



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration - Phase IV
ML 2024 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 05/31/2023

Proposal Title: Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration - Phase IV

Funds Requested: \$5,170,000

Confirmed Leverage Funds: \$840,000

Is this proposal Scalable?: Yes

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Tara Jensen

Title: Administrator

Organization: Wild Rice Watershed District

Address: 11 5th Avenue East

City: Ada, MN 56510

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Website: www.wildricewatershed.org

Location Information

County Location(s): Norman.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie
- Forest
- Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

Channelization of the Lower Wild Rice River in the early 1900s converted 50 miles of sinuous river channel to 23 miles of straight channel and lost several thousand acres of wetland and grassland habitat within the river corridor. Through an established and successful partnership between the Wild Rice Watershed District and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, this 4th request for funding from LSHOC would permanently protect 850 acres of private lands in easements. This project represents a model approach to river corridor acquisition and is critical to advancing the largest river restoration project ever proposed in Minnesota.

Design and Scope of Work

Rivers and streams in the Red River Basin were straightened, ditched, cleared, and snagged to improve drainage. These activities destroyed hundreds of miles of aquatic habitat and eliminated thousands of acres of riparian forest, wetland and grassland. These habitat losses continue and have reduced fish and wildlife populations within channelized reaches.

The Red River Drainage Commission channelized the Lower Wild Rice River in the late 1800's with additional "improvements" completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1950's. Channelized reaches of the Wild Rice River provide little functional aquatic or riparian corridor habitat and reduce connectivity between the lower 49 miles and upper 130 miles of the river. The project vision includes establishment of a ½-mile wide protected corridor along the river channel, setting back existing spoil banks, reconnecting oxbows, construction of a natural meandering river channel, and restoration of riparian wetland and prairie plant communities.

The Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) and the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) have approved a Memorandum of Understanding which details responsibilities for easement acquisition. The WRWD and BWSR partnership will use the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Program to secure, maintain, and monitor easements within the corridor.

The WRWD received three prior allocations from LSOHC for ML 2015, ML 2019, and ML 2020. Using these allocations, the WRWD and partners marketed the program to property owners within the designated corridor and successfully enrolled applicants. The Lower Wild Rice Program utilizes the RIM Outside Easement Program for establishing easement payment rates. The RIM easement payment rates are established using assessed values from the Minnesota Land Economics. Until recently, the most current available RIM easement payment rates were generated in September of 2018.

Unfortunately, inflation and other unforeseen market factors resulted in significant increases in the land values within the Wild Rice project area. As a result, several applicants to the program were unwilling to proceed with easement acquisitions at the 2018 RIM easement payment rates. Consequently, the WRWD will be releasing a portion of the unused funding from the prior allocations due to grant timeline expirations.

Fortunately, in March of 2023, BWSR released updated RIM easement payment rates. These new rates were significantly higher than the 2018 rates (40%±) in the project area and more accurately reflect current market conditions. Consequently, several prior applicants have shown a renewed interest in enrolling in the Lower Wild Rice Program. Therefore, this application to LSOHC is intended to fund approximately 850 acres from prior applications at the recent 2023 RIM easement payment rates.

Once acquisition is complete, future channel rehabilitation phases of the project will be completed with the assistance of MN DNR and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The WRWD will be the local sponsor responsible for final design, engineering, and construction of the project. The WRWD has requested Section 1135 assistance

from the USACE to begin a feasibility evaluation of the channel restoration and setback levees alignment proposed in Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the project.

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

This project is the land acquisition phase of a long-term project that will restore 50 miles of river and over 6,500 acres of habitat for associated fish and wildlife communities. In addition to the direct habitat benefits within the project area, fish and wildlife populations downstream of the project will benefit through water quality improvements. The Wild Rice River and associated prairie and forest lowland habitats were identified as key habitats for species of greatest conservation need in the Red River Prairie ecoregion. Key among aquatic species is the Lake Sturgeon, a species of special concern. The Wild Rice River provides critical sturgeon habitat and is a primary reintroduction waterbody where Lake Sturgeon have been stocked. Restoration of Wild Rice River habitat will help ensure successful reestablishment of Lake Sturgeon populations in the Red River basin.

