



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Young Forest Conservation Phase IV  
ML 2024 Request for Funding

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### General Information

**Date:** 05/30/2023

**Proposal Title:** Young Forest Conservation Phase IV

**Funds Requested:** \$3,110,000

**Confirmed Leverage Funds:** \$465,000

**Is this proposal Scalable?:** Yes

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Peter Dieser

**Title:** Minnesota Public Lands Coordinator

**Organization:** American Bird Conservancy

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Clearwater, Itasca, Aitkin, Beltrami, St. Louis, Becker, Cook, Cass, Pine, Lake of the Woods and Carlton.

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

- Northern Forest
- Forest / Prairie Transition

**Activity types:**

- Enhance

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Forest

## Narrative

### **Abstract**

Young Forest Conservation Phase IV will continue American Bird Conservancy's successful, ongoing efforts to maintain and enhance Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and Ruffed Grouse breeding habitat on publicly protected lands. This work also benefits a suite of associated deciduous and mixed forest habitat species within a diverse, contiguous landscape-level forest matrix. Through Phases I-III, ABC completed 9,204 acres of high-quality early successional habitat projects. Phase IV will continue habitat treatments on an additional 6,500+ acres over a five-year period and expand project work to include additional bird species, including, but not limited to, Red-headed Woodpecker and Sharp-tailed Grouse.

### **Design and Scope of Work**

In Young Forest Conservation Phases I-III (2013-present), American Bird Conservancy (ABC) completed 9,204 acres of breeding habitat projects for the Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA), American Woodcock (AMWO), Ruffed Grouse (RUGR), and associated early successional forest and brushland species. To achieve this, ABC worked collaboratively with County, Tribal, State, Federal, and NGO partners. In Phase IV, ABC will continue to use science-based best management practices (BMPs) to implement projects on permanently protected lands, creating 6,500+ acres of habitat over five years.

In Phase IV, ABC will continue to prioritize projects in early successional deciduous forest habitats, and expand to include additional complimentary treatments in mixed forest covertypes to benefit young forest cohorts such as White-throated Sparrow, Veery, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. ABC will also complete a limited number of projects in adjacent brushland and oak savanna habitats to benefit Red-headed Woodpecker (RHWO) and Sharp-tailed Grouse (STGR). Projects will be completed using science-based best management practices within consensus focal regions.

From 2015-2018, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology finished a program to monitor species response on Phase I-II project sites. Monitors evaluated point locations within ABC-managed sites, observing a positive effect on GWWA and AMWO occupancy, resulting in >90% relative occupancy on shrubland data points of managed sites in Minnesota by year three. GWWA density nearly doubled and AMWO density increased to 1 male/4.84 acres.

Cutting projects emulate natural disturbance by reducing the density of woody vegetation (mostly brush) in non-commercial stands to create nesting, brood rearing, and browsing habitat. Mature trees and patchy, woody structure are retained to create site-level structural diversity to maintain perches for male GWWAs to claim territory and attract females, while providing nesting and forage for associated wildlife species.

Prescribed fire projects will be implemented in disturbance dependent habitats within established burn units with approved burn plans in forest, oak savanna, and shrubland habitats. Treatments will be completed on sites that have become overgrown with brush species that reduce ecological heterogeneity and limit the habitat's viability to meet life-cycle needs of a suite of migratory and resident bird species. The loss or degradation of these habitat types and transition zones greatly reduces the capacity of these areas to support robust wildlife populations.

Planting projects will focus on creating young forest habitat, expanding forest contiguity, and increasing habitat connectivity. Focal areas include, but are not limited to, DNR Wildlife Management Areas, Audubon Minnesota Important Bird Areas, and focal management regions for at-risk bird species.

Treatment of invasive species or woody encroachment via herbicide application may be implemented if

complimentary to other projects described herein. Treatments will utilize guidance provided by the Minnesota Management Plan for Invasive Species, written by the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council.

ABC provides technical and project management assistance to partners for all project phases, while engaging in cooperative forums, outreach, and continuing education associated with forest habitat. ABC's collaborative network and technical experience implementing habitat projects enables us to work across jurisdictional boundaries and address landscape-level priorities while meeting site-level goals.

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

Minnesota is a key state in an international initiative to conserve AMWO and GWWA, Minnesota Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), across their full life-cycle ranges. ABC also collaborates with international partners in Central and South America to conserve GWWA wintering habitat, while implementing a regional program throughout the Great Lakes.

GWWA and AMWO breed in young forest and shrubland habitats within diverse, contiguous, deciduous and mixed forest landscapes. Minnesota holds the largest remaining breeding population of GWWA of any U.S. state and the second largest population of AMWO. Rangewide habitat loss and degradation has led to GWWA population declines of approximately 68% since 1966. As a result, GWWA is a Partners in Flight (PIF) Red Watch List Species and has been considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. AMWO populations steadily declined over the last quarter century at a rate of 1-2% per year and is on the 2016 North American Bird Conservation Initiative State of the Birds Watch List. The GWWA Status Review and Conservation Plan and the AMWO Conservation Plan identify 38 bird species of conservation concern frequently associated with GWWA and AMWO habitat.

Red-headed Woodpecker (RHWO) breeds in oak savanna/brush prairie habitats. It is a Minnesota SGCN and is identified as a PIF Species of Continental Importance, declining 54% across its range since 1966.

Sharp-tailed Grouse (STGR) is a SGCN that breeds in brushland and grassland habitats and occupies a fraction of its historical range in Minnesota. Populations declined 53-70% in Minnesota between 1980-1993. A state-wide management plan was recently written to address this decline, which is associated with habitat loss and degradation from succession, fragmentation, and conversion.

Where present on the landscape and given an appropriate forest matrix that fulfills additional habitat requirements, projects associated with this proposal will also provide habitat benefits for the following Minnesota SGCN:

- Eastern Whip-poor-will
- Brown Thrasher
- Veery
- Black-billed Cuckoo
- White-throated Sparrow
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Sedge Wren
- Elk
- Moose
- Willow Flycatcher
- Least Flycatcher
- Brown Thrasher

Additional Non-SGCN of note that also benefit from this work include:

- Ruffed Grouse
- Eastern Towhee
- Indigo Bunting
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Snowshoe Hare
- Yellow Warbler

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

Since 1970, North American bird populations indicated a net loss of 2.9 billion birds or 29% of total population abundance across all species. Phase IV offers a unique opportunity to build upon the success of Phases I-III to assist in the recovery of at-risk bird species through strategic habitat planning and management in critical habitats.

- GWWA has experienced a 68% population decline since 1966. Minnesota contains approximately 10% of the breeding range, though 45% of the population breeds here each year.
- AMWO populations have steadily declined 1-2% annually over the last quarter century. Minnesota is home to the second-largest AMWO breeding population in the country.
- RHWO has been declining 54% across its range since 1966. In Minnesota this decline was more precipitous, falling 6.3% per year between 1966-2012.
- STGR declined >53% in Minnesota between 1980-1993, leading to a close of the hunting season in 2021.

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

ABC will continue to prioritize young forest and brushland habitat for GWWA, AMWO, and RUGR in Phase IV, while also including openlands and oak savanna habitat treatments to benefit STGR and RHWO. In Phases I-III, ABC had numerous project opportunities to complete openlands and oak savanna habitat projects on sites within relative proximity to work being conducted for GWWA and AMWO, but could not complete them because those projects fell outside of the scope of work described in previous OHF agreements. In response to this need and opportunity, the Phase IV scope has been expanded to support collaboration between ABC project managers and natural resource partners to implement a more holistic conservation approach that impacts a broader range of focal species, while expanding habitat corridors or complexes and increasing habitat contiguity.

