Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Shakopee Creek: Headwaters Restored; Species and Land Protected

Laws of Minnesota 2025 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 06/05/2025

Project Title: Shakopee Creek: Headwaters Restored; Species and Land Protected

Funds Recommended: $2,359,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2025, Ch. 36, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 5(m)

Appropriation Language: $2,359,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District to restore and enhance wildlife habitat in the headwaters area of Shakopee Creek in Kandiyohi County.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Margaret Johnson
Title: District Manager
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Website: https://webgen1.revize.com/revize/kandiyohisoilandwaterconservationdistmn/

Location Information

County Location(s): Kandiyohi.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Prairie

Activity types:

Enhance

Protect in Easement

Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Habitat

Wetlands

Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

Led by the Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District, the proposed project aims to partner with BWSR's easement department to restore and conserve vital habitats for fish, game, and wildlife in the deteriorated headwaters of Shakopee Creek. This includes repairing the lack of connectivity to the natural floodplain, eroding banks, and incised channelization. The program will restore and protect 190 acres of wetland and habitat and 5,600 feet of deteriorating streambank, resulting in significant and long-term conservation accomplishments. The program's actions will center on habitat restoration and conservation to boost ecological resilience.

Design and Scope of Work

The scope of work includes habitat restoration and protection measures in the headwaters of Shakopee Creek to solve the existing issues.

The Problem: The problem is that essential habitats are being reduced and fragmented, resulting in biodiversity loss, species population reductions, and ecological imbalance. The proposed project focuses on the restoration, enhancement, and protection of prairies, wetlands, and fish, game, and animal habitats to address the critical issue of habitat degradation and loss and to protect threatened species like the Pugnose Shiner, Forster's Tern, and Lark Sparrow.

This involves initiatives such as reestablishing natural vegetation, reconstructing wildlife corridors, preserving essential biological characteristics, and implementing management practices that promote habitat relevance. The initiative intends to restore ecosystem health, aid species recovery, and improve habitat long-term resilience by addressing these critical variables.
Prioritizing Implementation: The project's priorities were determined after a thorough evaluation of various factors, including the ecological significance of the target habitats, the presence of threatened or endangered species, like the Pugnose Shiner, Forster's Tern, and Lark Sparrow, the potential for habitat connectivity, and the opportunities for partnerships and stakeholder involvement. Kandiyohi SWCD will be working with the Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) program (RIM – Integrating Clean Water and Habitat (1W1)) for easements (a separate application for easements will be submitted by BWSR). Furthermore, feedback from scientific experts, local communities, and other stakeholders contributed to the selection process.

The planned project's urgency arises from the habitats' precarious state and the pressing need to avert further degradation. The ongoing loss of aquatic habitats for northern pike, golden shiner and walleye jeopardizes ecosystem function, biodiversity, and natural system health. By responding quickly, we can prevent lasting damage, aid in habitat regeneration, and provide immediate relief.

Community Conservation: It gives an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders, including landowners, community groups, conservation organizations, and government agencies, to work together to restore and conserve ecosystems. Stakeholder participation is crucial to the project's success since their knowledge, resources,

and expertise contribute to good planning, execution, and long-term care of the restored ecosystems. Collaboration with local communities, conservation organizations, and government agencies ensures that conservation efforts are multidimensional. These alliances foster shared accountability, allow access to additional resources and funding, and boost the project's overall impact.

The Solution: The proposed project, in essence, addresses the issue of habitat degradation and loss, with a focus on prairie, wetlands, and fish, game, and animal habitat restoration, enhancement, and protection. Habitat restoration and conservation strategies are prioritized based on ecological relevance, stakeholder involvement, and scientific input. The project's urgency originates from the fragile state of ecosystems and the need for immediate intervention. The project gives an opportunity to engage stakeholders, form partnerships, and ensure a collaborative approach to long-term conservation outcomes.