This project will also likely benefit mussel and insect populations in the Wild Rice River. Two species of caddisfly and two species of mussels, black sandshell and fluted-shell are listed as species of special concern and known to be present in the upstream reaches of the Wild Rice River. Acquisition and restoration of the stream and associated riparian wetlands will also improve habitat for gamefish and more than 50 other fish species present in other reaches of the Wild Rice River watershed.

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

Land acquisition is the critical first step in the restoration of over 6,500 acres of riparian habitat and converting 23 miles of ditch to over 50 miles of river channel. Once land acquisition is complete, Army Corps of Engineers will be approached to contribute much of the channel restoration implementation under the Section 1135 program. Currently, landowners along the corridor are very interested in implementing the proposed project. If funding for this corridor rehabilitation is not secured, the opportunity to rehabilitate this reach of the Wild Rice River Corridor will be lost due to the uncertainty of future land and crop prices and continued landowner interest.

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

Restoration of the Lower Wild Rice River Corridor is listed as a high priority project on the MN DNR state river restoration priority list. The Minnesota Prairie Plan also lists restoration of channelized prairie river segments of cultivated lands immediately adjacent to streams and ditches as critical challenges. One Minnesota County Biological Survey site of moderate biodiversity significance is located within the Lower Wild Rice River Corridor.

Reference stream reaches established by the MN DNR will be used to set the geometry of the restored stream channels.

Additionally, updated easement payment rates associated with this phase of the project will help minimize fragmentation of riparian lands that may have resulted had prior rates not been increased.

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

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Red River of the North Fisheries Management 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.

This proposal addresses four priority actions for the Climate-Smart Natural and Working Lands goal of Minnesota’s Climate Action Framework. (1) Accelerate forest, grassland and wetland restoration – Securing easements along the Wild Rice River is the first step towards restoration of riparian corridor that will include forest, grasslands, and wetlands. (2) Store more carbon – Restored riparian ecosystems are capable of storing large amounts of carbon (3) Restore and expand habitat complexes and corridors – The acquisition of easements along the Wild Rice River is explicitly designed to provide habitat complexes and corridors, and (4) Increase water storage and infiltration and manage drainage – Increased floodplain connectivity and setback of existing berms will increase storage and infiltration. Collectively, these actions will help restore and enhance priority habitat corridors, increase floodplain connectivity and future floodplain protection, and help mitigate impacts of climate change.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Prairie

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

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:

This project will permanently protect and restore lands along the Wild Rice River corridor. Currently, none of the lands targeted in this proposal are protected. Within the primary reaches targeted in this proposal, approximately 73% of the acres are classified as cultivated crops. The other primary land classifications within these reaches are woody wetland (16% of acres) and open water (5% of acres).

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *The outcomes of the Lower Wild Rice River corridor project will be a stable stream with permanently protected and restored riparian corridor. This will significantly improve upland and aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife within the immediate corridor. Also, this project will improve water quality and provide substantial benefits extending to the entire watershed.*

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 funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

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

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement into perpetuity. The BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry-out oversight, monitoring and inspection of its conservation easements.

Easements are inspected for the first five consecutive years beginning in the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and partners’ staff document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been included in the project budget. The budgetary numbers were based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship cover costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and any enforcement necessary.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2025 - Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspection first 5 years; then every 3rd year	Corrective actions on any violations	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General Office
2025 - Ongoing	Landowner Responsibility	Maintain compliance with easement terms	-	-

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

This program will focus on acquiring easements through the BWSR RIM Program on parcels targeted towards the future full corridor restoration of the Wild Rice River. This project has undergone extensive public engagement of landowners, stakeholder groups and permitting authorities. Multiple public hearings, informational meetings and opportunities for comment have taken place through watershed plans, project development, and preliminary design. These transparent processes allow for an inclusive process to provide comment and participate from all citizens.

In addition, the project is located in Norman County that is comprised of primarily low- and moderate-income households.