The work outlined in this project advances the scientifically-established goals set forth in the GWWA Status Review and Conservation Plan, AMWO Conservation Plan, RHWO Minnesota Conservation Plan, and Minnesota STGR Management Plan. All work is completed within focal areas identified in these plans and using associated, science-based best management practices. Projects are designed with consideration to site, neighborhood, and landscape level biological and ecological factors, as well as integrating species considerations across adjacent habitat types when applicable.

ABC also created a Minnesota focal area through the use of a combination of GIS data layers to emphasize a landscape level focus on locating project sites within contiguous forest and brushland complexes on protected lands in Minnesota. We also utilize a habitat occupancy models developed by the Natural Resources Research Institute, project monitoring data collected by agency partners and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas species monitoring data, and MN DNR's Natural Heritage Information System when determining priority habitat areas. This additional work is reflected in the ABC Minnesota Northwoods BirdScape, which is a target investment area for conservation based on its importance to focal species and potential for

landscape-scale impact. By relying on established science, ABC ensures that our work produces habitat required to meet landscape goals that provide meaningful impact for target species.

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

- Partners in Flight Conservation Plans for States and Physiographic Regions
- Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Projects Joint Ventures Plan

### **Explain how this proposal 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.**

Focal species included herein are expected to experience range contraction or shift as climate change impacts native habitats. Increasing average temperature and changes in precipitation patterns are projected to continue in the coming decades. As a result, alterations in native plant community composition due to climate change is projected to continue.

Due to this and the life-cycle needs of focal species, ABC looks beyond site-level habitat considerations when designing projects, and incorporates neighborhood considerations to promote habitat connectivity and forest contiguity into the planning process. ABC also designs its projects to emulate natural disturbance and increase biological, ecological, and age class diversity to create high-quality habitat for focal species and associated species that share this habitat. Promoting contiguity, connectivity, and diversity increases habitat resilience and adaptability to climate change impacts, and facilitates movement of native communities as they adapt to shifting habitats and ranges.

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

#### **Forest / Prairie Transition**

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

#### **Northern Forest**

- Restore and enhance habitat on existing protected properties, with preference to habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened species identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey

### **Describe how this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife, and if not permanent outcomes, why it is important to undertake at this time:**

In addition to collaborative conservation for GWWA, AMWO, STGR, RHWO, and RUGR to maintain robust populations in Minnesota, ABC has been highly successful in establishing a legacy of education, outreach, and adaptive management for these species that will continue for years to come.

Since 2013, ABC has led full life-cycle conservation and outreach initiatives to provide habitat research and BMPs to the conservation community. Through this process, ABC has increased awareness of the importance of landscape-level planning to maintain a dynamic mosaic of forest cover types and age classes, while providing project assistance implementing thousands of acres of habitat projects on public and private lands throughout the Great Lakes.

ABC also worked with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to complete a pre- and post-treatment habitat monitoring program to further refine BMPs to benefit GWWA, AMWO, and related species.

The growth of this initiative into a larger legacy that benefits wildlife throughout Minnesota is reflected in ABC's role as a founding member of multiple conservation partnerships that bring together a diverse community of agency and NGO partners. The Minnesota Forest Habitat Collaborative was founded in 2016 to identify, promote, and deliver collaborative conservation, outreach, and research programs that assist natural resource managers to maintain, enhance, and restore Minnesota's forest habitat to benefit resident and migratory wildlife species. The Forestry for Minnesota Birds Initiative was founded in 2021 to benefit native bird species across Minnesota's forest landscape by designing and sharing a conservation toolkit for landowners and natural resource professionals.

## Outcomes

### **Programs in forest-prairie transition region:**

- Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need ~ *The majority of work will likely be completed in the Northern Forest Region, with a smaller percentage of project acres falling within the Forest-Prairie Transition Region. In Phases I-III, a number of sites were located at the border of these two regions and in Phase IV this is likely to continue with some prescribed fire units also falling in the forest-prairie region. This region is included in this proposal to avoid revising this input to accommodate online reporting if a similar circumstance occurs in Phase IV. Outcomes for this region are evaluated as described for the Northern Forest Region.*

### **Programs in the northern forest region:**

- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ~ *ABC provides site identification, project design, and project management assistance to cooperative partners for all project phases. ABC project coordinators work hand-in-hand with partners to manage project implementation. ABC also uses GIS to track completed work via GPS units and satellite imagery, allowing us to assess final completed acres with the highest degree of accuracy possible. Project work is also evaluated by project coordinators that manage ongoing project operations and visit completed sites to confirm that they fall within the post treatment conditions defined in the project management plan.*

### **What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this proposal?**

- N/A

### **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 only requests supplemental funds for planning and implementation of the habitat projects described herein and does not supplant any existing funds of public and tribal agency partners.

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

ABC has a mission to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. To realize this mission, we have built an organizational structure that continuously supports species of priority concern throughout the Americas without relying exclusively on any single funding source. As such, this project is one aspect of a collaborative, full life-cycle conservation initiative on public, tribal, and private lands for the focal species identified herein. Due to the scope of this initiative, numerous state, federal, and private funding sources will continue to be



used to maintain quality habitat in breeding, migratory, and wintering ranges now and in the future. Though the capacity to complete this vital work would be diminished if future MN OHF funding is not available, ABC would continue to seek alternate funding to maintain this and complimentary programs. Further, by continuing to engage a broad network of partners while promoting education and outreach of priority species BMPs, ABC’s conservation efforts to promote early successional habitat has resulted in a greater awareness within the natural resources community of how to best utilize the most recent research and new funding sources to implement quality habitat treatments to benefit these focal species.

**Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2024-2029	Public Funding (MN OHF IV)	Complete 6500+ Acres of Habitat Treatments on Permanently Protected Land	Continue to Refine BMPs by Supporting Research and Monitoring	Continue to Expand Network of Partner Agencies and Organizations
2029-2034	Private Donations and Public Funding (TBD)	Continue Public and Private Lands Programs	Continue Outreach and Education Programs for Priority Species	Continue to Monitor and Evaluate Focal Species Response to Young Forest Conservation Program

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

ABC celebrates not only the diversity of birds and their habitats, but also the diversity of all who celebrate and conserve birds. ABC is committed to supporting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) within our organization and across the bird conservation community. ABC has established a JEDI program made up of staff from all departments who meet monthly to design best practices for expanding ABC's engagement in all communities, economies, and cultures.

Advancing our JEDI program means working collaboratively with diverse partners throughout the Americas. We carry out our bird conservation work through numerous partnerships, including public and tribal agencies, industry professionals, private citizens, and nonprofits throughout the Americas. When possible through our tribal partnerships, we incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge into decision making for habitat management. We also establish and nurture new partnerships that help to expand birding and bird conservation to more people.

When recruiting new staff, ABC reaches beyond traditional networks. When implementing projects, ABC posts all subcontracts in public forums to ensure we attract appropriately qualified candidates. We also work with our project partners to identify local contractors and post projects on their forums when available. We review all applications/proposals and evaluate applicants based upon qualities that match our project or program requirements. ABC embraces and celebrates diversity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, opinions, politics, and physical ability.

