Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program - Phase 3

Laws of Minnesota 2026 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 11/20/2025

Project Title: Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program - Phase 3

Funds Recommended: $2,192,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

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Location Information

County Location(s): Stearns.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Enhance

Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Forest

Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

The Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program is focused on the protection and restoration/enhancement of remaining high-quality forest systems and their associated biota within the Hardwood Hills ecological section of west-central Minnesota. Over 60% of forests in the Hardwood Hills have been lost to conversion over the past century, with growth along the I-94 corridor near St. Cloud and lakeshore development posing significant threats. In this third phase of the program, we will protect via permanent conservation easement 337 acres and restore/enhance 430 acres of priority forest and associated habitats within the program area.

Design and Scope of Work

The Hardwood Hills subsection is an ecologically rich landscape in west-central Minnesota, where forests meet prairies. It encompasses approximately 3.5 million acres and consists of steep slopes and high rolling hills that were formed during the last ice age when massive glaciers sculpted the region. Scattered between these rolling hills are abundant kettle lakes and wetlands.

This transition zone includes a diversity of forest, prairie, and savanna habitats, numerous lakes and wetlands, and abundant wildlife, including 85 Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Our overarching program goal is to afford protection to the remaining high-quality ecological systems and their associated species in the Hardwood Hills, as represented in the State's Wildlife Action Network.

In this third phase of the Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program, program partners are prioritizing action within areas identified in Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 (WAN). The areas contain high-quality habitats and harbor numerous rare species, including American ginseng, cerulean warbler, red-shouldered hawk, and Blanding's turtle. Prioritization will be focused on areas under greatest threat - from development, parcelization and other factors. Among these is the Avon Hills, a 65,000-acre natural landscape located just 15 miles northwest of St. Cloud and along the I-94 corridor. This hilly glacial moraine landscape contains the highest concentration of native plant communities in Stearns County, including oak and maple-basswood forests, tamarack and mixed-hardwood swamps, and wet meadows. The area is also a designated Audubon Important Bird Area.

The Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) and Saint John's University (SJU) have a long-standing and successful partnership in this geography. With the assistance of the State of Minnesota and conservation-minded landowners, approximately 3,920 acres of the Hardwood Hills have already been protected with conservation easements. As of May 2025, 18 landowners in this program area owning approximately 2,200 acres have expressed interest in permanently protecting their properties with conservation easements, which far exceeds currently available funding. We anticipate significantly more interested landowners as outreach efforts continue.

MLT will secure conservation easements from willing landowners to protect 337 acres of the highest quality wildlife habitat remaining within the Hardwood Hills and steward them in perpetuity. Employing a market-based approach to identifying and procuring easements, program partners will encourage landowners to donate portions of their easement value, representing a significant cost savings to the state. SJU will conduct outreach within our priority areas to encourage landowners to protect their properties with a conservation easement. Stearns

Conservation District (Stearns CD) will join the partnership and restore/enhance 430 acres of critical habitat, focusing on building complexes of improved habitat.

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

Permanently protecting and restoring/enhancing the unique and threatened forest systems of the Hardwood Hills is critical to maintaining native plant and wildlife biodiversity in Minnesota. This is especially true for migratory songbirds and other avian species that rely on this broadleaf forest system for food and shelter along the larger Mississippi Flyway.

Upland deciduous (maple-basswood, aspen, and oak) forests are considered key habitats for SGCN within the Hardwood Hills. Habitat loss and degradation impact 86 percent of the SGCN occurring within the program area. Land protection and restoration/enhancement efforts will directly benefit a significant percent of the 85 SGCN that occur in the program area, including; red-shouldered hawk, Blanding's turtle, and four-toed salamander, common mudpuppy, red-shouldered hawk, veery, least weasel, fluted-shell mollusk, least darter, smooth green snake, and pollinators such as bumblebees and yellow swallowtail butterflies.

Land protection work will be focused on building complexes of protected habitat by linking together protected lands into a greater whole. With 92 percent of forest lands in the Hardwood Hills in private ownership, conservation easements can play a pivotal role in ensuring long-term protection of these critical forest resources.

