# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Sauk River Watershed Habitat Protection & Restoration, Phase 5

Laws of Minnesota 2024 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 06/08/2026

**Project Title:** Sauk River Watershed Habitat Protection & Restoration, Phase 5

**Funds Recommended:** $3,965,000

**Legislative Citation:** ML 2024, Ch. 106, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(n)

**Appropriation Language:** $3,965,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources for agreements to acquire lands in fee and permanent conservation easements and restore and enhance wildlife habitat in the Sauk River watershed as follows: $375,000 to Great River Greening; $1,199,000 to Sauk River Watershed District; $1,192,000 to Pheasants Forever; and $1,199,000 to Minnesota Land Trust. Up to $168,000 to Minnesota Land Trust is to establish a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Steve Zeece III
**Title:** Water Resources Manager
**Organization:** Sauk River Watershed District
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### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Todd, Stearns and Douglas.

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

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Enhance

Protect in Fee

Restore

Protect in Easement

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Forest

Prairie

Wetlands

Habitat

# Narrative

## Abstract

This program permanently protects, restores, and enhances critical habitat within the Sauk River Watershed, which has experienced considerable habitat loss and is at high risk for more land use conversion. Using conservation easements and fee land acquisition, we will protect approximately 387 acres of high priority habitat in Minnesota's Prairie and Forest-Prairie Transition Area. We will restore/enhance approximately 107 acres of wetlands, stream corridors, and accompanying uplands, creating vital habitat for waterfowl, fishes, and populations of threatened and endangered species. Properties will be strategically targeted using innovative site prioritization model that maximizes conservation benefit and financial leverage.

## Design and Scope of Work

Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD), Minnesota Land Trust (MLT), Pheasants Forever (PF), and Great River Greening (GRG) - with technical assistance from local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Stearns County Parks (SCP) – will partner to implement habitat protection and restoration within the Sauk River Watershed (SRW). Site prioritization will focus on protecting and restoring habitat in high-impact locations, including high quality or easily restorable wetland complexes, upland and floodplain forests, prairies, and stream corridors, which provide critical habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, SGCN and other important wildlife species.

The SRW is in a rapidly growing region that has experienced intense conversion from perennial cover to cropland in the past decade. Furthermore, public access for recreation, including hunting and fishing, is lacking. Landowner interest in conservation land protection and restoration is strong in the SRW. Since July 2019, the Partnership has protected 665 acres through fee title acquisition, 888 acres through conservation easements, and has restored/enhanced 198 acres, while leveraging $2,032,405 through landowner donation of easement value and non-state funding sources. As of May 2023, landowners owning approximately 1,200 acres are interested in permanently protecting their properties. Protecting and restoring these strategic parcels will far exceed funding available through the Partnership's previous OHF grants. We anticipate significantly more interested landowners as outreach efforts continue.

Conservation Easements:
MLT will conduct landowner outreach within priority areas and will accept proposals from landowners using a competitive, market-based Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Properties will be ranked based on ecological value and cost, prioritizing projects that provide the best ecological value and lowest cost to the state. Our goal is to protect 233 acres of permanent conservation easements through this proposal, with habitat management plans developed for eased acres.

Fee Acquisition:
Coordinating with agency partners, PF will protect through fee acquisition 154 acres of strategically identified parcels and donate parcels to MNDNR as a WMA or AMA, to USFWS as a WPA, or to counties. Protected tracts will be managed as wildlife habitat and provide public access within an area of our state where pubic land for recreation use is lacking.

Restoration and Enhancement:
SRWD will restore approximately 57 acres of wetland, riparian and associated upland habitat in cooperation with county SWCDs, MNDNR, and USFWS. The restorations will focus on building large complexes of improved habitat in the GUS Plus (Getchell, Unnamed, & Stony Creeks) and Osakis Management Units, which are priorities in the SRCWMP. The improved habitat will benefit many species including native bivalves, spawning fishes, and amphibians.

GRG will complete Natural Resource Management Plans and restore/enhance approximately 50 acres of public and/or protected private land, with a focus on three Stearns County Parks, all of which are degraded by invasive species and with inadequate woodland management. Natural Resource Management Plans developed for each park, totaling 399 acres, will advise the County and guide prioritization of needed habitat improvements.

## Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

This program will utilize a prioritization framework that uses fish spawning habitat, game species, threatened and endangered species, and quality habitat as major weighting factors for both protection and restoration/enhancement project selection. The SRW region is an important migratory corridor for forest birds and waterfowl.

This phase of the program targets the protection and restoration/enhancement of wetlands, stream corridors, and associated uplands. This will create excellent habitat for hundreds of migratory waterfowl who will use these basins to refuel and rest. Many species require wetland basins with open water areas and emergent aquatic vegetation to provide nesting habitat and many other use wetlands during their life cycle. This program offers the opportunity to restore a large wetland and protect and enhance smaller wetlands, which will benefit threatened and endangered species and will expand habitat cores and corridors. This program will also protect and restore/enhance upland forests, prairies, and shorelands, which are also essential habitats to Minnesota's wildlife diversity and health.

A variety of threatened and endangered species will benefit from this program including Blanding's turtle, bobolink, veery, smooth green snake, Dakota skipper, western harvest mouse, and a species of jumping spider (M. grata). Other species that will benefit from improved habitat as part of this program include trumpeter swan, sandhill crane, eastern and western meadowlark, bald eagle, Swainson's hawk, and dickcissel, and numerous native mussel species.

A focal point of SRWD's restoration will occur in the Crooked Lake basin in Douglas County. This historic Shallow Lake was drained in the early 1900's from the Long Prairie Watershed and into Lake Osakis, the headwaters of the Sauk River. The shallow lake formerly provided thousand of acres of wetland and upland habitat for fish and numerous SGCN. Fueled by problems occurring in Osakis Lake and the Sauk River, there is currently a strong effort to restore the ecological function of the former Crooked Lake, to improve the habitat and overall trophic health in Lake Osakis and waters downstream.

## What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

The SRW is in a rapidly growing region of the state that has experienced some of the most intense conversion from perennial cover to cropland and urban development in the past decade. There are currently landowners with parcels totaling approximately 1,200 acres interested in the program. Numerous landowners with high priority habitat have shown strong interest, including landowners that have land about to expire or just expired from CRP but that does not qualify for CREP. Without this program, there is a strong risk that these priority properties to be converted back to land uses that will adversely affect habitat and water quality benefits initially gained from enrollment in CRP.

## Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

The partners will utilize the recently completed Sauk River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (SRCWMP). The SRCWMP compiled information from numerous scientific reports and studies regarding the water resources within the Sauk River Watershed. That information was used to create a prioritized and targeted plan of work for the partners with a focus of improvement and protection of water resources. This work was completed through the Board of Water and Soil Resources via its One Watershed One Plan program.

The program also utilizes TNC's Multiple Benefits Analysis, a science-based process completed in 2017 for the Upper Mississippi River Basin, which prioritized protection and restoration sites for the SRW. The Analysis finds the "sweet spot" where multiple benefits overlap.

The vast majority (97%) of the SRW landscape is in private ownership. Therefore, once priority parcels are identified, working with private owners on land protection strategies is key to successful conservation in this region. We will also work closely with partners in the region to identify those habitat complexes where private land protection can make a significant contribution to existing conservation investments. Specific parcels available for acquisition of easements will be further reviewed relative to each other to identify priorities among the pool of applicants. This relative ranking is based on amount of habitat on the parcel (size), the quality or condition of habitat, the parcel's context relative to other natural habitats and protected areas, and cost. MBS data will be used to evaluate potential conservation easements and fee simple acquisitions. Field visits to further identify and assess condition of habitats prior to easement acquisition will also occur, as many private lands were not formally assessed through MBS.

The program will also work to build on initial conservation investments in the program area, expanding and buffering the footprint of existing protected areas, such as existing conservation easements, WMAs, WPAs, AMAs and County Parks, facilitating the protection of habitat corridors and reducing the potential for fragmentation of existing habitats, while also restoring and enhancing the existing public habitat cores.

## Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

## Explain how this plan will uniquely address habitat resilience to climate change and its anticipated effects on game, fish & wildlife species utilizing the protected or restored/enhanced habitat this proposal targets.