**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 or on lands to be acquired in this program?**

Yes

**Where does the activity take place?**

- WMA
- WPA
- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements
- County/Municipal
- Refuge Lands
- State Forests
- Other : Tribal Lands, State Parks

**Land Use**

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

No

**Will neonicotinoid pesticide products be used within any activities of this proposal?**

No

**Other OHF Appropriation Awards**

**Have you received OHF dollars in the past through LSOHC that are current OPEN appropriations?**

Yes

Approp Year	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
2020	\$1,275,000	\$700,000	\$575,000	54.9%
Totals	\$1,275,000	\$700,000	\$575,000	54.9%

**Timeline**

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Complete 6500+ acres (1300/yr) of Habitat Enhancement on Permanently Protected Lands	July 2029



**Budget**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$900,000	\$310,000	American Bird Conservancy, USFWS Tamarac NWR, USFWS Rice Lake NWR	\$1,210,000
Contracts	\$2,050,000	-	-	\$2,050,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$50,000	\$45,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR and Rice Lake NWR	\$95,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$35,000	\$81,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR and Rice Lake NWR Office/Facility Use	\$116,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	\$29,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR Equipment Use and ABC Computers	\$34,000
Supplies/Materials	\$70,000	-	-	\$70,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,110,000</b>	<b>\$465,000</b>	-	<b>\$3,575,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Rice Lake NWR Public Lands Program Staff	0.15	5.0	-	\$75,000	USFWS Rice Lake NWR	\$75,000
Tamarac NWR Public Lands Program Staff	0.25	4.0	-	\$160,000	USFWS Tamarac NWR	\$160,000
ABC MN Project Director	0.4	4.0	\$100,000	\$75,000	American Bird Conservancy	\$175,000
ABC MN Project Coordinator	1.0	5.0	\$400,000	-	-	\$400,000
ABC MN Project Coordinator	1.0	5.0	\$400,000	-	-	\$400,000

**Amount of Request:** \$3,110,000

**Amount of Leverage:** \$465,000

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 14.95%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$935,000

As a % of the total request: 30.06%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

Total Leverage (from above)	Amount Confirmed	% of Total Leverage	Amount Anticipated	% of Total Leverage
\$465,000	\$465,000	100.0%	-	0.0%

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**

ABC received \$385000 in in-kind leverage from Tamarac/Rice Lake NWRs for office space and programmatic support (scalable per year). ABC will provide \$25000/yr starting year 3 for Public Lands Director, and \$5000 for computers.

ABC expects to provide additional leverage via Minnesota Private Lands Forester salaries beginning 7/2025.

**Does this proposal 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?**

Target acres to be competed will range from 1000-1300 acres/year given two Project Coordinator Positions. Budget scaling will remain in this range unless reduced budgets require ABC to remove one Coordinator position from the final budget, which would result in a reduced final acreage goal of 500-700 acres/yr.

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

ABC will evaluate scalability of DSS and Personnel based on multiple factors, including acreage goals, number of Project Coordinators funding can support, and the number of implementation years final budgets are projected to support. All of these budget items will be adjusted proportionally though some differences in scalability may occur.

**If the project received 30% of the requested funding**

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

Target acres to be competed will range from 1000-1300 acres/year. Budget scaling will remain in this range unless reduced budgets require ABC to remove one of the Project Coordinator positions from the final budget, which would result in a reduced final acreage goal of 500-700 acres/yr.

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

DSS and Personnel budget lines will remain proportional to target acreage goals. ABC will evaluate DSS and Personnel based on multiple factors, including final target acreage goals, number of Project Coordinators funding can support, and the number of implementation years final budgets are projected to be able to support.

**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?**

There will be one year of overlap between Phase III and Phase IV. This allows a seamless transition between Phases and the ability to continue completing projects and support Project Coordinators without budget shortfalls or dips in project accomplishments due to funding being exhausted. For example, the overlapping year between Phases I-II and Phases II-III enabled the ABC Public Lands Coordinator to utilize all remaining project funds from the previous Phase and begin using project funding from the subsequent Phase immediately.

**Contracts**

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

Funds will be used to hire contractors to complete habitat projects described herein. This work will concentrate on hiring contractors for brush cutting, planting, prescribed fire, and invasive species removal projects. This proposal is designed to maximize funds spent directly on project implementation.

**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**

No allocated travel funds will be used for purposes other than traditional travel costs: mileage, food, and lodging.

**I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:**

Yes

**Direct Support Services**

**How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?**

The Direct Support Services budget was determined using timesheet data from MN OHF programmatic funding for grant implementation support requirements for Young Forest Conservation Phases I-III.

**Other Equipment/Tools**

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

Field equipment to be purchased includes items such as rubber boots, rain gear, mosquito nets, flagging tape, forester's vests, GPS units (for contractor and Coordinator use), roller drum maintenance (such as repairing breaks to the hitch assembly), forestry prisms, forestry paint, etc..

**Federal Funds**

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

Yes

**Are the funds confirmed?**

Yes

- In Kind : \$385,000

**Is Confirmation Document attached?**

[Yes](#)

**Output Tables**

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
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	0	0	6,500	0	6,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,500</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$3,110,000	-	\$3,110,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,110,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,110,000</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	500	0	0	6,000	6,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,500</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$240,000	-	-	\$2,870,000	\$3,110,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$240,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$2,870,000</b>	<b>\$3,110,000</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$478	-

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	\$480	-	-	\$478

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

Parcels

**Sign-up Criteria?**

[Yes - Sign up criteria is attached](#)

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

This parcel table reflects the partners that ABC has identified as project partners in Phase IV. All of these partners have worked with ABC in the past to complete habitat projects in Phases I-III or through other funding opportunities and are eager to continue to work with ABC in Phase IV. ABC will also continue to work to identify additional partners to work with throughout Phase IV.