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

The majority of the Hardwood Hills is privately-owned; high development pressure continues to increase and threaten critical pieces of the existing ecosystem. Pressures from nearby cities, including St. Cloud and Alexandria, and along the I-94 corridor make the area a highly sought-after development area. Six types of forested communities in west-central Minnesota are considered “imperiled” statewide by the DNR. Land protection will protect remaining remnant habitats, buffer high-quality habitat cores and increase landscape resiliency. Restoration/enhancement efforts will prevent habitat degradation and increase biodiversity.

Our program closed on five conservation easements and is advancing two more under our initial allocation, with other projects teed up for when more funding is available from our Phase 2 allocation in July. Interest in participation is outstripping available funding. Properties in the application pool include large tracts of high-quality forest and land adjacent to important waterbodies. The need and landowner interest are exceptionally high.

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

This program is focused on protecting and restoring/enhancing priority forest and wetland habitats within the Hardwood Hills subsection as guided by the State Wildlife Action Plan and the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS). Specific easement parcels will be evaluated and prioritized for protection among the pool of applicants. This relative ranking is based on three primary ecological factors: 1) amount of habitat on the parcel (size) and abundance of SGCN; 2) the quality or condition of habitat; and 3) the parcel's context relative to other natural habitats and protected areas) and the level of payment the landowner is willing to accept (cost). The landscape context factor tilts protection of properties toward those that are adjacent to existing protected lands or that otherwise fall within priority conservation areas identified through various plans.

The program serves to build upon past conservation investments in the program area, expand the footprint of

existing protected areas, facilitate the protection and restoration/enhancement of habitat corridors and reduce the potential for fragmentation of existing habitats.

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

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

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

Using The Nature Conservancy's Resilient Land Mapping Tool, we'll target properties for conservation that provide the best opportunities for maintaining biodiversity in a changing climate. Increasing connectivity and targeting climate-resilient sites sets the stage for a resilient landscape.

Protecting complexes of connected habitat blocks reduces fragmentation and allows for species movement as climate changes. Protecting and restoring/enhancing forested lands improves water retention, which promotes resilience to drought in upland systems and associated streams and rivers. Protecting and restoring/enhancing forests and associated biota is crucial in mitigating against flooding caused by excessive rainfall events given their water retention ability.

Furthermore, permanently protected and well-managed forests are at lower risk to stressors such as invasive species, pests, and pathogens due to their managed status and improved overall health. Limiting stressors will further promote the ability of biota associated with these protected lands to persist in a changing climate.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Forest / Prairie Transition

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

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 ~ *This program will permanently protect 337 acres and restore/enhance 430 acres of forest and wetland habitat in the forest-prairie transition region. Measure: Acres protected; acres restored; acres enhanced.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

Funding provided to MLT, SJU, and Stearns CD from the Outdoor Heritage Fund through this proposal will not supplant or substitute any previous funding from a non-Legacy fund used for the same purpose.

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

The land protected through conservation easements will be sustained through state-of-the-art standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship. MLT is a nationally accredited land trust with a very successful stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring, effective records management, addressing inquiries and interpretations, tracking changes in ownership, investigating potential violations, and defending the easement in cases of a true violation. Funding for these easement stewardship activities is included in the project budget. In addition, MLT will assist landowners in the development of comprehensive habitat management plans to help ensure that the land will be managed for its wildlife and water quality benefits.

Stearns CD enters restoration and enhancement projects with the goal of achieving a site threshold where continuing maintenance beyond the allocation period is achievable by landowners. Stearns CD and SJU will work with landowners on an ongoing basis to provide resources, and technical expertise to undertake restoration, enhancement, and ongoing management of these properties.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Every 4-6 years	Stearns CD in-kind	Evaluate restoration based on initial restoration plan	Provide technical assistance to the landowner/operator as necessary	-
2030 and in perpetuity	MLT Long-Term Stewardship and Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of easements in perpetuity	Enforcement as necessary	-

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

One of MLT's core values is a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We work to demonstrate this commitment when possible. For example, in this program area, we protected a property that is home to the Avon Hills Folk School, which serves a diverse audience and looks to create the opportunity for community to happen within the natural splendor of the Avon Hills. We look to find other opportunities to protect critical habitat associated within camps/nature centers that serve diverse constituencies, allowing access to nature in a welcoming and safe environment. Additionally, MLT intends to continue to use diversity, equity, and inclusion as a lens in project, partner, and contractor selection. We intend to continue to listen and seek out potential, authentic partnerships that can advance our goals of conserving the best of Minnesota's remaining habitats and, at the same time, being a more inclusive organization.