Activity Details

Requirements

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

Yes

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

Yes

Land Use

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

Yes

Explain what will be planted:

In certain circumstances food plots for wildlife are an allowable use on RIM easements and must be part of an approved Conservation Plan. Food plots on narrow buffers, steep slopes and wet areas are not allowed. RIM policy limits food plots to 10% of the total easement area or 5 acres whichever is smaller. There is no cost share for establishment of food plots and upon termination the landowners must reestablish the

vegetation as prescribed in the Conservation Plan at their own expense. Food plots are a rarely selected option by landowners, to date only approximately 2% of RIM easements have food plots.

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

No

Will the eased land be open for public use?

No

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

No

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?

No

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this proposal's funding and availability?

Yes

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	\$1,888,000	\$610,296	\$1,277,704	32.32%
2019	\$2,975,000	\$585,796	\$2,389,204	19.69%
2015	\$2,270,000	\$2,036,800	\$233,200	89.73%
Totals	\$7,133,000	\$3,232,892	\$3,900,108	45.32%

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Obtain applications from eligible landowners	June 30, 2025
Allocation to specific parcels	July 30, 2025
Easements recorded	June 30, 2026
Restorations completed and final report submitted	June 30, 2027

Budget

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$148,400	-	-	\$148,400
Contracts	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$4,684,600	\$840,000	-, Wild Rice Watershed District	\$5,524,600
Easement Stewardship	\$120,000	-	-	\$120,000
Travel	\$8,800	-	-	\$8,800
Professional Services	\$120,000	-	-	\$120,000
Direct Support Services	\$41,900	-	-	\$41,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$12,500	-	-	\$12,500
Supplies/Materials	\$3,800	-	-	\$3,800
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$5,170,000	\$840,000	-	\$6,010,000

Partner: BWSR

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$98,400	-	-	\$98,400
Contracts	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$4,684,600	-	-	\$4,684,600
Easement Stewardship	\$120,000	-	-	\$120,000
Travel	\$8,800	-	-	\$8,800
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$41,900	-	-	\$41,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$12,500	-	-	\$12,500
Supplies/Materials	\$3,800	-	-	\$3,800
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$5,000,000	-	-	\$5,000,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Engineering/Eco Services	0.17	6.0	\$98,400	-	-	\$98,400
Easement Processing	0.0	3.0	-	-	-	-

Partner: WRWD

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$50,000	-	-	\$50,000
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	\$840,000	Wild Rice Watershed District	\$840,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$120,000	-	-	\$120,000
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$170,000	\$840,000	-	\$1,010,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
0.1 FTE	0.2	6.0	\$50,000	-	-	\$50,000

Amount of Request: \$5,170,000

Amount of Leverage: \$840,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 16.25%

DSS + Personnel: \$190,300

As a % of the total request: 3.68%

Easement Stewardship: \$120,000

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 2.56%

Total Leverage (from above)	Amount Confirmed	% of Total Leverage	Amount Anticipated	% of Total Leverage
\$840,000	\$840,000	100.0%	-	0.0%

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:

The WRWD has agreed to contribute an amount equal to 20% of the offered RIM payments to match the LSOHC funding. This amounts to an approximately 16% match to the LSOHC funds.

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?

If 50% of the requested project funding was received, the acres protected would be reduced by

approximately 55% due to the higher percentage of administrative costs per acre to enroll 425 acres in RIM vs the proposed 850 acres.

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

The personnel and DSS expenses would not be proportionately reduced, since there are certain management costs that are fixed regardless of the number of acres ultimately enrolled in RIM.

If the project received 30% of the requested funding

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

If 30 of the requested project funding was received, the acres protected would be reduced by approximately 75% due to the higher percentage of administrative costs per acre to enroll 255 acres in RIM vs the proposed 850 acres.

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

The personnel and DSS expenses would not be proportionately reduced, since there are certain management costs that are fixed regardless of the number of acres ultimately enrolled in RIM.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?

