



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Phase 14

ML 2026 Request for Funding

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### General Information

**Date:** 06/26/2025

**Proposal Title:** Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Phase 14

**Funds Requested:** \$19,044,000

**Confirmed Leverage Funds:** \$115,500

**Is this proposal Scalable?:** Yes

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Nick Bancks

**Title:** Project Manager

**Organization:** The Trust for Public Land

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Winona, Houston, Goodhue, Wabasha, Fillmore and Olmsted.

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

Southeast Forest

**Activity types:**

Protect in Easement

Protect in Fee

Enhance

Restore

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Forest

Prairie

Wetlands

Habitat

**Narrative****Abstract**

This award will protect approximately 2,725 acres using conservation easement and fee title acquisition, and restore and enhance approximately 2,610 acres of declining habitat for important wildlife species. This includes the 500-acre Wacouta Bay project, which protects an extraordinary complex of forest, prairie, and trout stream habitat near Red Wing, MN. Additional work will occur in strategically targeted, resilient corridors of biodiversity significance within the Blufflands of Southeast Minnesota, resulting in increased public access and improved wildlife habitat.

**Design and Scope of Work**

Southeast Minnesota's Driftless Area is an often-overlooked gem for outdoor recreation and natural habitat. The towering bluffs and secluded valleys provide a spectacular backdrop for hunting, birding, foraging, and especially fly fishing in the region's many spring fed streams. Inhabiting this landscape are nearly 150,000 acres of native plant communities mapped by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) that support 51% of all plant species found in Minnesota, 183 state-listed plants and animals, and more Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) than anywhere else in the state.

Despite this biological richness, only 5% of the region is currently protected.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) and Trust for Public Land (TPL), in partnership, are working to change this. Through our Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Program, we are expanding and connecting large blocks of protected lands. As a result, land managers are able to restore, enhance and maintain high-quality habitats at a scale difficult to accomplish under fragmented ownership. Additionally, the public has greater opportunities to enjoy the resources of a landscape where outdoor recreation is in high demand.

This Program has a long, proven track record of protecting, restoring and enhancing lands that meet both state and local priorities for biodiversity conservation, land access and watershed health. To date, the Partnership has protected 9,415 acres of priority lands, 43 stream and river miles, and has restored/enhanced 9,339 acres of habitat.

The 14th Phase of our Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Program continues this body of work:

1. Conservation Easement Acquisition: MLT will protect 1,725 acres of high-quality private land through conservation easements. MLT will identify potential projects within targeted priority areas through an RFP process coupled with effective landowner outreach strategies. This competitive landowner bid process will rank projects based on ecological value and cost, prioritizing the best projects and securing them at the lowest cost to the state.
2. Fee Acquisition. TPL coordinates with MN DNR on all potential fee title acquisitions. TPL partners with the participating DNR Divisions by leading the following activities: initial site reviews, negotiations with the willing

seller, appraisals, environmental reviews and the fee title acquisition of the land. Subsequently, TPL will transfer these lands to the DNR. Fee acquisition of 1,000 acres of forest, prairie, and other habitat and 1 mile of coldwater trout stream is planned. This includes the opportunity to complete the Wacouta Bay project, a major new acquisition opportunity near Red Wing.

3. Restoration and Enhancement: TNC will use a stewardship crew and contractors to restore/enhance approximately 2,610 acres of bluff prairie, floodplain, riparian habitat and forest within priority complexes of protected lands. Ecological restoration enhancement management plans will be developed in coordination with the DNR staff, landowners and/or hired subcontractors.

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

This program expands and improves connected complexes of habitat that support the full diversity of plants, wildlife, and fish in the biodiversity hotspot of Minnesota. We focus on areas of biodiversity significance identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) and protect and restore connected habitat to give SGCNs new opportunities to expand, migrate, and adapt to changing conditions.

The Wacouta Bay acquisition included in this proposal is a great example of the impact our proposal can have for species conservation. 25 SGCNs alone are known to utilize habitats on or around the Wacouta Bay property. The majority of the property is designated as a Site of Outstanding Biological Significance, and it contains 48 acres of remnant native bluff prairie.

Sedimentation and erosion are major threats to fish in the region. Protecting and enhancing upland natural communities, especially on the steep bluffs that flank most trout streams, helps prevent additional erosion. Aquatic habitat also benefits from protection of trout stream banks and floodplains. The water quality benefit that comes with the protection of forested upland areas is significant and contributes to improved trout and non-game fish and mussel habitat.