Similarly, SJU's core Benedictine value of respect for human dignity requires respect to embrace the marginalized, and break down the privileges that exclude those who are different or disadvantaged. SJU initiated a campus-wide endeavor in 2018 to support programs focused on inclusive community building. Through that undertaking, SJU assembled an Outdoor U Inclusivity Team. SJU's Outdoor U Inclusivity Team works to broaden access to proposed outreach offerings within this proposal to underrepresented/marginalized students and the surrounding community. This includes the increasingly diverse St. Cloud metro, home to the state's largest BIPOC population outside the Twin Cities metro.

Stearns CD operates on the basis that conservation of natural resources is essential for equity and environmental justice in the community. SCD is an equal opportunity provider, committed to serving any landowner or agricultural producer who meets screening criteria for assistance based on resource concern and/or target areas, including eliminating financial barriers to implementation for low- and moderate-income households. SCD also

recognizes that the outcomes of natural resource protection or degradation impact the lives, health, and recreational opportunities for downstream and nearby communities, including the growing and diverse St. Cloud metropolitan area.

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?
Minnesota Land Trust

Who will be the easement holder?
Minnesota Land Trust

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
Minnesota Land Trust expects to close 3-7 conservation easement projects, depending on cost and amount of donated easement value obtained.

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

SNA

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

WPA

AMA

County/Municipal

Land Use

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

Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:
The purpose of the MLT's conservation easements is to protect existing high quality natural habitat and to preserve opportunities for future restoration. We restrict agricultural lands and use on the properties. In cases where there are agricultural lands associated with the larger property, we will either exclude the agricultural area from the conservation easement, or in some limited cases, we may include a small percentage of agricultural lands if it is not feasible to exclude those areas. In such cases, however, we will not use OHF funds to pay the landowners for that portion of the conservation easement. These lands will be available for traditional agriculture unless otherwise restricted by the easement.

As for food plots, although MLT prefers no food plots in our easements, we do recognize that these are important to some landowners; an outright restriction against them would greatly diminish our ability to protect quality habitat in some of our program areas. As such, we do allow a limited number of them over small areas when that's the case. Since January 1, 2020, MLT has completed 47 conservation easements containing food plots, representing 28.7% of the 162 conservation easements completed during this time. The total footprint of these food plots is 92 acres, a mere 0.47% of the total area protected. Our practice is to limit the area of food plots to no more than 3% of the total easement area of a property, with a preference for less than more. Exceptions to this practice will be very limited. Per our stated policy, MLT will prohibit the use of neonicotinoid-treated seed in the planting of food plots, prohibit the planting of invasive species, and require the landowner to submit seed tags to MLT's Stewardship Team on an annual basis after the planting of food plots.

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?
Yes

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:
Most conservation easements are established on private lands, many of which have driveways, field roads and trails located on them. Often, the conservation easement permits the continued usage of established trails and roads so long as their use does not significantly impact the conservation values of the property. Creation of new roads/trails or expansion of existing ones is typically not allowed and would require Land Trust approval.

Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition?
Yes

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?
Existing trails and roads are identified in the project baseline report and will be monitored annually as part of the Land Trust's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads/trails in accordance with the terms of the easement will be the responsibility of the landowner.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?
No

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
No

Our priority for land protection is intact natural habitats. If some portion of a protected property requires restoration, the property will be evaluated and funding sought after developing the restoration plan and detailed cost estimates.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
No

Explain how, when, and source of the R/E work:
Our priority for land protection is intact natural habitats. If some portion of a protected property requires restoration, the property will be evaluated and funding sought after developing the restoration plan and detailed cost estimates.