No

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

The \$30,000 that is listed on the contracts line represents the allocation to the Norman Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to provide assistance to the landowners for this project.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

- Other : GIS Mapping and Area Calculations, Landowner communications, and portions of the project management.
- Surveys

Easement Stewardship

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

This request assumes that 12 easements will be placed on land totally 850 acres. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at \$10,000 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship cover costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and any enforcement necessary.

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

The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

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?

BWSR calculates and periodically reviews and updates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

Other Equipment/Tools

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

Equipment and tools will consist of standard hand tools and signage materials. Examples of necessary equipment and tools would be easement signs and steel posts to mark the easement boundary.

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	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	850	0	0	850
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	850	0	0	850

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	-	\$5,170,000	-	-	\$5,170,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	\$5,170,000	-	-	\$5,170,000

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	850	0	850
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	850	0	850

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	-	-	-	\$5,170,000	-	\$5,170,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	\$5,170,000	-	\$5,170,000

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$6,082	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

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	-	-	-	\$6,082	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

23

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

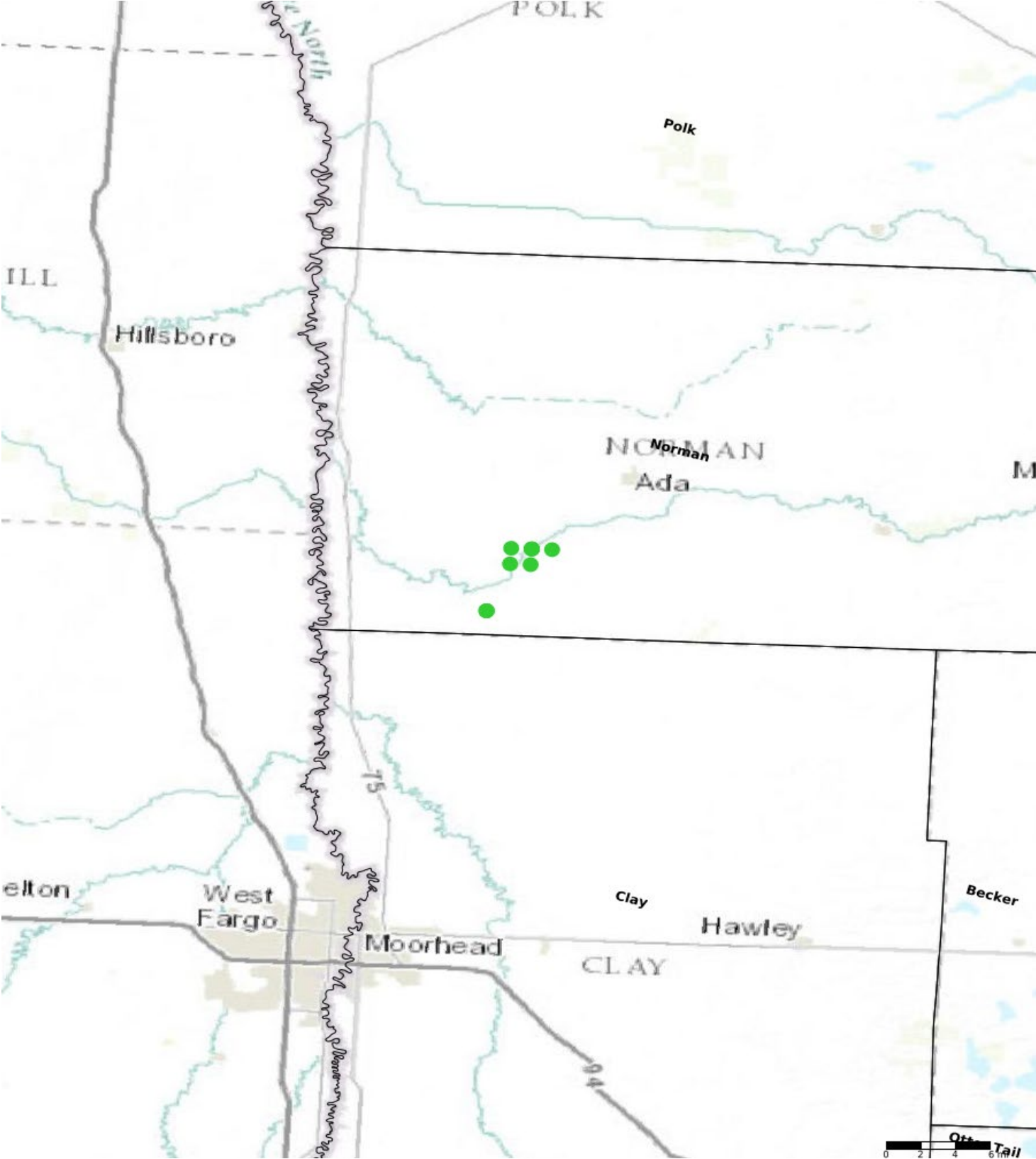
Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