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

To achieve habitat protection, the restoration program will focus implementing measures to reduce pollution and sedimentation. This will create a healthier environment for aquatic life and enhance the overall habitat quality of the creek. Additionally, efforts will be made to restore and preserve the natural vegetation along the creek banks, providing essential cover and food sources for various wildlife species. The restoration program will immediately enhance fish populations in Shakopee Creek by improving habitat conditions. Better breeding and spawning habitats, more food availability, and enhanced oxygen levels all contribute to healthier and more plentiful fish populations of northern pike, golden shiner and walleye. The restoration efforts will also consider the needs of game species, such as waterfowl or game birds, by restoring 29 acres of wetlands and other suitable habitats that support their life cycles. Furthermore, the restoration initiative will focus on conserving and assisting threatened or endangered species that rely on Shakopee Creek for existence like the Pugnose Shiner, Forster’s Tern, and Lark Sparrow. This may entail putting specialized conservation measures in place, restoring vital habitats, and working with necessary authorities and conservation organizations to secure the survival of these fragile species. Overall, the rehabilitation idea for Shakopee Creek comprises habitat conservation, fish population enhancement, animal habitat restoration, and the preservation of threatened or endangered species. These actions will improve the creek's overall ecological health and provide a healthy ecosystem for wildlife and fish.

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

Community engagement and collaboration must begin immediately to generate meaningful participation, instill ownership, and gather support. Landowners are already excited to complete the projects required to restore Shakopee Creek and avoid further environmental harm and costly repairs. Rapid intervention is critical for conserving species that rely on the creek and lowering the risk of species reductions. Implementing restoration measures now generates suitable habitat for these species and gives immediate support. Climate change must be addressed urgently by increasing ecosystem resilience through techniques such as growing climate-adapted plants and safeguarding key ecosystems. In summary, the proposed project necessitates immediate action to prevent additional degradation, protect threatened species like the Pugnose Shiner, Forster’s Tern, and Lark Sparrow, address the effects of climate change, and engage stakeholders. Prompt action enables effective restoration, protects species, boosts resilience, and optimizes participation for long-term success.

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

Shakopee Creek restoration provides a chance to extend habitat corridors or complexes and alleviate habitat fragmentation, both of which are key components of maintaining healthy ecosystems and supporting biodiversity. Here is a thorough explanation of how the restoration effort intends to accomplish these objectives.
Expanding Habitat Corridors: Habitat corridors are passageways that unite fragmented ecosystems, allowing animals to travel and succeed. The restoration operation will create a continuous and contiguous habitat corridor by recovering the natural vegetation along the creek banks and neighboring areas. This will allow numerous wildlife species, including mammals, birds, and insects, to roam about, fostering genetic variety and maintaining their normal life cycles.
Enhancing Connectivity: In addition to constructing habitat corridors, the restoration project will focus on improving ecosystem connectivity. This will entail reducing impediments to fish and other aquatic species migration, such as culverts. The project will allow fish to access spawning areas and ease the migration of other aquatic organisms by restoring the creek's natural flow and enhancing communication between different portions.
Addressing Habitat Fragmentation: Habitat fragmentation occurs when natural habitats are split into smaller, isolated sections, reducing biodiversity and restricting species' capacity to survive. This problem will be addressed by re-establishing and enhancing the amount of existing habitat patches along Shakopee Creek. The project will generate more suitable and resilient habitats for a variety of plant and animal species by repairing degraded areas and building larger contiguous habitats.
Promoting Ecological Resilience: Ecological resilience is enhanced by habitat corridors and reduced fragmentation, which allow species to adapt and respond to environmental changes. Shakopee Creek restoration will provide a broad range of habitats, including riparian zones, wetlands, and upland areas, which will support a variety of species with varying ecological requirements. This enhanced habitat diversity improves the ecosystem's overall resilience, allowing it to tolerate shocks and adapt to future environmental problems.
Collaboration and Planning: The restoration effort will require collaboration with local communities, landowners, and relevant stakeholders to effectively increase habitat corridors and alleviate fragmentation.