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Restoration/Enhancement completed	June 30, 2031
Conservation easements completed	June 30, 2030

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2031

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, 2030;
(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, 2034;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2031;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

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

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$298,600	-	-	$298,600
Contracts	$314,800	-	-	$314,800
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$1,104,000	$110,000	-, Landowner Donation of Easement Value	$1,214,000
Easement Stewardship	$196,000	-	-	$196,000
Travel	$12,000	-	-	$12,000
Professional Services	$192,000	-	-	$192,000
Direct Support Services	$57,600	-	-	$57,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$1,000	-	-	$1,000
Supplies/Materials	$16,000	-	-	$16,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$2,192,000**	**$110,000**	**-**	**$2,302,000**

Partner: Minnesota Land Trust

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$190,000	-	-	$190,000
Contracts	$54,000	-	-	$54,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$1,104,000	$110,000	Landowner Donation of Easement Value	$1,214,000
Easement Stewardship	$196,000	-	-	$196,000
Travel	$12,000	-	-	$12,000
Professional Services	$192,000	-	-	$192,000
Direct Support Services	$52,000	-	-	$52,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$1,000	-	-	$1,000
Supplies/Materials	$1,000	-	-	$1,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,802,000**	**$110,000**	**-**	**$1,912,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Land Protection Staff	0.47	4.0	$190,000	-	-	$190,000

Partner: St. Johns University

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$75,000	-	-	$75,000
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$15,000	-	-	$15,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$90,000**	**-**	**-**	**$90,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
SJU Staff	0.17	4.0	$75,000	-	-	$75,000

Partner: Stearns Conservation District

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$33,600	-	-	$33,600
Contracts	$260,800	-	-	$260,800
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$5,600	-	-	$5,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$300,000**	**-**	**-**	**$300,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
SCD Wildlife Habitat Specialist	0.07	4.0	$33,600	-	-	$33,600

Amount of Request: $2,192,000
Amount of Leverage: $110,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 5.02%
DSS + Personnel: $356,200
As a % of the total request: 16.25%
Easement Stewardship: $196,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 17.75%

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
The Partnership was recommended for 39% of its total request. Land protection outputs were reduced by 69.4% (30.6% of proposed); R/E outputs were reduced by 15.0% (85.0% proposed). Some activities were curtailed less than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
The Land Trust encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements to the program through an RFP process; this leverage amount is a conservative estimate of value we expect to see donated by landowners.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Outputs would be reduced by 55-65 percent. Activities will be curtailed, but less than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program success.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS will be scaled, but moderately less than proportional. Some costs are fixed (landowner recruitment; grant management) and must occur regardless of grant amount. Projects may fail midstream after investment of time. Donation of easement value (high in this program) can inflate the number of projects pursued/completed.

Personnel

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

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
MLT: Funds in the contract line are for the writing of habitat management plans for protected easement properties and for conducting landowner outreach within the program area via qualified vendors.

Stearns CD: Restoration and enhancement field services, based on lowest qualified bid from private sector contractors.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Other : Phase 1 Environmental Assessments, Minerals Reports, Mapping

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

Easement Stewardship

What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?
The Land Trust expects to close 4-7 conservation easements under this appropriation. The average cost per easement to fund the Minnesota Land Trust's perpetual monitoring and enforcement obligations is $28,000, although in extraordinary circumstances additional funding may be warranted. This figure is derived from MLT's detailed stewardship funding "cost analysis" which is consistent with Land Trust Accreditation standards. MLT shares periodic updates to this cost analysis with LSOHC staff.

Travel

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

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
Land Trust staff occasionally rent vehicles for grant-related purposes, which can be a cost savings over use of personal vehicles on longer trips.

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?
MLT - In a process that was approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, Minnesota Land Trust determined our direct support services rate to include all of the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget, which is similar to the Land Trust's proposed federal indirect rate. We applied this DNR-approved rate only to personnel expenses to determine the total amount of direct support services requested through this grant.

Stearns CD - the Direct Support Services included in the SCD budget is based on the hourly Administration & Facilities portion of the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) billable rate calculator. These expenses are essential to providing services and are prorated across all work by SCD staff. This amount is equivalent to $11.50 per hour worked on this program, which will be tracked separately. These expenses are not reimbursed or paid by any other source.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
GPS devices, satellite communicator, safety gear, etc.