Protection and restoration of stream, wetland, and upland prairie and forests will improve habitat resilience to climate change affects by providing diverse prairies and forest habitats provide shelter and forage for aquatic species, migratory birds, and over-wintering/residents birds and other native wildlife. Attenuation of flows through wetland and stream restoration/enhancement will also improve aquatic resilience to climate change by reducing the intensity of climate change driven flash flooding events that severely degrade in-stream habitat.

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

Protect, restore, and enhance habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need

**Prairie**

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

# Outcomes

## Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Rivers and streams provide corridors of habitat including intact areas of forest cover in the east and large wetland/upland complexes in the west ~ *Expanded buffers of stream corridors and wetland/prairie complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat, providing nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, spawning areas for fishes, and cover for game species will be restored and protected. Partners will work together to identify priority lands using existing data and public plans, and then coordinate protection, restoration, and enhancement activities in those priority areas. Success within each priority area will be determined based on the percentage of area protected, restored, and/or enhanced.*

## Programs in prairie region:

Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands ~ *Expanded buffers of stream corridors and wetland/prairie complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat, providing nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and cover and forage for game species will be restored and protected. Partners will work together to identify priority lands using existing data and public plans, and then coordinate protection, restoration, and enhancement activities in those priority areas. Success within each priority area will be determined based on the percentage of area protected, restored, and/or enhanced.*

## 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 Sauk River Watershed District, Minnesota Land Trust, Pheasants Forever, and Great River Greening are not substituting or supplanting existing funding sources for this body of proposed work.

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

MLT, a nationally accredited and insured land trust, will sustain the land protected through conservation easements using state-of-the-art stewardship standards and practices. MLT conducts annual property monitoring, investigates potential violations, and defends the easement in case of a true violation. Easement stewardship funding is included in MLT's budget. MLT also encourages active ecological management, providing landowners with habitat management plans, and working with them to secure resources (expertise and funding) to undertake these activities over time.

All fee-title lands will be enrolled into the WMA or WPA system to be managed perpetually by the MNDNR or USFWS, or donated to local Counties, respectively. All acquisitions will be restored and enhanced as high quality as practicable, with knowledge that quality and comprehensive restorations utilizing native species result in lower management costs. Additionally, local PF chapter members and volunteers have strong interest in acquisitions with highly productive habitat. Partners will develop an ecological restoration and management plan for each parcel. Grant and partner dollars will be used for the initial site development and restoration/enhancement work.

GRG enters restoration and enhancement projects with the goal of achieving a threshold where continuing maintenance beyond the allocation period is achievable by landowners.

## Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Every 4-6 years | MN DNR, USFWS, Landowners | Prescribed fire, tree control, invasive species control. | - | - |
| 2028 and in perpetuity | MLT Long-Term Stewardship and Enforcement Fund | Annual monitoring of conservation easements in perpetuity. | Enforcement as necessary | - |
| 2030 | GRG In-kind | Monitoring every 2-3 years | Landowner Engagement | Follow up treatment, seeding, and/or planting |

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

The Sauk River Partnership has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We seek to use diversity, equity, and inclusion as a lens in project, partner, and contractor selection.

St. Cloud, which lies at the bottom of the Sauk River Watershed, has the largest concentration of our state's BIPOC population outside of the Twin Cities metro. In recent years, St. Cloud and its surrounding suburbs, such as Waite Park have grown increasingly diverse. Currently, the BIPOC population comprises approximately 32% of the total population in St. Cloud. This program will benefit this diverse community by increasing close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. This includes adding more public lands and partnering with Stearns County Parks on ecological restoration/enhancement projects, which will increase the aesthetic and recreational value for visitors. Our work will also improve water quality – directly benefiting the drinking water quality for St. Cloud due to the

city's drinking water intake being just downstream of the Sauk River confluence with the Mississippi River. Our program will also increase water storage and thereby improve community resiliency by reducing flooding.

## Activity Details

### Requirements

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

**Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought** prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
No

> **Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:**
> At a minimum, we will notify local governments in writing of the intent to acquire and donate lands to the MNDNR/USFWS and follow up with questions prior to acquisition. In cases where there is interest, we will also indicate our willingness to attend or ask to attend county or township meetings to communicate our interest in the projects and seek support.