The parcels listed include targeted parcels that the WRWD has already received applications for.

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
LEE/WAYNE & LYNN	Norman	14347203	58	\$356,078	No
OLSON/MICHAEL J.	Norman	14347229	7	\$42,975	No
OLSON/MICHAEL J.	Norman	14347229	10	\$61,393	No
OLSON/MICHAEL J.	Norman	14347229	10	\$61,393	No
PEPPEL/CAROL L	Norman	14347229	10	\$61,393	No
TUFTE/BRUCE, BLAIR & BRENT	Norman	14347202	157	\$962,392	No
TUFTE/BRUCE, BLAIR & BRENT	Norman	14347203	73	\$445,158	No
LEE/LYNN ROWLAND/ REVOCABLE TR	Norman	14347203	120	\$736,712	No
LEE FAMILY, LLP	Norman	14347204	160	\$982,283	No
LEE FAMILY, LLP	Norman	14347203	40	\$245,571	No
LEE FAMILY, LLP	Norman	14347209	38	\$232,371	No
LEE FAMILY, LLP	Norman	14347210	160	\$982,283	No

Parcel Map



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

Lower Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration Program

What is the Program

The Lower Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration Program (LWRRCHRP) is a voluntary effort with the long-term goal to restore a natural corridor area along the Lower Reach of the Wild Rice River. This project will improve fish and wildlife habitat, enhance water quality, and reduce the risks of flood damages to agricultural land. This is a cooperative project between the Wild Rice Watershed District, BWSR, MnDNR, and other local LGUs as illustrated in the Implementation Process diagram on the following page.

The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives through enrolling land along the corridor in the program. Landowners enrolling land in the program will be required to follow the conservation requirements of the *Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve - Outside Request Program* and a *Supplemental WRWD Easement* to allow for Phase 2-4 modifications described below.

Phased Implementation

Due to the overall size of the initiative, it is planned that the project will be conducted in multiple phases over the next decades. The phases were established to allow both for orderly implementation of the project and to ensure that wildlife and habitat benefits would be gained from the onset of implementation. The following describes the anticipated phases and major work items anticipated under each phase.



- **Phase 1 – Land Acquisition/Restoration** – This phase will involve acquisition of a Conservation Easements. Two companion easements would be executed, RIM and a Supplemental WRWD Easement.



As part of this phase, the production of agricultural crops within the parcel would cease and the area would be restored to a permanent vegetative cover by the landowner as set forth in the Conservation Easement conservation plan under the requirements of the RIM program. Since the lands would still be in private ownership, management/maintenance activities identified within the easement area will be the responsibility of the landowner. In addition, the

landowner will grant the Watershed District rights to install and maintain future phases of implementation. Future easement monitoring and stewardship will be provided by and through the Board of Water and Soil Resources and Norman County SWCD as part of the RIM Easement.

- **Phase 2 – Detailed Design and Setback Levee Construction** – Once a significant reach of property has been enrolled as part of Phase 1 and detailed design for the corridor restoration has been completed, the existing river-side levees would be decommissioned and replaced with new levees setback further from the river. The alignment of these levees would be established to allow for future implementation of Channel Rehabilitation under Phase 3.



Work under this phase would be completed by the Wild Rice Watershed District. Future maintenance of the setback levees and directly adjacent features would also be completed by the Wild Rice Watershed District. All other areas would continue to be maintained by the underlying property owner under the terms of the Conservation Easement conservation plan established in Phase 1.