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Minnesota Statewide Conservation & Preservation Plan

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

1. This proposal uniquely addresses habitat resilience to climate change and its anticipated effects on game, fish, and wildlife species through several key strategies. Firstly, the project focuses on restoring and enhancing habitats that are specifically designed to withstand and adapt to changing climatic conditions – how engineering has changed or provides for advancement in climate adaptation.
2. Secondly, the proposal emphasizes the conservation and restoration of critical ecosystems, such as wetlands and forests, which act as natural buffers against climate impacts. Furthermore, the project incorporates scientific research and monitoring to inform adaptive management practices.
3. Finally, the concept emphasizes the significance of developing habitat connectivity. Creating habitat corridors and improving connectivity allows species to travel, allowing them to adjust and adapt to changes in climate patterns.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Prairie

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

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands ~ *Regular visual surveys of streambank condition along Shakopee creek will evaluate the success and longevity of the streambank restorations. Wetland and riparian vegetation surveys will track community changes over time and inform when and where vegetation management is needed. Stream fish and macroinvertebrate surveys following MPCA protocols can evaluate the health of the stream. Visual and call surveys of birds will evaluate the impact the restoration has on waterfowl.*

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 project proposed by Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District does not replace traditional financing or existing programs; completion of the project is impossible without dollars provided by the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Our application to Outdoor Heritage Council was denied in 2023 and we were asked to reapply.

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

It is critical to ensure the long-term viability and maintenance of the restoration effort beyond the use of Outdoor Heritage Funds. Several ways can be used to do this:
Collaborative Partnerships: It is critical to form collaborative partnerships with local communities, conservation organizations, government agencies, and landowners. Collaboration fosters shared accountability and maximizes conservation activities' joint impact.
Adoption of Adaptive Management: Using an adaptive management method enables for continual monitoring and evaluation of the functioning of the restored habitat. Adaptive management encourages learning and progress, allowing the restoration operation to be successful in the long run.
Education and Community Engagement: Investing in educational programs and community engagement projects promotes awareness of the importance of habitat conservation and encourages active participation.
Establishment of Stewardship Programs: Developing stewardship initiatives with local volunteers and citizen scientists develops a sense of ownership and responsibility for the restored ecosystem. Engaging the community in hands-on conservation initiatives ensures that the environment is cared for even after the funds are depleted.
The property owner is solely responsible for the project's upkeep, which includes channel maintenance, modest bank repairs, and vegetation management. Large failures are not predicted along this stretch of Shakopee Creek.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2026 and beyond	Local Match	Work with additional landowners to complete similar conservation work in the headwaters of Shakopee.	-	-
2025 and beyond	Local Match	Maintain existing relationships with landowners.	Plant the ideas of additional work in the Shakopee headwaters to further expand and increase local conservation.	Work with landowner on questions regarding maintenance.

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

Our program is dedicated to actively participating, engaging, and helping diverse communities. We acknowledge the significance of inclusivity and equity in conservation initiatives. Here are some of the primary ways in which our program may directly address and involve diverse communities:
Outreach and Representation: We will prioritize outreach efforts with diverse populations, ensuring that they are aware of the restoration project and have opportunity to participate. In planning, decision-making, and project implementation, we will seek representation and input from these populations. Community gatherings, partnerships with local organizations, and focused communication tactics will be used to accomplish this.
Culturally Relevant Education and Outreach: We recognize the need of offering culturally relevant and accessible education and outreach resources. We will adjust our messaging, resources, and events to appeal to a wide range of populations, considering different languages, cultural values, and points of view. This will promote inclusivity and encourage community members to actively engage in and profit from the restoration effort.
Collaborative Partnerships: Our strategy includes forming alliances with organizations, community groups, and local leaders. We ensure that their knowledge, thoughts, and needs are incorporated into the project by engaging with these groups. This collaborative approach will foster ownership, trust, and shared decision-making, resulting in a more equitable and community-driven restoration process.
Environmental Justice Considerations: We will address environmental justice problems directly related to the restoration project. This entails identifying and correcting any existing imbalances in environmental quality and access to natural spaces.
Community Benefits: The rehabilitation initiative will seek to directly benefit the communities concerned. This could include increased access to recreational opportunities and the enhancement of ecosystem services that benefit inhabitants' health and well-being.
By incorporating these approaches, our program will foster inclusivity and provide equitable opportunities for diverse communities to be actively involved in and benefit from the restoration project.