To date, this program has benefited habitat for over 919 documented occurrences of some 102 SGCN identified by the Natural Heritage Inventory. This proposal will continue with high impact projects that protect, restore, and enhance habitat for Minnesota's rarest and most vulnerable species. Specific habitats include bluff prairie, oak savanna, barrens prairie, oak-hickory woodland, jack pine - oak woodland, white pine - oak/maple forest and maple basswood hardwood forest. These habitats support species including: tri-colored and northern long-eared bats, timber rattlesnake, Blanding's turtle, western foxsnake, North American racer, American ginseng, great Indian plantain, plains wild indigo and red-shouldered hawk.

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

This program has historically protected several large properties, and these opportunities are increasingly rare in the region. When larger landholdings become available, it's crucial to move fast to protect them. The Wacouta Bay project is an excellent example of this. Failing to secure funding would jeopardize a significant protection opportunity. Protecting large parcels like Wacouta Bay while expanding existing protected areas helps improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ecological management and ensures the long-term viability of ecosystems.

Many of the most imperiled habitats in the Driftless Area require regular disturbance to maintain their health and resilience. Sites that require enhancement work to remove invasive species or restore open conditions become more expensive and less likely to succeed every year they are delayed. TNC's contract funding for restoration and

enhancement under this program is currently fully allocated to projects, so without new funding no new projects will be initiated.

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

A number of conservation plans covering Southeast MN have identified habitat corridors and complexes with high biodiversity significance and potential to expand areas of protected land. These include watershed-based Landscape Stewardship Plans and DNR's Wildlife Action Network along with the Conservation Focus Areas in the Root River and Whitewater watersheds. Our work will prioritize these areas, realizing a long-term vision of high-quality protected habitat complexes within larger corridors. Protection projects will prioritize parcels that are either 1) connected to existing protected lands, or 2) are of significant standalone size and have potential for future expansion. These two criteria directly address expanding habitat complexes and protecting large parcels from parcellation and fragmentation. Restoration projects return habitat to fill in gaps within these corridors, increasing landscape connectivity. Enhancement work will focus on improving habitat within the core complexes to the highest quality.

**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 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.**

As described in a recent paper by Anderson, et. al. (2023), TNC has mapped a nationwide network of habitat corridors and complexes with increased resilience to climate change. The priority areas for this proposal are all within resilient and connected complexes identified in this analysis. Our partnership targets those lands for protection and restoration that provide the best opportunities for maintaining biodiversity and increasing connectivity which are the foundation of a resilient landscape. Protection of larger, connected habitat blocks supports the ability of wildlife to move and adapt to stressors, including those accelerated by a changing climate. Enhancement projects maintain that resilience by controlling ecosystem stressors like invasive species and supporting the variety of habitats that drive the biodiversity of the region.

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

**Southeast Forest**

Protect forest habitat through acquisition in fee or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties

**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:**

To date, roughly 14.7 square miles of critical habitat have been protected through this program. Over 8 square miles have been opened for public hunting and fishing, while allowing increased management within habitat complexes. Approximately 6.5 square miles of permanent conservation easements within priority habitat

complexes have been procured. This program has protected habitat for 102 different SGCN, including 14 classified as Endangered and 22 considered Threatened.

In addition to permanent protection, enhancement work proposed through this funding will return habitat to conditions where the ongoing management needed to maintain high quality is cheaper and easier. Degraded habitats suffer from self-reinforcing impacts. By taking on the hard work needed to reverse these impacts, we will make sustainable management of critical habitat feasible moving forward.

## Outcomes

### Programs in southeast forest region:

Large corridors and complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat typical of the unglaciated region are restored and protected ~ *We will track the acres of priority parcels protected within the Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA) identified as priorities in regional planning. Success within each COA will be determined based on the percentage of area protected, restored and/or enhanced.*

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

Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund

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

This proposal does not substitute or supplant previous funding that was not from a Legacy fund.

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

Tracts acquired in fee title will be conveyed to the state for ongoing management and stewardship. Acquisition projects will be near or adjacent to existing protected lands, including state-owned lands and lands under conservation easement, allowing for the expansion of management activities that are already taking place. Habitats cleared of invasive species will be maintained with prescribed fire and other practices depending on funding. Protection and restoration projects will improve future prescribed fire and maintenance activities through economies of scale. The tracts protected and enhanced as part of this proposal also meet the prioritization for Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan.

Land protected through conservation easements will be sustained by MLT through a state-of-the art easement stewardship standards and practices. MLT is a nationally-accredited and insured land trust with a successful easement stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring and defending the easements as necessary. In addition, MLT encourages landowners to undertake active ecological management of eased properties, provides them with habitat management plans, and works with them to secure resources (expertise and funding) to undertake these activities over time.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2026 and perpetually	MLT Easement Stewardship and Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring in perpetuity	Enforcement as necessary	-
Every 4-6 years	Game and Fish Fund	Prescribed fire	-	-
Every 4-6 years	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Prescribed fire	-	-

**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 focuses on protecting and restoring habitat in the most biologically diverse region of Minnesota. Protecting, restoring, and enhancing diverse and resilient habitat benefits all Minnesotans. It keeps our air and water clean, mitigates the impacts of climate change, and conserves the biological diversity that is every Minnesotan's natural heritage.