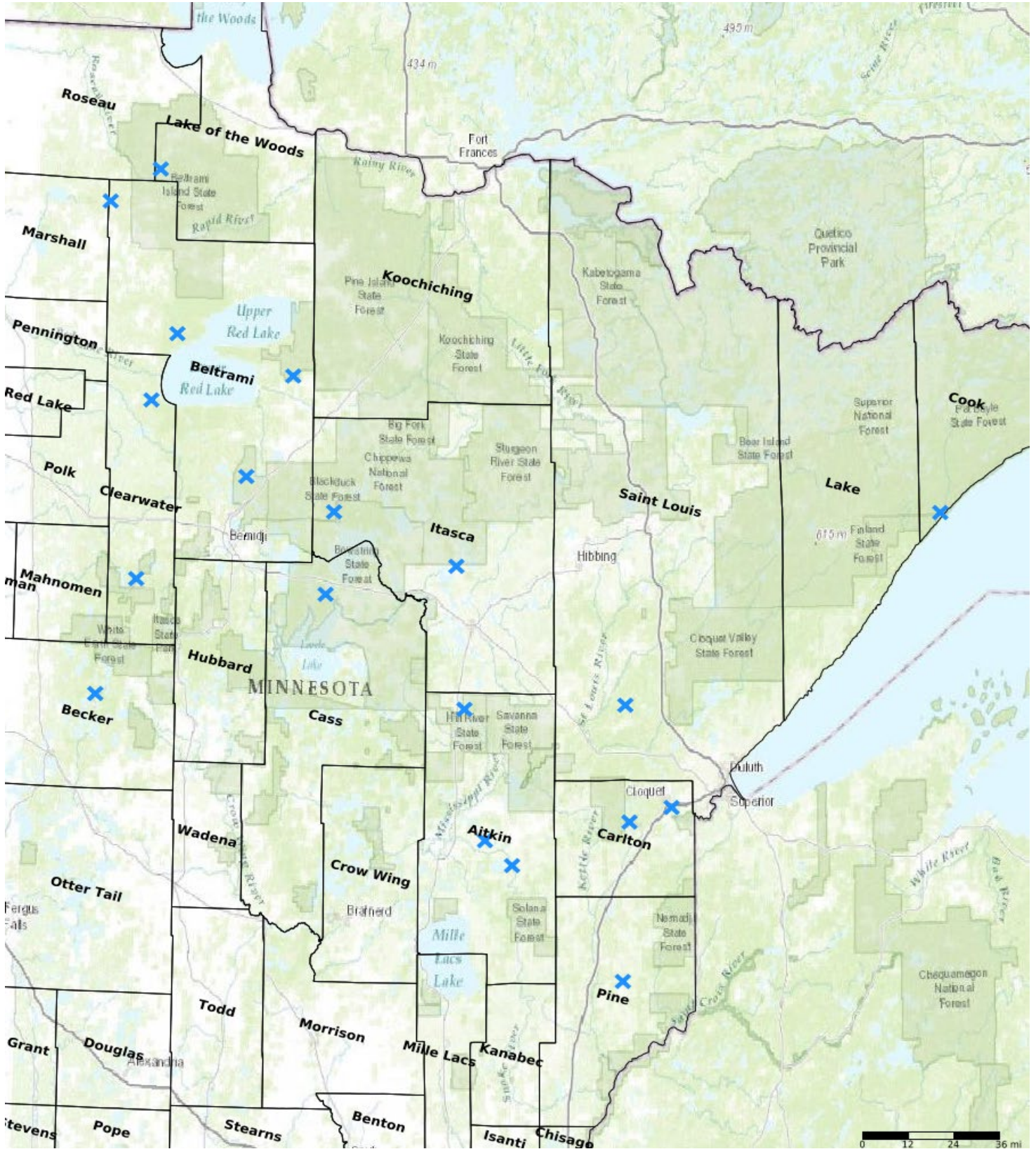
Prospective project sites will be evaluated using the attached selection criteria and via collaboration with public, tribal, NGO foresters and biologists using habitat and species best management practices. Project identification and design utilize the Sign-up Criteria included herein and also the management guidance set forth in the GWWA Status Review and Conservation Plan, AMWO Conservation Plan, RHW0 Minnesota Conservation Plan, and Minnesota STGR Management Plan, and other associated resources. All work is completed within focal areas identified in these plans or by ABC agency and organizational partners. Projects are designed with consideration to site, neighborhood, and landscape level biological and ecological factors, as well as integrating species considerations across adjacent habitat types when applicable.

**Restore / Enhance Parcels**

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Aitkin Co. #1	Aitkin	04725201	250	\$78,750	Yes
Rice Lake NWR #1	Aitkin	04723231	250	\$78,750	Yes
MN DNR Aitkin #1	Aitkin	05225219	200	\$63,000	Yes
Tamarac NWR #1	Becker	14139227	500	\$157,500	Yes
MN DNR Wapiti WMA #1	Beltrami	15838230	1,000	\$315,000	Yes
MN DNR Bemidji #1	Beltrami	15230219	250	\$78,750	Yes
Beltrami Co. #1	Beltrami	14832206	400	\$126,000	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #1	Beltrami	15335207	750	\$236,250	Yes
Carlton Co. #1	Carlton	04818217	400	\$126,000	Yes
MN DNR Cloquet #1	Carlton	04916231	200	\$63,000	Yes
Chippewa NF #1	Cass	14429203	100	\$31,500	Yes
Red Lake Reservation #2	Clearwater	15137224	750	\$236,250	Yes
White Earth Reservation #1	Clearwater	14537229	100	\$31,500	Yes
Superior NF #1	Cook	05905236	100	\$31,500	Yes
Itasca Co. #1	Itasca	05726223	300	\$94,500	Yes
MN DNR Grand Rapids #1	Itasca	14729212	100	\$31,500	Yes
MN DNR Red Lake WMA #1	Lake of the Woods	15936220	300	\$94,500	Yes
Pine Co. #1	Pine	04319236	250	\$78,750	Yes
St. Louis Co. #1	St. Louis	05218218	300	\$94,500	Yes



### Parcel Map



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

# American Bird Conservancy (ABC): Young Forest Conservation Phase IV

## **Summary:**

In Young Forest Conservation Phases I-III (2013-present), American Bird Conservancy (ABC) completed 9,204 acres of habitat projects for the Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA), American Woodcock (AMWO), Ruffed Grouse, and associated early successional forest and brushland species. ABC worked collaboratively with County, Tribal, State, Federal, and NGO partners.

In Phase IV, ABC will continue to use science-based best management practices to implement projects on permanently protected lands, targeting 6,500+ acres over five years. ABC will continue to prioritize projects in early successional deciduous forest habitats, but expand the habitat focus to include additional treatments to benefit additional Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) young forest cohorts such as White-throated Sparrow, Veery, and Rose-breasted grosbeak in mixed forest habitats. ABC will also complete a limited number of projects in adjacent brushland and oak savanna habitats to benefit Red-headed Woodpecker (RHWO), Sharp-tailed Grouse (STGR), and associated species. All projects will be conducted within consensus focal regions.

From 2015-2018, monitoring teams from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology evaluated point locations within ABC managed sites and observed a positive effect of treatment on GWWA and AMWO occupancy, resulting in >90% relative occupancy on shrubland data points of ABC managed sites in Minnesota by year three. GWWA density nearly doubled and AMWO density increased to 1 male per 4.84 acres.

## **Description of Need:**

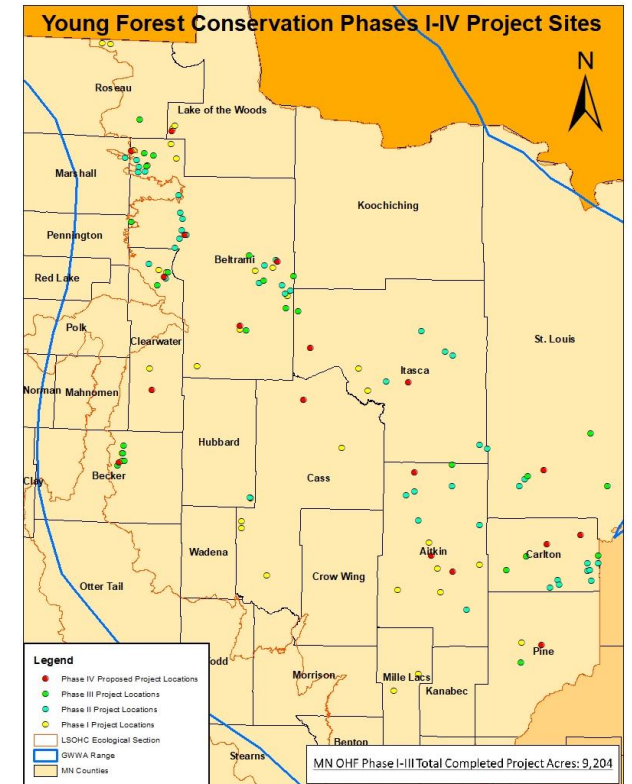
Since 1970, North American bird populations indicated a net loss of 2.9 billion birds or 29% of total abundance, including a 33% decline across all boreal forest bird species. GWWA has experienced a 68% GWWA population decline since 1966. Minnesota contains approximately 10% of the GWWA breeding range, though 45% of the population breeds here each year. It is listed as a Partners in Flight (PIF) Red Watch List species and has been considered for Federal ESA listing. AMWO populations have steadily declined 1-2% annually over the last quarter century. AMWO is on the 2016 NABCI State of the Birds Watch List. Minnesota is home to the second-largest AMWO breeding population in the country. RHWO is identified as a PIF Species of Continental Importance, declining 54% across its range since 1966. In Minnesota, this decline was more precipitous, falling 6.3% per year between 1966-2012. STGR declined >53% in Minnesota between 1980-1993, leading to a close of the hunting season in 2021.