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?**
No

> **Describe the permanent protection and justification for additional protection:**
> A limited number of the parcels may have a federal or state easement on a portion of the tract, which provides permanent protection for wetlands or grasslands. If a parcel has one of these encumbrances and is still deemed a high priority by our agency partners, we will follow guidance established by the LSOHC to proceed or use non-state funding to acquire the residual value of the protected portion of the property.

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

**Who will manage the easement?**
The Minnesota Land Trust.

**Who will be the easement holder?**
The Minnesota Land Trust will hold the easement rights.

**What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
The Minnesota Land Trust expects to close 3-5 conservation easements through this appropriation, depending on project 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

WMA

WPA

County/Municipal

## Land Use

**Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?**
Yes

**Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:**
For fee acquisitions, lands acquired for ownership by County or DNR may use limited farming, specifically food plots, to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife. On a small percentage of WMAs (less than 2.5%), DNR uses farming to provide a winter food source for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture-dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources. There are no immediate plans to use farming for winter food on any of the parcels in this proposal. This proposal may also include initial development plans or restoration plans to utilize farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is a standard practice across the Midwest to prepare the seedbed for native seed planting. In restorations, non-neonicotinoid treated seed and no herbicides other than glyphosate will be used.

On conservation easements, MLT may incorporate the short-term use of agricultural crops, which is an accepted best practice in some instances for preparing a site for restoration. For example, short-term use of soybeans could be used for restorations to control weed seedbeds prior to prairie planting. In some cases, this necessitates the use of GMO-treated products to facilitate herbicide use to control weeds present in the seedbank. However, neonicotinoids will not be used.

The purpose of MLT's conservation easements is to protect existing high-quality natural habitat and to preserve opportunities for future restoration. As such, we restrict any agricultural lands and use on the properties. In cases where there are agricultural lands associated with the larger property, we will either carve the agricultural area out of the conservation easement, or in some limited cases, we may include a small percentage of agricultural lands if it is not feasible to carve those areas out. In such cases, however, we will not use OHF funds to pay the landowners for that portion of the conservation easement.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?**
No

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

**Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:**
No variation from State of MN regulations for WMA acquisitions.

All WPA acquisitions will be open to the public taking of fish and game during the open season according to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, United States Code, title 16, section 668dd, et seq.

Lands to be acquired for county ownership will be open to hunting and fishing with only minimal restrictions when required for public safety.

**Who will eventually own the fee title land?**

County

State of MN

Federal

Local Unit of Government

**Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:**

WMA

WPA

Other : County Park etc

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
PF estimates closing on 1-3 sites, depending on acquisition cost.

**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:**
Most conservation easements are established on private lands, many of which have driveways, field roads, and trails located on them. Often, these established trails and roads are permitted in the terms of the easement and can be maintained for personal use if their use does not significantly impact the conservation values of the property. Creation of new roads/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 are identified in the project baseline report and will be monitored annually as part of the MLT's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads/trails in line with the terms of the easement 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

Funding from this appropriation will be used restore or enhance parcels acquired under this appropriation. Funding through previous phases of this program may also supplement restoration and enhancements of parcels acquired through our ML 2024 appropriation..

**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 completed | June 2029 |
| Conservation easement and fee-title acquisition completed | June 2028 |
| Site prioritization and targeted outreach completed | December 2025 |
| GRG: Project planning, secure Landowner agreements | December 2024 |
| GRG: Complete three (3) NRMPs | December 2025 |
| GRG: Complete R/E Activities | June 2029 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 11/01/2029

**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 for fee title acquisition of land 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, 2028;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2032;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2029;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $300,500 | - | - | $300,500 |
| Contracts | $1,305,600 | - | - | $1,305,600 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $225,000 | $25,800 | -, Private Donors | $250,800 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $695,900 | $25,800 | -, Private Donors | $721,700 |
| Easement Acquisition | $713,000 | $106,000 | Landowners | $819,000 |
| Easement Stewardship | $168,000 | - | - | $168,000 |
| Travel | $16,500 | - | - | $16,500 |
| Professional Services | $427,000 | - | - | $427,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $69,500 | $38,300 | -, Unrealized dss, Private Donors | $107,800 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $7,000 | - | - | $7,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $2,000 | - | - | $2,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $35,000 | - | - | $35,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$3,965,000** | **$195,900** | **-** | **$4,160,900** |