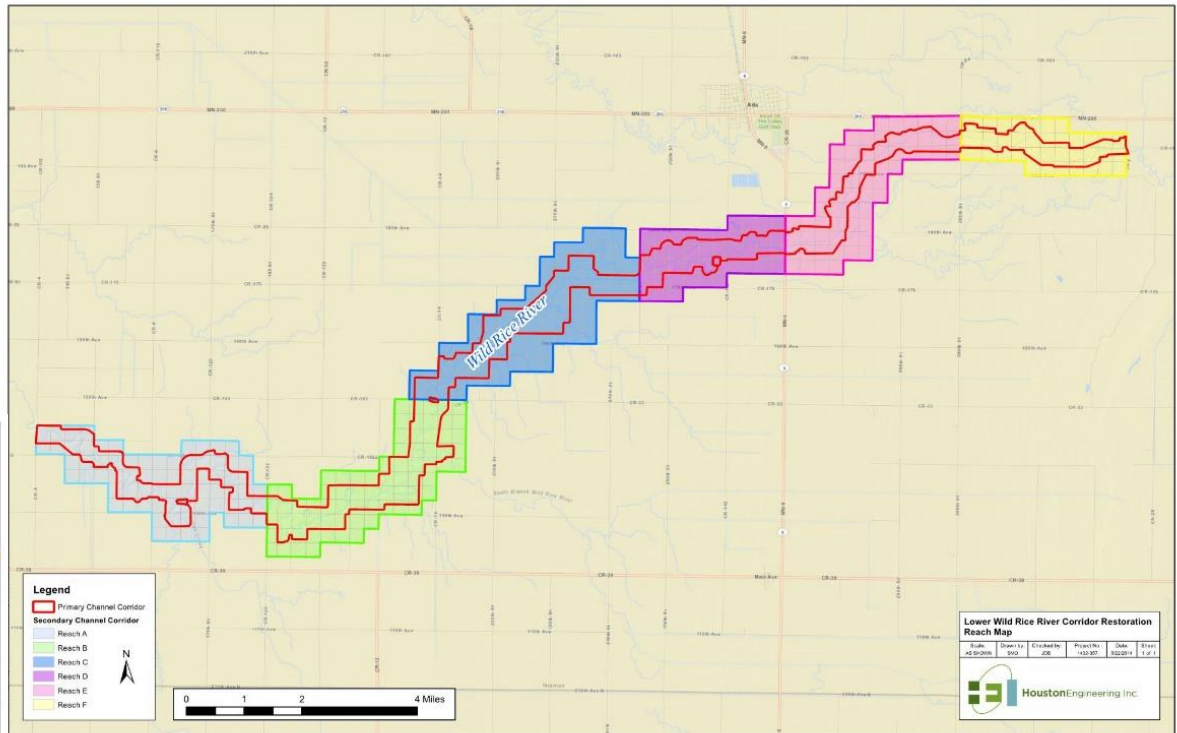
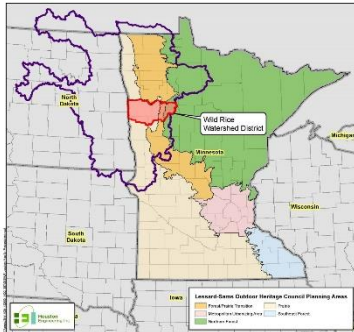
- **Phase 3 – Channel Rehabilitation** – Phase 3 will involve restoration of the channel along an approximately 23-mile segment of river. This restoration will reconnect many segments of the natural river that were cut off by the channelized, leveed river channel. Reconnecting the floodplain will also benefit adjacent prairie and wetlands. The timing of this channel restoration will depend on available funding and completion of Phase 2. Modifications under this phase as well as future maintenance of the channel areas would be completed by the Wild Rice Watershed District. Other areas would continue to be maintained by the underlying property owner under the terms of the Conservation Easement conservation plan established in Phase 1, except for the setback levee corridors defined in Phase 2.