## **Project Design:**

Cutting projects will concentrate on emulating natural disturbance by hiring contractors to cut woody species (primarily brush) in non-commercial stands to create nesting, brood rearing, and browsing habitat. Mature trees and patchy, woody structure are retained during project operations. This retention provides site-level structural diversity to maintain perches for male GWWA to claim territory and attract females, while providing nesting and forage for associated young forest species. Retention will be reduced in open brushland and oak savanna to meet the habitat suitability needs of STGR (10-40%) and RHWO (<25%), respectively.

Contractors will also be hired to implement prescribed fire in disturbance dependent native plant communities within established burn units with approved burn plans in forest, oak savanna, and shrubland habitats. Treatments will be completed in ecological communities that have become overgrown with brush species that reduce ecological heterogeneity and limit the habitat's viability to meet the life-cycle needs of a suite of migratory and resident wildlife. The loss or degradation of these habitat types and transition zones can greatly reduce the capacity of these areas to support robust populations of game and nongame bird species.

Planting projects will focus on creating young forest habitat and expanding forest contiguity, as well as increasing habitat connectivity. Priority will be given to working in locations with a management focus of creating high quality wildlife habitat. Focal areas include, but are not limited to DNR Wildlife Management Areas, Audubon Minnesota Important Bird Areas, and focal management regions for at-risk bird species.







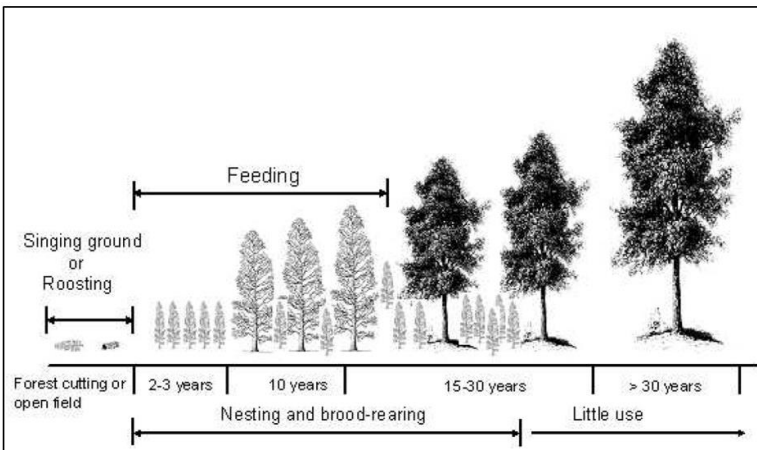
Left to right: Scott Abel, Timber Sales Administrator, Red Lake DNR; Al Pemberton, Director, Red Lake DNR; Peter Dieser, MN Lakes Public Lands Coordinator, ABC; Kent Sundseth, Refuge Manager, USFWS Tamarac NWR. (Photo by Sara Ruffing, Red Lake DNR.)



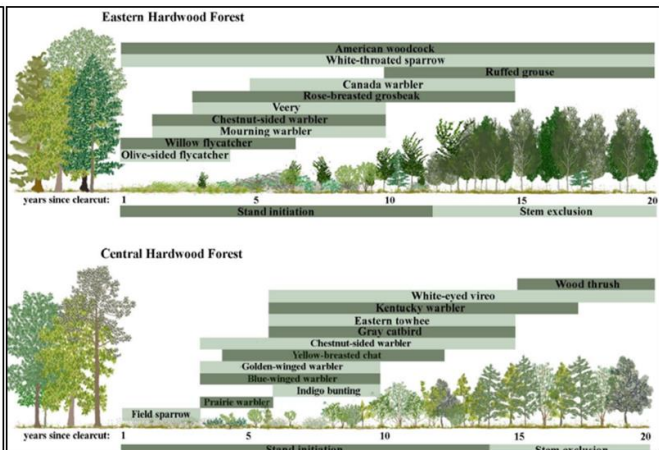
Before



After



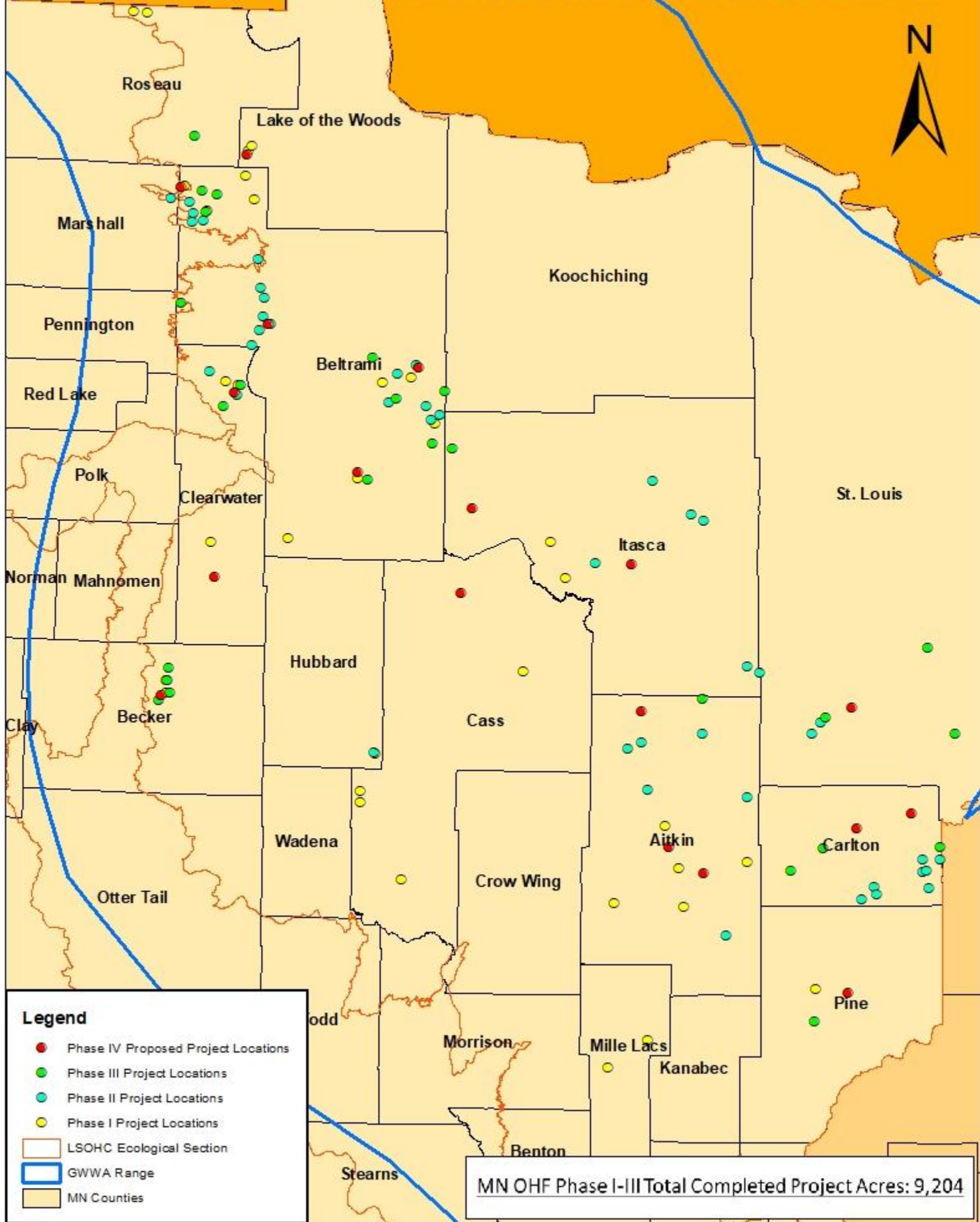
Key habitat components required by American Woodcock in relation to forest succession.