## Partner: GRG

### *Totals*

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $90,000 | - | - | $90,000 |
| Contracts | $246,000 | - | - | $246,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $10,000 | - | - | $10,000 |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | $25,000 | $34,300 | Unrealized dss | $59,300 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $1,000 | - | - | $1,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $3,000 | - | - | $3,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$375,000** | **$34,300** | **-** | **$409,300** |

### *Personnel*

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ecologist | 0.1 | 5.0 | $65,000 | - | - | $65,000 |
| Program Manager | 0.05 | 5.0 | $25,000 | - | - | $25,000 |

## Partner: MLT

### *Totals*

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $140,000 | - | - | $140,000 |
| Contracts | $30,000 | - | - | $30,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $713,000 | $106,000 | Landowners | $819,000 |
| Easement Stewardship | $168,000 | - | - | $168,000 |
| Travel | $6,000 | - | - | $6,000 |
| Professional Services | $102,000 | - | - | $102,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $38,000 | - | - | $38,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $1,000 | - | - | $1,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $1,000 | - | - | $1,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,199,000** | **$106,000** | **-** | **$1,305,000** |

### *Personnel*

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MLT Land Protection Staff | 0.35 | 4.0 | $140,000 | - | - | $140,000 |

## Partner: PF

### *Totals*

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $40,500 | - | - | $40,500 |
| Contracts | $154,600 | - | - | $154,600 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $225,000 | $25,800 | Private Donors | $250,800 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $695,900 | $25,800 | Private Donors | $721,700 |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $500 | - | - | $500 |
| Professional Services | $31,000 | - | - | $31,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $6,500 | $4,000 | Private Donors | $10,500 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $7,000 | - | - | $7,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $31,000 | - | - | $31,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,192,000** | **$55,600** | **-** | **$1,247,600** |

### *Personnel*

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PF Field Staff | 0.03 | 5.0 | $12,600 | - | - | $12,600 |
| PF Field Staff | 0.07 | 5.0 | $27,900 | - | - | $27,900 |

## Partner: SRWD

***Totals***

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $30,000 | - | - | $30,000 |
| Contracts | $875,000 | - | - | $875,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | - | - | - | - |
| Professional Services | $294,000 | - | - | $294,000 |
| Direct Support Services | - | - | - | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | - | - | - | - |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,199,000** | **-** | **-** | **$1,199,000** |

***Personnel***

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrator | 0.01 | 5.0 | $5,000 | - | - | $5,000 |
| Water Resource Manager | 0.09 | 5.0 | $25,000 | - | - | $25,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $3,965,000
**Amount of Leverage:** $195,900
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 4.94%
**DSS + Personnel:** $370,000
**As a % of the total request:** 9.33%
**Easement Stewardship:** $168,000
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 23.56%

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
The Partnership received 24% of its request. Proposed funding was allocated disproportionately to partners in the following manner: GRG (100% of request); PF (26%); SRWD (17%); MLT (26%). Outputs were reduced as follows: GRG (100% of request); PF (26%); SRWD (11%); MLT (20%).

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**
Leverage is currently not confirmed. However, MLT and PF have an exemplary track record of sourcing leverage though private donors, often exceeding expectations.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

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

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Our planned protection, restoration, and enhancement work is scalable. If scaled back, this proposal would be phased over a longer period of time. Scaling would be modestly more than proportional due to inherent efficiencies with greater funding.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
PF - Personnel/DSS will be reduced proportionately.
MLT - Personnel/DSS will be reduced, but not proportionately. Some costs are fixed. Donation of easement value may result in more projects, more personnel time.
GRG – Personnel/DSS will be reduced, but not proportionally. Some costs are fixed.

## Personnel

**Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?**
Yes

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
MLT: Habitat management plans on the new easement acquisitions; Partnering with SWCD's and other contractors on outreach for easement acquisition.

PF: Restoration, enhancement, and initial development of protected areas.

SRWD: Working with contractors to complete restoration project work.

GRG: Restoration and enhancement field services; rare plant surveys.

## Professional Services

**What is included in the Professional Services line?**

Appraisals

Design/Engineering

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**
Pheasants forever estimates closing on 1-3 sites.