Phase 4 – Operation and Maintenance – Once Phases 1-3 are completed, the operation and maintenance of the setback levee and channel corridors (including adjacent drainage features) would be completed by the Wild Rice Watershed District. Other areas would continue to be maintained by the underlying property owner under the terms of the Conservation Easement.

Eligible Project Area

Priority is currently being placed on the area within Reach C, D and E in the map on this page. However, applications would be accepted/funded from landowners within any reach if funding is available.



Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration Project (LWRRCHRP) Implementation Process





2011 Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame Inductee

May 14, 2019

Board of Managers
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 5th Avenue East
Ada, MN 56510

Dear Board of Managers;

Please accept this letter of support for the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council "Lower Wild Rice River Stream Restoration Project" as proposed by Kevin Ruud, Administrator – Wild Rice Watershed District

As an organization with the mission "to promote sportsmanship, conservation & education with respect to walleye fishing", FM Walleyes Unlimited, Inc. sees the benefit of habitat restoration in supporting healthy populations of all fish species. We therefore, wish to offer our support for this proposal and the work outlined within to restore sections of the Wild Rice River in Western Minnesota to natural habitat, benefiting the entire Red River Basin.

Sincerely,

Kyle Agre, President
Representing, FM Walleyes Unlimited, Inc.
P.O. Box 1077
Moorhead, MN 56560

*"To Promote Sportsmanship, Conservation & Education
With Respect To Walleye Fishing"*



Red River Watershed Management Board

June 04, 2014

Board of Managers
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 5th Ave. E
Ada, MN 56510

RE: Support for Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council "Lower Wild Rice River Project Stream Restoration Project"

Dear Board of Managers:

Please accept this letter acknowledging the Red River Watershed Management Board's (RRWMB's) support for the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council "Lower Wild Rice River Project Stream Restoration Project" as proposed by Kevin Ruud, Administrator - Wild Rice Watershed District.

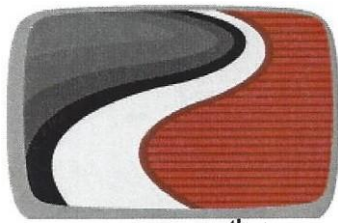
We anticipate that this project will help our board in its mission to institute, coordinate and finance projects and programs to alleviate flooding and assure the beneficial use of water in the watershed of the Red River and its tributaries. As a member of the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, the RRWMB has significant interest in supporting projects that seek to achieve the flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancement goals included in the 1998 Mediation Agreement. The stream restoration component of this project is consistent with the objective of the Work Group to incorporate natural resource enhancements within flood damage reduction projects.

The RRWMB offers our support for this proposal in order to advance our efforts to utilize comprehensive approaches for flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancements in the Red River Basin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Naomi Erickson".

Naomi L. Erickson
Administrator



RED RIVER

RETENTION AUTHORITY

1120 28th Ave N - Suite B - West, Fargo, ND 58102 - Phone: 701-356-6644

June 4, 2014

Board of Managers
Wild Rice Watershed District
115th Ave. E
Ada, MN 56510

RE: Lower Wild Rice River Project - Stream Restoration - Support

Dear Watershed Board,

The Red River Retention Authority and its members, we would like to offer our support for this stream restoration project to enhance wildlife habitat and improve water quality. This project as planned will be win for all; - people - plants - animals and all other creatures.

It is wonderful when we can marry significant environmental improvements with returning a stream to its more natural state and its natural floodplain. Funding for such projects is difficult to obtain. It is even more difficult from the local financing level to add these type of habitat and wildlife improvements as well. The Outdoor Heritage Council funding will be essential to restore the meandering stream features and habitat corridor in the plan.

We certainly hope the Outdoor Heritage Council Board can see the merits and fund your project request. We fully support your application for Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council funding. We believe the citizens of Minnesota, when they voted for this funding mechanism would concur this project would be a worthy investment of these funds and the project is of the type they envisioned for the use of these funds.

If we can offer additional assistance or support, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Pat Downs, Executive Director
Red River Retention Authority