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	-	-	300	-	300
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	337	-	337
Enhance	-	80	50	-	130
Total	**-**	**80**	**687**	**-**	**767**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	$210,800	-	$210,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	$1,892,000	-	$1,892,000
Enhance	-	$56,500	$32,700	-	$89,200
Total	**-**	**$56,500**	**$2,135,500**	**-**	**$2,192,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	300	-	-	-	300
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	337	-	-	-	337
Enhance	-	130	-	-	-	130
Total	**-**	**767**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**767**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	$210,800	-	-	-	$210,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	$1,892,000	-	-	-	$1,892,000
Enhance	-	$89,200	-	-	-	$89,200
Total	**-**	**$2,192,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,192,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	$702	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	$5,614	-
Enhance	-	$706	$654	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	$702	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	$5,614	-	-	-
Enhance	-	$686	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
Yes - Sign up criteria is attached

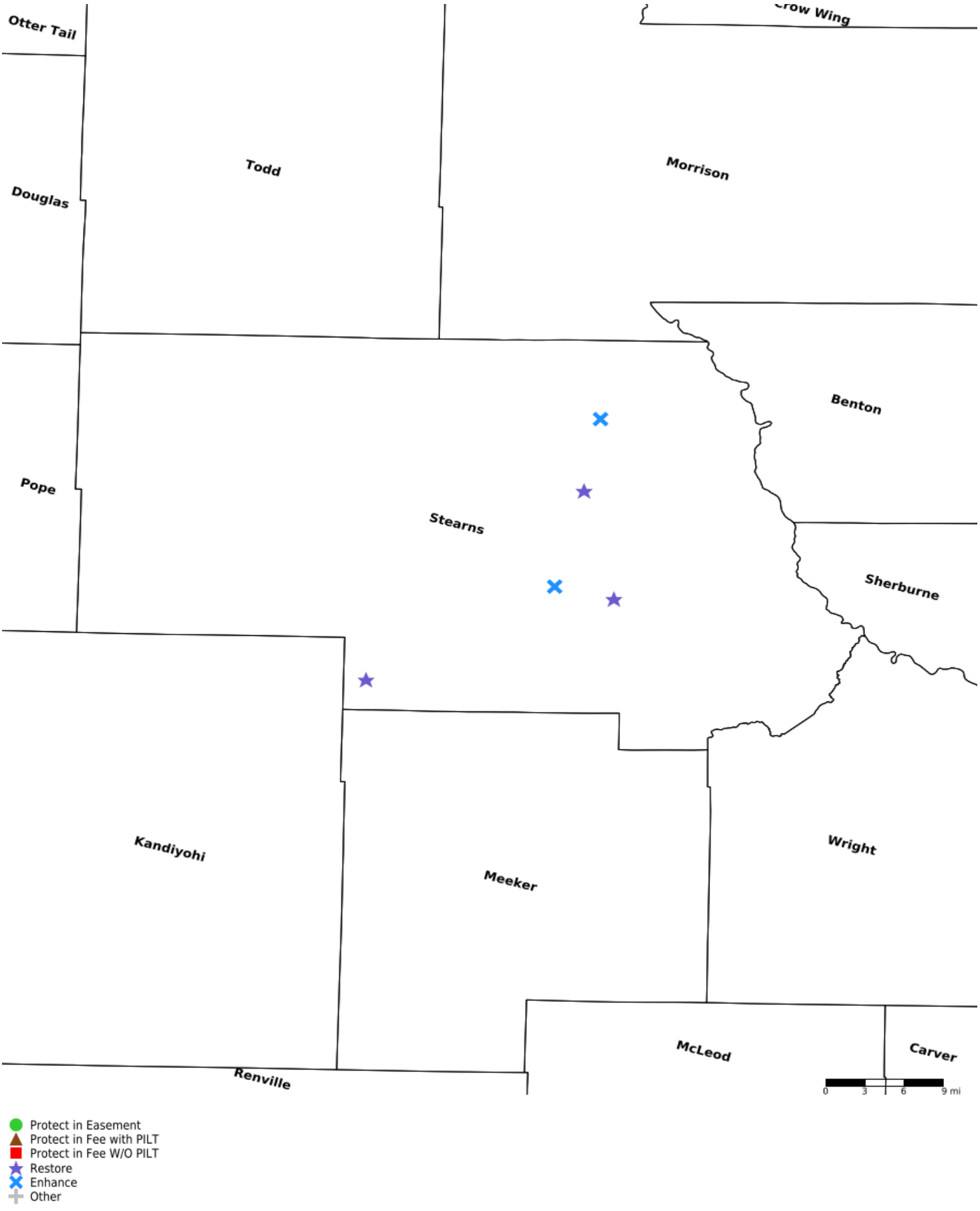
Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
The Land Trust uses a competitive, market-based approach through an RFP process to identify interested landowners and prioritize parcels for conservation easement acquisition. All proposals submitted by landowners are evaluated and ranked relative to their ecological significance based on three primary factors: 1) size of habitat on the parcel; 2) condition of habitat on the parcel; and 3) the context (both in terms of amount/quality of remaining habitat and protected areas) within which the parcel lies.