## Easement Stewardship

**What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?**
The Minnesota Land Trust expects to close 3-5 conservation easements through this appropriation, depending on project cost. The Easement Stewardship funding request is calculated from the estimated required time staff will spend conducting annual property monitoring, investigating potential violations, and creating Habitat Management Plans to encourage active Landowner ecological management, and working with the to secure resources (expertise and funding).

## Travel

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?**
Yes

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging**
MLT staff frequently rent cars for travel to project locations. GRG occasionally rents vehicles due to lack of availability in our fleet or POVs.

**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?**
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 4.04%. In this proposal, PF has discounted its rate to 2.5% of the sum of personnel, contracts, professional services, and travel. We are donating the difference-in-kind.

MLT: In a process that was approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, MLT 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 apply this DNR approved rate only to personnel expenses to determine the total amount of the direct support services.

GRG: In a process approved by DNR in September 2019, GRG's direct support services rate includes all allowable direct and necessary expenditures not captured in other line items in the budget. Our DSS request to LSOHC is less than the amount allowed by the DNR approved rate, and less than or equal to 10% of the total allocation request

## Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**
GPS devices, safety equipment.

## 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 | - | 57 | - | - | 57 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 4 | 34 | - | - | 38 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 12 | 104 | - | - | 116 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | 233 | 233 |
| Enhance | - | 20 | 30 | - | 50 |
| **Total** | **16** | **215** | **30** | **233** | **494** |

## How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie? (Table 1b)

| Type | Native Prairie (acres) |
|---|---|
| Restore | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - |
| Protect in Easement | - |
| Enhance | 20 |
| **Total** | **20** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | $599,500 | - | $599,500 | $1,199,000 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $29,700 | $263,000 | - | - | $292,700 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $90,300 | $809,000 | - | - | $899,300 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | $1,199,000 | $1,199,000 |
| Enhance | - | $150,000 | $225,000 | - | $375,000 |
| **Total** | **$120,000** | **$1,821,500** | **$225,000** | **$1,798,500** | **$3,965,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | 57 | - | 57 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | 23 | - | 15 | - | 38 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | 70 | - | 46 | - | 116 |
| Protect in Easement | - | 116 | - | 117 | - | 233 |
| Enhance | - | 50 | - | - | - | 50 |
| **Total** | **-** | **259** | **-** | **235** | **-** | **494** |

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

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | $1,199,000 | - | $1,199,000 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $179,800 | - | $112,900 | - | $292,700 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | $539,500 | - | $359,800 | - | $899,300 |
| Protect in Easement | - | $599,000 | - | $600,000 | - | $1,199,000 |
| Enhance | - | $375,000 | - | - | - | $375,000 |
| **Total** | **-** | **$1,693,300** | **-** | **$2,271,700** | **-** | **$3,965,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | $10,517 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $7,425 | $7,735 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $7,525 | $7,778 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | $5,145 |
| Enhance | - | $7,500 | $7,500 | - |

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

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | $21,035 | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $7,817 | - | $7,526 | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | $7,707 | - | $7,821 | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | $5,163 | - | $5,128 | - |
| Enhance | - | $7,500 | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

1.4

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

**Sign-up Criteria?**
No

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
Easement parcels are identified through TNC's Multiple Benefits Analysis. The size of parcels and proximity to other protected lands are also considered in this analysis. Specific parcels available for acquisition of easements will be further reviewed relative to each other to identify priorities among the pool of applicants. This relative ranking is based on: amount of habitat on the parcel (size), abundance of SGCN, the quality or condition of habitat, the parcel's context relative to other natural habitats and protected areas, and cost. MBS data will be another important component of potential conservation easements and fee simple acquisitions. Field visits to further identify and assess condition of habitats prior to easement acquisition will also occur, as many private lands were not formally assessed through MBS.

Fee parcels are identified and strategically prioritized using the best science and decision support tools (e.g. Prairie Conservation Plan Maps) available. Preference is given to projects that help deliver the goals of local and state recognized conservation initiatives and that build critical habitat. Data layers (i.e. MN Biological Survey, Natural Heritage Database, MN Wildlife Action Plan, Wellhead Protection Areas, Pheasant Action Plan, existing protected land, etc.) are used to help justify projects and focus areas as well as to inform decisions on top priorities for protection and restoration efforts. Additionally, the partners will use the Sauk River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (One Watershed, One Plan) to guide priority areas.