Avian site occupation following forest treatment for Eastern and Central Hardwoods.



# Young Forest Conservation Phases I-IV Project Sites



# **ABC Young Forest Conservation Phase IV Sign Up Criteria**

In Phase IV, ABC will work with agency and organizational partners to identify and implement noncommercial forest, brushland, and open land habitat projects on protected lands to benefit Minnesota bird Species of Conservation Need (SGCN).

## **Non-commercial Cutting:**

### ***Deciduous Forest, Mixed Forest or Forest Brushland Habitat:***

Prospective sites are overgrown with shrub and sapling species reducing their habitat usability by early successional forest and brushland bird species. Targeted cutting projects have the potential to create nesting and brood rearing habitat for Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and/or associated young forest and brushland species. Potential project sites must be closed canopy brush or forest systems that cannot be completed using commercial harvest practices. 10-15 trees will be retained when present. When 10-15 trees are not present, sites will retain 25-50% shrub/sapling cover distributed throughout the site. In some cases, brush will not be retained if sufficient tree cover exists.

Additional site and neighborhood level considerations include:

- Conifer component < approximately 30% (some sites may exceed this total for focal species including Veery, White-throated Sparrow, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak)
- Mix of mature and early successional forest age classes
- May maximize forest edge with legacy patches and/or feathered borders
- Created habitat is  $\leq 5$  mi (preferably  $\leq 1$  mi) from other breeding habitat patches

Additional habitats such as wet meadow/Carr systems, oak-aspen woodlands, and oak savanna will also be considered for cutting operations in Phase IV. Brush cutting operations will emulate natural disturbance and may compliment additional habitat treatments, such as implementation of prescribed fire. Standing snags will also be preferentially retained, in groups if possible, for Red-headed Woodpecker nesting sites and foraging perches.

**Oak-aspen woodlands and savannas:** Target project areas ideally contain 25-50% cover by forb species such as northern bedstraw, wild sarsaparilla, and goldenrod species. Shrub layer density is ideally approximately  $\leq 25\%$  and common species are bur oak, juneberry, chokecherry, American hazelnut, poison ivy, and gray dogwood. Canopies range from 10-50% (ideal range) and most common species are bur oak and quaking aspen. Sites will be evaluated for potential cutting projects if they exceed 25% brush cover.

**Wet meadow/Carr Systems:** In the absence of fire, graminoid and forb dominated communities can become overrun by shrubs, making this habitat less desirable to SGCN such as Sharp-tailed Grouse. Management in these native plant communities identifies the need for regular disturbance (preferably fire) every 5-10 years or as needed to set back succession. Shrub densities of 10-40% across the focal management units are ideal. Management will be prioritized on sites that exceed this density range and have been confirmed to have a breeding lek present in previous years.

## **Planting Projects:**

Planting projects will focus on expanding contiguous forest habitat in deciduous, mixed, and conifer cover types into areas that are presently unforested (such as fields adjacent to contiguous forest blocks). Additionally, planting projects may be designed to increase forest diversity and thermal cover, such as planting conifer clumps in deciduous forest stands to create thermal cover for Ruffed Grouse. Priority will

be given to working in locations with a management focus of creating high quality wildlife habitat. Focal areas include, but are not limited to DNR Wildlife Management Areas, Audubon Minnesota Important Bird Areas, and focal management regions for at-risk bird species.

### **Prescribed Fire:**

Prescribed fire projects will be completed in disturbance-dependent native plant communities within established burn units with approved burn plans in forest, oak savanna, and shrubland habitats. Treatments will be completed in ecological communities that have become overgrown with brush species that reduce ecological heterogeneity and limit the habitat's viability to meet the life-cycle needs of a suite of migratory and resident wildlife. The loss or degradation of these habitat types and transition zones can greatly reduce the capacity of these areas to support robust populations of game and nongame bird species.

Habitats that once depended on low to mid severity fire events to maintain their natural plant community composition risk losing their ability to support the bird species that once occupied those systems. Prescribed fire implementation can also provide a number of additional benefits to these habitats such as

- 1) Reducing the density of shrub layer and allow native forbs and grasses to become or remain established
- 2) Consuming excess fuel and reducing ladder fuels, which mitigates the risk of future high severity fire events
- 3) Creating openings to allow advance regeneration of future canopy trees to become established
- 4) Reducing the establishment and spread of invasive and pest species

### **Focal habitats for prescribed fire implementation include, but are not limited to:**

*Oak-aspen Woodlands and Savannas:* These plant communities historically experienced frequent surface fires and return intervals. Target project areas ideally contain 25-50% cover by forb species such as northern bedstraw, wild sarsaparilla, and goldenrod spp. Shrub layer density is 25-100% and common species are bur oak, juneberry, chokecherry, American hazelnut, poison ivy, and gray dogwood. Canopies range from 5-75% and most common species are bur oak and quaking aspen.

*Wet meadow/Carr Systems:* In the absence of fire, graminoid and forb dominated communities can become overrun by shrubs, making this habitat less desirable to species of concern such as Sharp-tailed Grouse. Management in these native plant communities identifies the need for regular disturbance (preferably fire) every 5-10 years or as needed to set back succession. Shrub densities of 10-40% across the focal management units are ideal and sites will be prioritized that exceed this range (indicating shrub density is beginning to exceed ideal habitat limits). Management will also be prioritized on sites that have been confirmed to have a breeding lek present in previous years.

**Invasive or Woody Species Removal:** Treatment of invasive species or encroaching woody species will be limited in scope, and only implemented if complimentary to other habitat projects described herein. Priority will be given to implementing treatments (hand pulling, herbicide application, etc.) on sites where encroaching or invasive species threaten the integrity and usability of native habitats by at-risk bird species and associated wildlife.

Treatment and removal of invasive species will utilize guidance provided by the [Minnesota Management Plan for Invasive Species](#), written by the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council.



## AITKIN COUNTY LAND DEPARTMENT

Aitkin County Government Center  
307 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW, Room 310  
Aitkin, MN 56431

Dennis.thompson@co.aitkin.mn.us  
Phone: 218-927-

May 19, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Aitkin County Land Department, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Dennis Thompson  
Land Commissioner  
Aitkin County Land Department



# Beltrami County

Natural Resource Management

701 Minnesota Ave NW, Suite 234 – Bemidji MN 56601-3178

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May 9, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Beltrami County Natural Resource Management (NRM) Department, I am writing in support of the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund titled "*Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*", which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit the golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with Beltrami County to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern whip-poor-will, Canada warbler, red-headed Woodpecker, spruce grouse, and sharp-tailed grouse.

ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from these grants through successful implementation of earlier phases of its Public Lands Program. The NRM Department has been privileged to collaborate with the ABC on many wildlife habitat projects since 2013.