Activity Details

Requirements

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

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

Who will manage the easement?
The Kandiyohi SWCD will partner with the Board of Water and Soil Resources to manage the easement. The landowner will complete the ongoing operation and maintenance of the easement.

Who will be the easement holder?
BWSR's existing RIM program will be the easement holder.

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
9-13 easements.

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?

Public Waters

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

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

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 acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
Yes

BWSR will use the appropriation they received to complete the easement while we will use the funding to complete the restoration.

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

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Vegetation maintenance	ongoing
Native prairie and riparian plantings	5/1/2027
Restore Wetland - construction	09/30/2026
Restore Creek - natural channel construction	09/30/2026
Easement Acquisition	07/31/2025

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2026

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2029;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2033;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2030;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

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

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$322,000	-	-	$322,000
Contracts	$1,574,000	-	-	$1,574,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	$463,000	-	-	$463,000
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$2,359,000**	**-**	**-**	**$2,359,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Administration	0.1	4.0	$88,000	-	-	$88,000
Technician	0.9	4.0	$234,000	-	-	$234,000

Amount of Request: $2,359,000
Amount of Leverage: -
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%
DSS + Personnel: $322,000
As a % of the total request: 13.65%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
We will get done the work in a prioritized fashion. To make sure the highest quality habitat restored is completed first.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
No

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
No

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
The contractor work for the restorations.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Design/Engineering

Surveys

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	150	40	-	-	190
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**150**	**40**	**-**	**-**	**190**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	$2,359,000	$2,359,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,359,000**	**$2,359,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	190	-	190
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**190**	**-**	**190**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	$2,359,000	-	$2,359,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,359,000**	**-**	**$2,359,000**

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	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	$12,415	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