## Restore / Enhance Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GRG - Hansen Easement | Stearns | 12329216 | 13 | $30,000 | Yes | Buckthorn control; seeding |
| GRG Oak Township County Park | Stearns | 12532230 | 33 | $50,000 | Yes | Writing Natural Resource Management Plan, followed by R/E on select acres. |
| GRG Rockville County Park | Stearns | 12329208 | 284 | $245,000 | Yes | Writing Natural Resource Management Plan, followed by R/E on select acres. |
| GRG Spring Hill County Park | Stearns | 12433224 | 82 | $80,000 | Yes | Writing Natural Resource Management Plan, followed by R/E on select acres. |
| GRG- DMD Farms Easement | Stearns | 12432230 | 1 | $3,000 | Yes | Riparian Seeding |
| SRWD Getchell AHH 2 | Stearns | 12532233 | 40 | $20,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration design & permitting |
| SRWD Getchell AHH 3 | Stearns | 12432205 | 38 | $15,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration design & permitting |
| SRWD Getchell AHH1 | Stearns | 12532232 | 120 | $20,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration design & permitting |
| SRWD Getchell DJT | Stearns | 12532233 | 160 | $35,000 | Yes | Stream corridor restoration and wetland restoration design & permitting |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SRWD Getchell DLM | Stearns | 12432205 | 130 | $15,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration design & permitting |
| SRWD Getchell EMT | Stearns | 12532234 | 120 | $20,000 | Yes | Stream corridor restoration and wetland restoration design & permitting |
| SRWD Getchell GBT | Stearns | 12532227 | 160 | $768,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration implementation |
| SRWD Getchell HF | Stearns | 12532227 | 63 | $240,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration implementation |
| SRWD Getchell JT | Stearns | 12532234 | 26 | $20,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration design & permitting |
| SRWD Getchell KJM | Stearns | 12532233 | 357 | $35,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration design & permitting |
| SRWD Getchell RPR 1 | Stearns | 12432205 | 75 | $6,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration design & permitting |
| SRWD Getchell RPR 2 | Stearns | 12432206 | 37 | $5,000 | Yes | Stream corridor and wetland restoration design & permitting |

