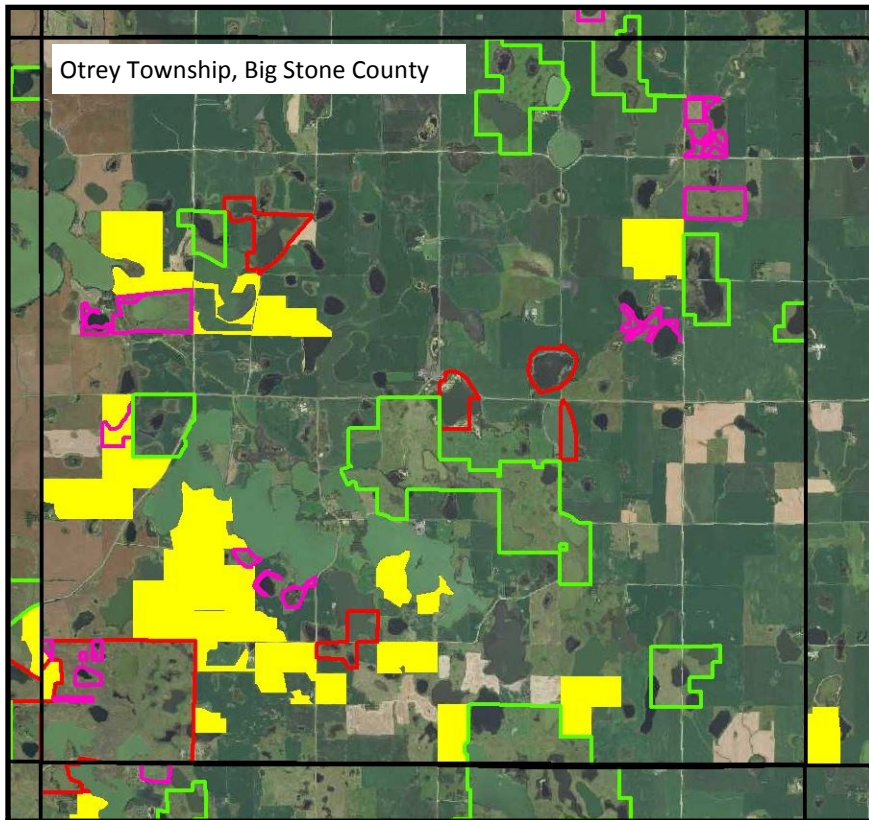
FWS Wetland Management Districts: Big Stone, Detroit Lakes,
Fergus Falls, Litchfield, Minnesota Valley, Morris, Windom, Tamarac



**CLEAN
WATER
LAND &
LEGACY
AMENDMENT**


**DUCKS
UNLIMITED**



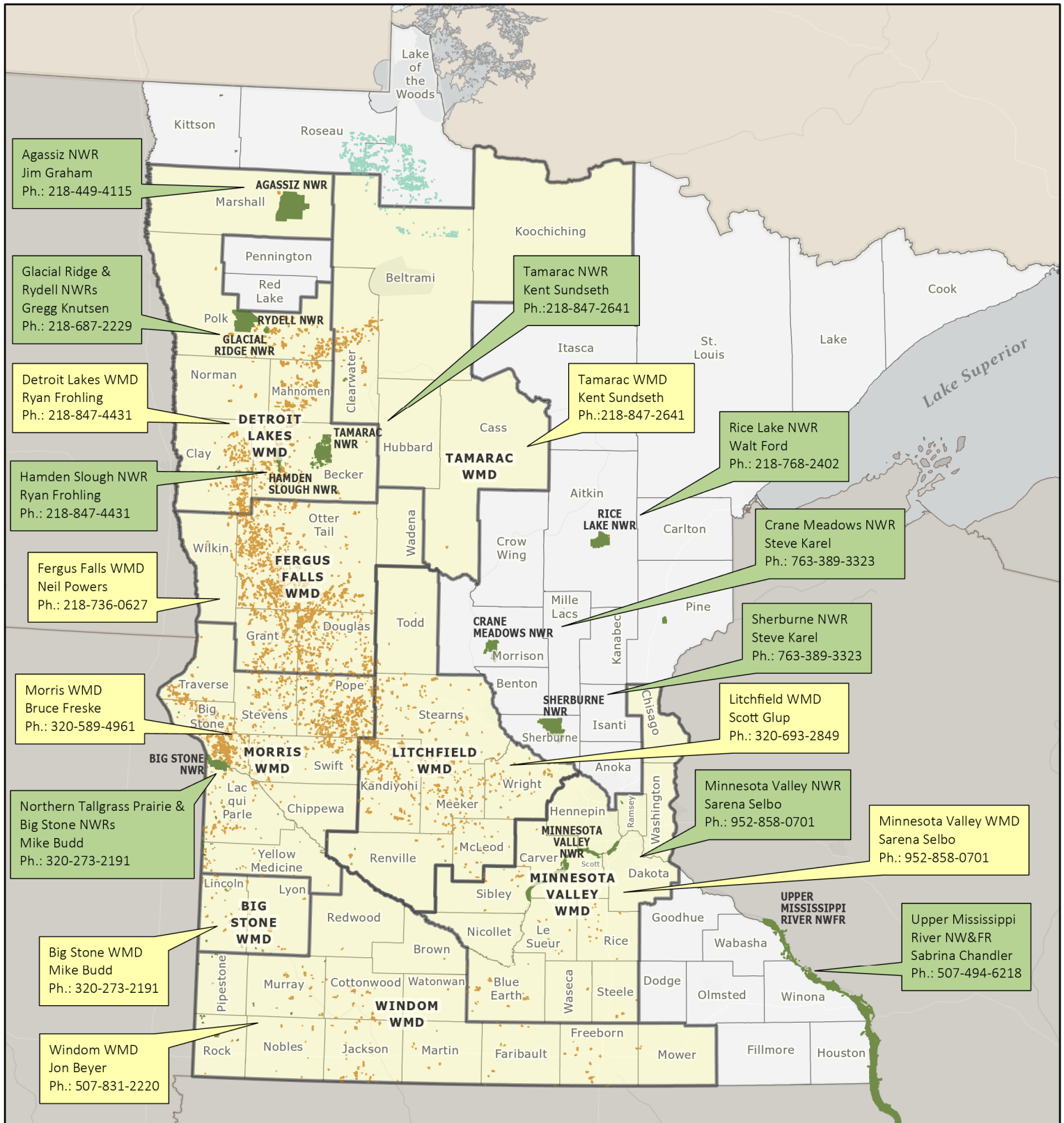




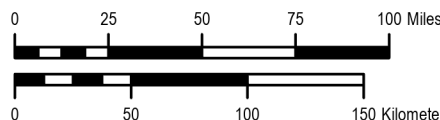
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Minnesota USFWS Contact Information

May 2022



Notes:
Projection: UTM Zone 15N
Datum: NAD 1983
Produced in the Division of Realty,
Bloomington, MN
Map Updated: May 12, 2022



FWS Interest

- National Wildlife Refuge
- Wildlife Management Area; Coordination Area
- Waterfowl Production Area

Base Map Source: USFWS Cadastral Geodatabase, ESRI ArcGIS Online Map Server