The Beltrami County NRM Department is responsible for the sustainable natural resource management on 146,500 acres of tax-forfeited lands. The Department is committed to multiple use management of its lands including forest management, wildlife habitat management, and recreation. Our goal for habitat projects is the same as the ABC's goal of providing young forests and young wetland shrubs to benefit a wide variety of wildlife species. An avenue such as the ABC and the programs provided are vital to the regeneration of wetland shrubs. These species have little or no commercial value and, without financial support, the regeneration of these species and habitat would be difficult.

Working in collaboration with other agencies and land managers, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted areas to create high-quality breeding habitat for the golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, and ruffed grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Young Forest Habitat Initiative on Minnesota's public lands that has produced 9,204 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to ensure range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need.

I fully support the work outlined in ABC's proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future. This proposal recognizes that many wildlife species depend not only on young upland forest, but also on quality shrub wetlands. This project recognizes that the creation of young forest habitat needs to be done in the broader context of sustainable forest management plans that embrace the importance of sustaining a complex patchwork of upland and lowland forest types.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Moore  
Beltrami County  
Natural Resource Management Department Director



# CARLTON COUNTY

## Land Department

1630 County Road 61 • Carlton, MN 55718  
218-384-9179

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Gregory J. Bernu, *Land Commissioner* • Mark P. Westphal, *Forester*

May 8, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of Carlton County Minnesota, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled Young Forest Conservation Phase IV, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Gregory J Bernu  
Land Commissioner  
Carlton County

# **ITASCA COUNTY LAND DEPARTMENT**

**1177 LaPrairie Avenue  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744-3322  
218-327-2855 • Fax: 218-327-4160**



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May 9, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President, American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Itasca County Land Department, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species.

The American Bird Conservancy has worked collaboratively with partners, including the Itasca County Land Department, throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota. Through collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I expect that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV so I support the work outlined in the MN OHC proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

*Kory Cease*

Land Commissioner  
Itasca County Land Department

Equal Opportunity Employer



## ***PINE COUNTY LAND DEPARTMENT***

1610 Highway 23 North  
Sandstone, MN 55072  
(320) 216-4225

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May 19, 2023

Mike Parr  
President- American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Mr. Parr,

I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue their initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and other early successional habitat species.

The winter of 2021/2022 the American Bird Conservancy (working with Peter Dieser) conducted habitat improvement projects on two sites consisting of a total of 42 acres on Pine County Memorial Forest Lands. The project involved restoring over-mature brushlands to young regrowth to benefit early successional habitat species. Without their initiation and involvement this habitat improvement would not have occurred.

As I understand, the American Bird Conservancy has worked collaboratively with other partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. I strongly support this project and believe the American Bird Conservancy's ongoing efforts will promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

Based on the American Bird Conservancy's successful habitat projects that have been implemented through Phases I- III, I am confident that Phase IV will continue in the successful management of creating diverse forest habitat. I support the goals and work of the American Bird Conservancy as outlined in the proposal and look forward to working with them on future projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Beck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Beck  
Pine County Land Commissioner/Forester





# Saint Louis County

Land and Minerals Dept. • [www.stlouiscountymn.gov](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov) • [landdept@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:landdept@stlouiscountymn.gov)

**Julie Marinucci**  
Land Commissioner

May 19, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the St. Louis County Land and Minerals Department, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Jason Meyer  
Deputy Director  
St. Louis County Land and Minerals Department

Duluth Government Services Center  
320 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Ste 302  
Duluth, MN 55802  
(218) 726-2606  
Fax: (218) 726-2600

Pike Lake Area Office  
5713 Old Miller Trunk Hwy  
Duluth, MN 55811  
(218) 625-3700  
Fax: (218) 625-3733

Virginia Area Office  
7820 Highway 135  
Virginia, MN 55792  
(218) 742-9898  
Fax: (218) 742-9870



# WHITE EARTH RESERVATION

CHAIRMAN Michael Fairbanks SECRETARY-TREASURER Leonard Alan Roy  
DISTRICT I Raymond Auginaush, Sr. DISTRICT II Kathy Goodwin DISTRICT III Cheryl "Annie" Jackson

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May 17, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the White Earth Reservation Department of Natural Resources, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Doug McArthur  
Wildlife Manager  
White Earth Natural Resources



# RED LAKE BAND of CHIPPEWA INDIANS

## RED LAKE NATION HEADQUARTERS



**OFFICERS:**  
DARRELL G. SEKI., Chairman  
SAMUEL R. STRONG, Secretary  
VERNELLE LUSSIER, Treasurer

**DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES:**  
GARY NELSON  
GLENDA J. MARTIN  
JULIUS "TOADY" THUNDER  
ALLEN PEMBERTON  
ROBERT "BOB" SMITH  
DONALD GOOD, SR.  
ADRIAN BEALIEU  
MICHELLE (BARRETT) COBENAIS

**ADVISORY COUNCIL:**  
7 HEREDITARY CHIEFS

PO Box 550, Red Lake, MN 56671

Phone 218-679-3341 • Fax 218-679-3378

May 11, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, I am writing in support of the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC's) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF): "*Young Forest Conservation, Phase IV*". This ongoing project has played an integral role in maintaining a healthy and dynamic balance of forest and brushland age classes at Red Lake and throughout Minnesota's forests. This proposal describes management activities that help ensure maintenance of critical wildlife habitats for multiple species of conservation need and concern, such as the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Bobcat, Canada Lynx, Elk, and White-tailed Deer.

Working in collaboration with county, state, federal and tribal agencies, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create important habitats for a number of wildlife species, by promoting a healthy and diverse mosaic of cover types on the landscape. The American Bird Conservancy and its partners have developed a successful habitat enhancement initiative in Minnesota that has produced 9,204 acres of high quality habitats since its inception in 2013.

With funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, ABC also implements a complimentary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. It is this integrated approach, landscape-level awareness and ability to manage projects across jurisdictional boundaries that has made the ABC and this program an essential partner in ongoing efforts to manage Minnesota's natural resources.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal to restore and maintain a dynamic mosaic of habitats across Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Allen D. Pemberton  
Redby District Representative  
Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians  
Director, Red Lake Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 279  
Red Lake, MN 56671

**TRIBAL COUNCIL Organized April 18, 1918** (Revised Constitution & By-Laws, January 6, 1959)

**CHIEF COUNCIL OF 1889:** May-dway-gwa-no-nind, Nah-guan-gwon-abe, Mays-co-co-caw-ay, Ahnah-me ay-ge-shig, Naw-ay-tah-wowb, Nah-wah-quay-ge-shg

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**File Code:** 2000  
**Date:** May 19, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of Chippewa National Forest, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota and within the Chippewa National Forest.

Please contact Todd Tisler, Fish and Wildlife Program Manager at [todd.tisler@usda.gov](mailto:todd.tisler@usda.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*for* MICHAEL STANSBERRY  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Todd Tisler



**File Code:** 2020  
**Date:**

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P.O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr

On behalf of Superior National Forest (USDA Forest Service), I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

THOMAS HALL  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Cheron Ferland; Matt Judd



May 19, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Avian Ecology Research Lab at the Natural Resources Research Institute, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which would continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance habitat to benefit the Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has proven its ability to execute forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of its previous Public Lands Program. This project has been a paradigm-setting effort, and will continue to be important for evolving the future of forest ecosystem conservation.