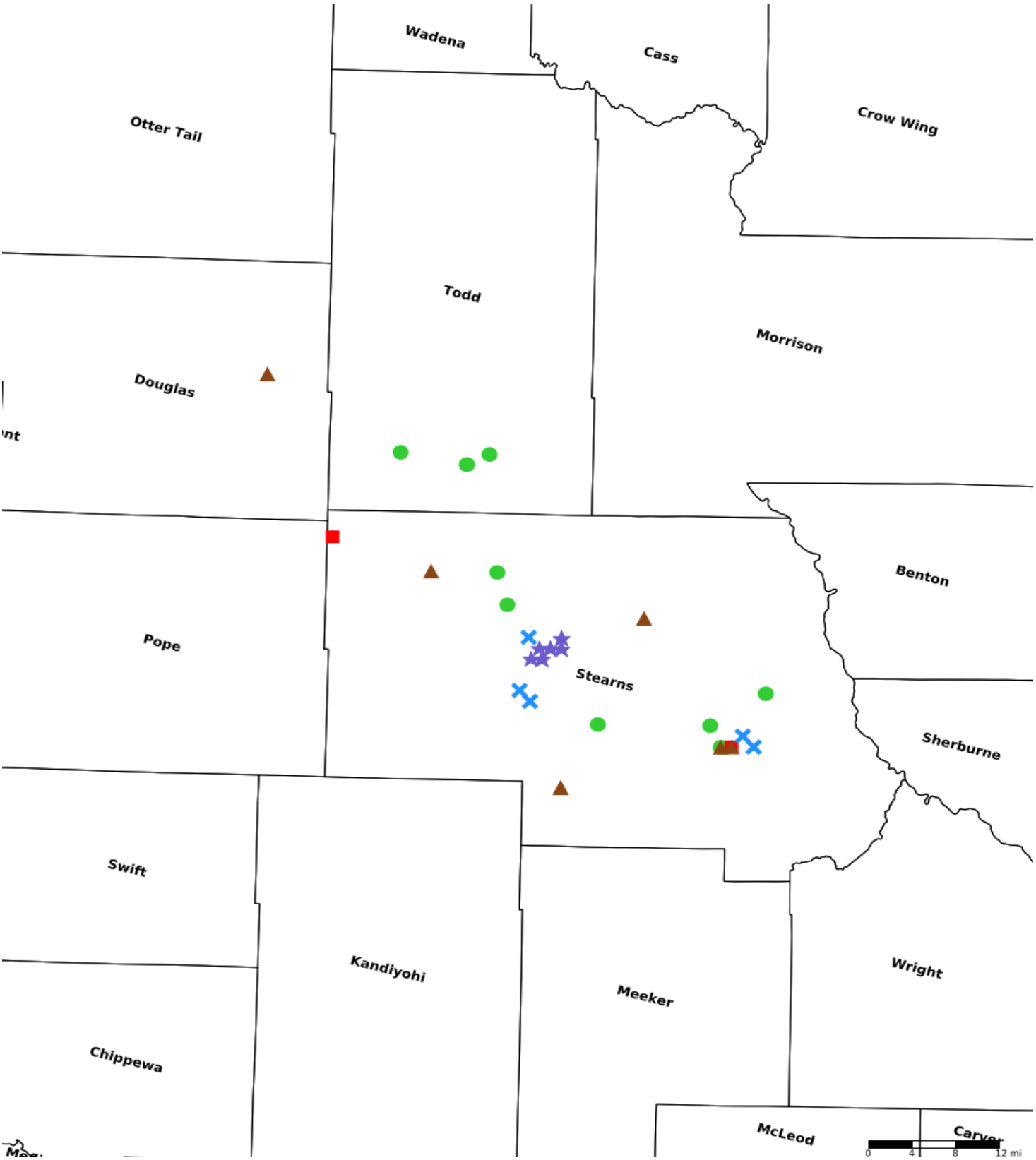
## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PF Belle River WMA Addn | Douglas | 12936230 | 124 | $1,057,400 | No |
| PF Partners WMA | Stearns | 12232203 | 40 | $180,000 | No |
| PF Partners WMA Addn | Stearns | 12232203 | 79 | $550,830 | No |
| PF Sauk River WMA Addn | Stearns | 12634227 | 53 | $50,000 | No |
| PF TBD WMA/AMA | Stearns | 12329218 | 20 | $40,000 | No |
| PF TBD WMA/AMA | Stearns | 12531214 | 85 | $3,000,000 | No |
| PF TBD WMA/AMA | Stearns | 12329218 | 40 | $100,000 | No |
| PF TBD WMA/AMA | Stearns | 12330213 | 20 | $40,000 | No |
| PF TBD WPA | Stearns | 12635207 | 388 | $1,350,000 | Yes |

## Easement Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MLT Mud Lake (Be) | Stearns | 12330202 | 60 | $240,000 | No |
| MLT Sauk River (Ba) | Stearns | 12330213 | 20 | $50,000 | No |
| MLT Sauk River (Gn) | Stearns | 12633227 | 22 | $50,000 | No |
| MLT Sauk River (Im) | Stearns | 12533211 | 61 | $250,000 | No |
| MLT Sauk River (Ra) | Stearns | 12429222 | 50 | $150,000 | No |
| MLT Sauk River (Sa) | Stearns | 12331206 | 65 | $200,000 | No |
| MLT Little Sauk Lake (Sc) | Todd | 12834231 | 130 | $530,000 | No |
| MLT Trout Creek (Ol) | Todd | 12833233 | 114 | $300,000 | No |
| MLT Trout Creek (VB, C) | Todd | 12733206 | 72 | $230,000 | No |
| MLT Trout Creek (VB, Z) | Todd | 12733206 | 70 | $230,000 | No |

# Parcel Map


Wadena
Cass
Otter Tail
Crow Wing
Todd
Morrison
Douglas
Pope
Benton
Stearns
Sherburne
Swift
Kandiyohi
Meeker
Wright
Chippewa
McLeod
Carver
0
4
8
12 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other