5000

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
No

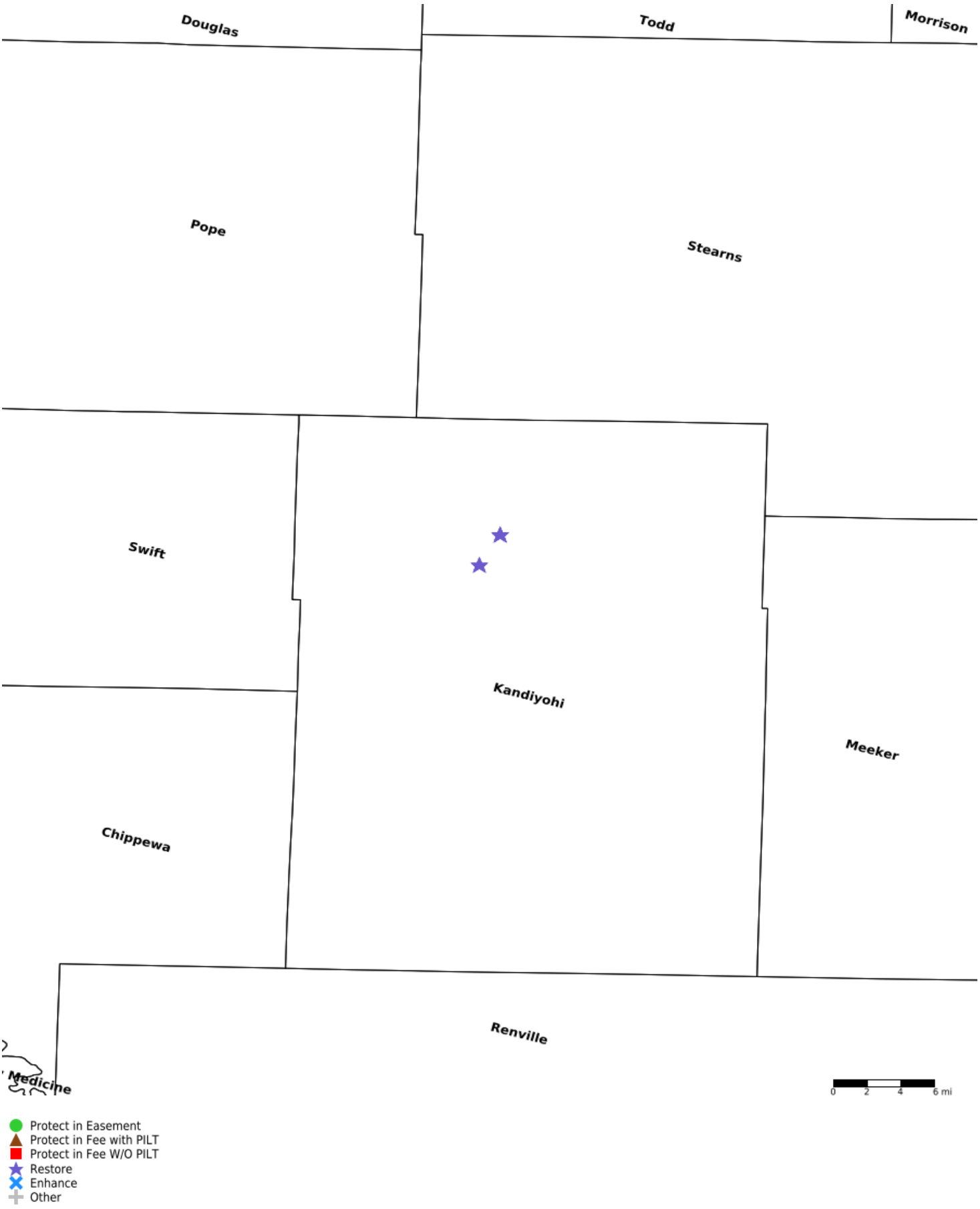
Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
The project's priorities were determined after a thorough evaluation of various factors, including the ecological significance of the target habitats, the presence of threatened or endangered species, like the Pugnose Shiner, Forster's Tern, and Lark Sparrow, the potential for habitat connectivity, and the opportunities for partnerships and stakeholder involvement. Furthermore, feedback from scientific experts, local communities, and other stakeholders contributed to the selection process.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
23-011-0010 - Miller, J. & D.	Kandiyohi	12135211	-	$0	Yes	Restore and protect 250 feet of deteriorating streambank, resulting in significant and long-term conservation accomplishments.
23-011-0016 - Miller, J.	Kandiyohi	12135211	-	-	Yes	Restore and protect 200 feet of deteriorating streambank, resulting in significant and long-term conservation accomplishments.
23-011-0020 - Rupp, D.	Kandiyohi	12135211	-	$0	Yes	Restore and protect 400 feet of deteriorating streambank, resulting in significant and long-term conservation accomplishments.

23-011-0021 - Holien, B.	Kandiyohi	12135211	-	-	Yes	Restore and protect 250 feet of deteriorating streambank, resulting in significant and long-term conservation accomplishments.
23-013-0040 - Tep., LLC	Kandiyohi	12135211	29	-	Yes	The program will restore acres of wetland and 1,500 feet of deteriorating streambank, resulting in significant and long-term conservation accomplishments.
23-022-0015 - McBroom	Kandiyohi	12135211	-	-	Yes	Meander of deteriorating streambank.
23-022-0032 - Sammons	Kandiyohi	12135222	-	-	Yes	Meander of deteriorating streambank and restore the floodplain on 1,500 feet of stream.
23-022-0040, 23-022-0045 - Nelson	Kandiyohi	12135222	-	-	Yes	Meander of deteriorating streambank and restore the floodplain on 1,500 feet of stream.
23-022-0052, 23-022-0050 - Cors	Kandiyohi	12135222	-	-	Yes	Restore and protect pool created by increased velocities.

Parcel Map


Douglas
Todd
Morrison
Pope
Stearns
Swift
Kandiyohi
Meeker
Chippewa
Renville
Medicine
0 2 4 6 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other