We also ask the landowner to consider contributing all or a portion of fair market value to enable our funds to make a larger conservation impact (see attached sign-up criteria). SJU conducts outreach in the community to encourage landowner participation in the program; the Land Trust may also contract with Stearns CD offices or other vendors to further build the project pipeline.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Johnson C	Stearns	12330208	95	$66,500	Yes	FSI & Prairie
Liestman L	Stearns	12232220	220	$153,800	Yes	FSI
Lindell F	Stearns	12330213	76	$53,200	Yes	FSI
Merdan J	Stearns	12530234	60	$42,000	Yes	FSI
Smith B	Stearns	12630235	55	$38,500	Yes	Prairie

Parcel Map


Otter Tail
Crow Wing
Todd
Morrison
Douglas
Benton
Pope
Stearns
Sherburne
Kandiyohi
Meeker
Wright
McLeod
Carver
Renville
0
3
6
9 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program - Phase 3

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2026 - Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program - Phase 3
Organization: Minnesota Land Trust
Manager: Wayne Ostlie

Budget

Requested Amount: $5,554,000
Appropriated Amount: $2,192,000
Percentage: 39.47%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$464,600	-	$298,600	-	64.27%	-
Contracts	$436,800	-	$314,800	-	72.07%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$3,600,000	$360,000	$1,104,000	$110,000	30.67%	30.56%
Easement Stewardship	$448,000	-	$196,000	-	43.75%	-
Travel	$20,000	-	$12,000	-	60.0%	-
Professional Services	$464,000	-	$192,000	-	41.38%	-
Direct Support Services	$101,600	-	$57,600	-	56.69%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$3,000	-	$1,000	-	33.33%	-
Supplies/Materials	$16,000	-	$16,000	-	100.0%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$5,554,000**	**$360,000**	**$2,192,000**	**$110,000**	**39.47%**	**30.56%**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Outputs would be reduced by 55-65 percent. Activities will be curtailed, but less than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program success.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS will be scaled, but moderately less than proportional. Some costs are fixed (landowner recruitment; grant management) and must occur regardless of grant amount. Projects may fail midstream after investment of time. Donation of easement value (high in this program) can inflate the number of projects pursued/completed.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Outputs would be reduced by 75-85 percent. Activities will be curtailed, but less than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program success.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS will be scaled, but moderately less than proportional. Some costs are fixed (landowner recruitment; grant management) and must occur regardless of grant amount. Projects may fail midstream after investment of time. Donation of easement value (high in this program) can inflate the number of projects pursued/completed.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	356	300	84.27%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	1,100	337	30.64%
Enhance	150	130	86.67%

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$249,000	$210,800	84.66%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$5,200,000	$1,892,000	36.38%
Enhance	$105,000	$89,200	84.95%

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	356	300	84.27%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	1,100	337	30.64%
Enhance	150	130	86.67%

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$249,000	$210,800	84.66%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$5,200,000	$1,892,000	36.38%
Enhance	$105,000	$89,200	84.95%