ABC has been an active conservation partner and has worked in collaboration with researchers, county, state, federal, and tribal agencies to understand needs and opportunities for habitat improvement across the state. Specifically, ABC uses science-based best management practices within targeted focal regions to create high-quality breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler. Importantly, the forest habitat treatments are beneficial for an entire suite of forested landscape species including species of conservation interest such as Canada Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Veery. This phase of the project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC and its partners to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

ABC has integrated collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research. ABC has been a leader in advocating best management practices for breeding birds and sharing on-the-ground-experiences for habitat improvement techniques and implementation. Since 2013 ABC and their partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013. Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, ABC has also developed a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on private properties.

ABC has been a leader in the development, implementation, and education of the importance of the full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes region. Their efforts have helped to promote habitat conservation initiatives for target species and habitats of greatest conservation need. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV. I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,



Alexis Grinde, PhD  
Wildlife Ecologist  
Avian Ecology Research Lab, Natural Resources Research Institute





May 22, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of the Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

David C. Pauly  
President & Habitat Projects Coordinator  
Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Society



### Staff

**Ted Koch, Executive Director, Idaho**

**Terry Riley, PhD, Policy Director,**  
*Colorado, Certified Wildlife Biologist ®*

**Jodie Provost, Communications Director,**  
*North Dakota, Certified Wildlife Bio. ®*

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### **North American Grouse Partnership**

P.O Box 343

Garden Valley, ID 83622

#### **Email:**

NAGP@GrousePartners.org

#### **Website:**

[grousepartners.org](http://grousepartners.org)

#### **Facebook:**

[facebook.com/GrousePartners](https://facebook.com/GrousePartners)

#### **Instagram:**

[instagram.com/  
na\\_grouse\\_partnership](https://instagram.com/na_grouse_partnership)

May 19, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President, American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

The North American Grouse Partnership (NAGP) strongly supports the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*. It will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and shrubland habitats to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. This project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Regional Conservation Partnership Program, ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

NAGP fully supports the work outlined in this proposal and looks forward to working with ABC in the future. These habitat projects are consistent with NAGP's mission to conserve North America's grouse species through science, policy, landscape-scale management, and partnerships. Our priorities and examples of our conservation actions can be found on our website at [grousepartners.org](http://grousepartners.org).

Yours in Conservation,

Ted Koch, Executive Director, North American Grouse Partnership  
208-912-5233, [ted@grousepartners.org](mailto:ted@grousepartners.org)

*The Mission of the North American Grouse Partnership  
is to promote the conservation of grouse and  
their habitats for their survival and reproduction.*



May 12, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr - President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

Established in 1961, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is North America's foremost conservation organization dedicated to creating healthy forests, abundant wildlife and promoting a conservation ethic. Together with the American Woodcock Society (AWS) (established in 2014), RGS & AWS work with private landowners, forest products industry partners, and government agencies to establish critical wildlife habitat utilizing scientific management practices. Our members and staff recognize the numerous wildlife, economic, recreational, social, climate resiliency, and aesthetic values that are generated from public lands. That is why RGS & AWS strongly support the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species.

ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF through successful implementation of Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has created 9,204 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm very confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented

adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

I am confident in ABC and its partners to implement this project to high standards and RGS & AWS fully support the work outlined in this proposal. RGS & AWS look forward to working with ABC in the future to benefit Minnesota's forests and the people and wildlife that call them home.

Best Regards,



Jon Steigerwaldt  
Forest Conservation Director: Great Lakes/Upper Midwest  
Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society  
1700 Pine Dr.  
Spooner WI, 54801  
Cell: 412-720-6033





MINNESOTA,  
IOWA, MISSOURI

2355 Highway 36 Suite 400  
Roseville, MN 55113

May 19, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of Audubon Minnesota, I am writing on behalf of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

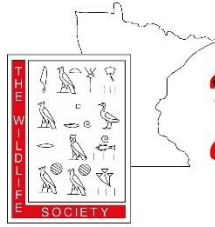
ABC has demonstrated its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects with assistance from the MN OHF by successfully implementing Phases I-III. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands that has improved 9,204 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013. I'm confident this pattern will continue in Phase IV.

Additionally, with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Finally, ABC has successfully implemented adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America to support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats.

I fully support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Dale Gentry Ph.D.  
Director of Conservation  
Audubon Minnesota Iowa Missouri



## *The Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society*

May 19, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

On behalf of Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society (MNTWS), I am writing in support of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) 2023 proposal to the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (MN OHF) entitled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV (YFCP)*.

MNTWS is a non-profit professional society of scientists, managers, educators, students, technicians, planners, consultants and others who use science-based management and conservation to help sustain wildlife populations and habitats. Our guiding policies include **1.** supporting and promoting conservation of biological diversity, not only for wildlife but because human quality of life and survival depend upon it, **2.** opposing activities that jeopardize threatened and endangered species populations and **3.** supporting restoration of critical habitats.

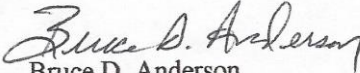
ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species aligns well with MNTWS guiding policies #1 and #3. We recognize that many of Minnesota's species of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) such as the Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse continue to decline due to a whole suite of threats. The YFCP initiative is an important step to minimize or offset this decline for early seral species and as such further galvanizes our support for this project.

MNTWS is well aware of ABC's proven track record to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects. We are impressed with ABC's success in implementing adaptive, full life-cycle conservation initiatives throughout the Great Lakes and on wintering grounds in Central and South America that support range-wide habitat conservation initiatives for at-risk species and critical habitats. We know ABC's prior year integration of collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management has created 9,204 acres of high-quality habitat since its inception in 2013. We recognize that prior MN OHF assistance was crucial in the successful implementation of Phases I-III. MNTWS is confident that ABC will continue this success in Phase IV.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that ABC also implements a complementary Minnesota Private Lands Program to help landowners complete similar work on their properties. Young forest habitat enhancement practices and outcomes stemming from YFCP projects are readily shared with private land partners resulting in benefits at multiple scales.

MNTWS fully supports the work outlined in this proposal and looks forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

  
Bruce D. Anderson  
MNTWS Past President  
Forest Committee Chair



May 9, 2023

Mr. Mike Parr  
President  
American Bird Conservancy  
P. O. Box 249  
The Plains, VA 20198-2237

Dear Mr. Parr,

The Forest Stewards Guild strongly supports the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) project proposal titled *Young Forest Conservation Phase IV*, which will continue ABC's initiative to restore and enhance young forest and brushland habitat to benefit golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and associated early successional habitat species. ABC has also worked collaboratively with partners throughout Minnesota to identify non-commercial forest habitat treatments and planting projects to include in Phase IV that will benefit additional species of greatest conservation need, including, but not limited to, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Spruce Grouse, and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Furthermore, this project will continue to support ongoing efforts by ABC to promote a healthy and diverse mosaic of forest ages and cover types throughout Minnesota.

The Forest Stewards Guild sees this work as an important part of land stewardship in the state and ABC has proven its ability to utilize science-based best management practices to complete high-quality forest habitat projects. By integrating collaborative landscape-level planning and site-level management with outreach, training, and research, ABC and its partners have developed a successful Public Lands Program on Minnesota's protected forest lands.

We support the work outlined in this proposal and look forward to working with ABC in the future.

Sincerely,

Michael Lynch  
Great Lakes Region Director  
Forest Stewards Guild

2019 Galisteo St., Suite N7  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

phone 505-983-8992

fax 505-986-0798

[www.ForestStewardsGuild.org](http://www.ForestStewardsGuild.org)