Our program also works to increase public access to opportunities for recreation. Outdoor recreation provides benefits to all people, from the physical, mental, and spiritual health rewards of being in nature to the social benefits of family and group recreation. TPL's mentored hunting and angling program is a great example of this. In partnership with the MN Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, TPL hosts and facilitates mentored hunting, angling, and foraging opportunities for diverse communities on public lands and waters across Southeast Minnesota, with a focus on lands protected by Outdoor Heritage Funds. Program mentors are individuals from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds as well, helping to reinforce and foster a sense of representation, belonging, and inclusion on public lands.

Increasing public land access also helps grow the region's significant outdoor recreation economy, providing income and jobs to rural communities. The restoration and enhancement work we accomplish also has an economic impact. Most of the contractors we work with to complete those projects are local to the region. Working with them supports local jobs and small businesses.

In Southeast Minnesota, the rising price of land is quickly turning access to natural spaces into a luxury good. With less than 5 percent of the land protected, opening new opportunities for public access to the outdoors helps make sure economic status is not a barrier to enjoying the wealth of nature available in the Driftless Area. Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, and Minnesota Land Trust all hold a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice as a core value. We are committed to seeking more ways to close the outdoor access gap and support diverse human communities as we continue preserving the biological diversity of Minnesota.

**Activity Details**

**Requirements**

**Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought\*\* prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**

No

**Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:**

We will follow the county/township board notification processes as directed by current statutory language.

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

Yes

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

Yes

**Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?**

Yes

**Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?**

Yes

**Where does the activity take place?**

WMA

SNA

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

Public Waters

County/Municipal

AMA

State Forests

Other : TNC Preserve acquired with Outdoor Heritage Funds

## 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:**

TPL and TNC - We are not aware of any long-term plans to use food plots on lands acquired with this appropriation. Short-term use of agricultural crops is an accepted best practice for preparing a site for prairie restoration. For example, short-term use of soybeans or rye may be used for restorations to control weed seedbeds prior to planting.

MLT - 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, 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 proposal either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**

No

**Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?**

No

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

Yes

**Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:**

None

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

State of MN

NGO

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

WMA

AMA

SNA

State Forest

Other : TNC Preserve

**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:**

Lands protected with conservation easements often include private roads or trails used by the landowners on their property. TPL is not aware of any trails or roads on any of the fee-title acquisitions on the parcel list. If any trails are discovered TPL will consult with LSOHC staff to determine appropriate actions and resolution.

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

Yes

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**

Landowners with easements may continue to use private trails on their property. TPL is not aware of any trails or roads on any of the acquisitions. If any are discovered on lands to be managed by the



DNR, they will be managed per DNR policy for WMAs, AMAs, SNAs or State Forests. If they are discovered on lands to be managed by local units of government, they will be managed per a maintenance and monitoring plan developed in consultation with LSOHC staff.

**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?**

No

**Explain how, when, and source of the R/E work:**

Costs for restoration and enhancement of lands acquired through conservation easements are not included in this proposal. MLT (as easement holders on respective properties) will work with landowners on an ongoing basis to provide habitat restoration plans, resources and technical expertise to undertake ongoing management of these properties.

While no significant R/E work is anticipated for the fee-title land acquired under this appropriation, there may be some minor initial R/E work needed and we have included funding in the Contracts line item for that potential work. Additionally, after land is acquired and conveyed to the MN DNR, initial restoration activities occur as part of the DNR IDP plan. If additional R/E work is needed for lands acquired under this appropriation, it will be addressed through subsequent proposals and/or other funding.

**Other OHF Appropriation Awards**

**Have you received OHF dollars through LSOHC in the past?**

Yes

**Are any of these past appropriations still OPEN?**

Yes

Approp Year	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
2025	\$2,387,000	-	-	-
2024	\$3,052,000	\$18,000	\$3,034,000	0.59%
2023	\$3,675,000	\$43,600	\$3,631,400	1.19%
2022	\$3,883,000	\$225,300	\$3,657,700	5.8%
2021	\$4,068,000	\$2,775,916	\$1,292,084	68.24%
2020	\$2,704,000	\$2,464,685	\$239,315	91.15%
2019	\$5,741,000	\$5,572,034	\$168,966	97.06%
Totals	\$25,510,000	\$11,099,535	\$14,410,465	43.51%

**Timeline**

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Purchase agreements or options on acquisition of fee land	June 30, 2029
Acquisition of fee land	June 30, 2030
Easement acquisition	June 30, 2030
Restoration/Enhancement on parcels protected without grant	June 30, 2031
Restoration/Enhancement on parcels protected with grant	June 30, 2035

Budget**Grand Totals Across All Partnerships**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Funding Request</b>	<b>Total Leverage</b>	<b>Leverage Source</b>	<b>Total</b>
Personnel	\$1,545,000	-	-	\$1,545,000
Contracts	\$1,322,000	-	-	\$1,322,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$10,000,000	-	-	\$10,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$4,050,000	\$607,500	Landowner Donations	\$4,657,500
Easement Stewardship	\$392,000	-	-	\$392,000
Travel	\$90,000	\$2,500	Private	\$92,500
Professional Services	\$530,000	-	-	\$530,000
Direct Support Services	\$374,000	\$356,800	Private, Private	\$730,800
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$240,000	-	-	\$240,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$1,000	-	-	\$1,000
Supplies/Materials	\$325,000	-	-	\$325,000
DNR IDP	\$175,000	-	-	\$175,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$19,044,000</b>	<b>\$966,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$20,010,800</b>

**Partner: The Nature Conservancy****Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$655,000	-	-	\$655,000
Contracts	\$1,000,000	-	-	\$1,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$60,000	-	-	\$60,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$153,000	\$243,800	Private	\$396,800
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$320,000	-	-	\$320,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,188,000</b>	<b>\$243,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$2,431,800</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TNC Project Management, Protection and Grants Admin	1.3	3.0	\$355,000	-	-	\$355,000
TNC Restoration/Enhancement Crew	1.75	3.0	\$300,000	-	-	\$300,000

**Partner: Trust for Public Land**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$490,000	-	-	\$490,000
Contracts	\$200,000	-	-	\$200,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$10,000,000	-	-	\$10,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	\$2,500	Private	\$2,500
Professional Services	\$100,000	-	-	\$100,000
Direct Support Services	\$113,000	\$113,000	Private	\$226,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$240,000	-	-	\$240,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$175,000	-	-	\$175,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$11,318,000</b>	<b>\$115,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$11,433,500</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TPL Protection and Legal Staff	0.95	3.0	\$490,000	-	-	\$490,000

**Partner: Minnesota Land Trust****Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$400,000	-	-	\$400,000
Contracts	\$122,000	-	-	\$122,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$4,050,000	\$607,500	Landowner Donations	\$4,657,500
Easement Stewardship	\$392,000	-	-	\$392,000
Travel	\$30,000	-	-	\$30,000
Professional Services	\$430,000	-	-	\$430,000
Direct Support Services	\$108,000	-	-	\$108,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$1,000	-	-	\$1,000
Supplies/Materials	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$5,538,000</b>	<b>\$607,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$6,145,500</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Protection Staff	1.0	4.0	\$400,000	-	-	\$400,000

**Amount of Request:** \$19,044,000**Amount of Leverage:** \$966,800**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 5.08%**DSS + Personnel:** \$1,919,000**As a % of the total request:** 10.08%**Easement Stewardship:** \$392,000**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 9.68%

Total Leverage (from above)	Amount Confirmed	% of Total Leverage	Amount Anticipated	% of Total Leverage
\$966,800	\$115,500	11.95%	\$851,300	88.05%

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

TPL and TNC will leverage privately sourced funds to cover direct support services (DSS) costs not reimbursed.

TPL has leveraged private funds for travel.

MLT encourages landowners to donate value as a participant in the program. This leverage (\$607,500) is a conservative estimate of expected landowner contribution.

**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?**

A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities) slightly more than proportionately. Some costs related to program development, oversight, and real estate due diligence remain constant regardless of appropriation amount, forcing a larger reduction in acres/activities. A significant funding reduction would jeopardize the Wacouta Bay Bluffs acquisition.

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

Program management costs (personnel and DSS expenses) will be reduced as well. However, not exactly proportionately as program development and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

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

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

A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities) more than proportionately. Some costs related to program development, oversight, and real estate due diligence remain constant regardless of appropriation amount, forcing a larger reduction in acres/activities. A reduction this large would significantly jeopardize the Wacouta Bay Bluffs acquisition.

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

Program management costs (personnel and DSS expenses) will be reduced as well. However, not exactly proportionately as program development and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

## Personnel

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

Yes

### **Please explain the overlap of past and future staffing and position levels previously received and how that is coordinated over multiple years?**

Phase 14 is a component of the larger Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Program. Continuity of funding across multiple phases allows us flexibility when prioritizing parcels for protection or enhancement. Further, it ensures stability in our staffing model and provides the ability to plan and prioritize projects over multiple years. The flexibility provided by stable funding is critically important to achieving conservation goals given the uncertainty and variability of field season weather conditions.

## Contracts

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

TNC and TPL contract lines are dedicated to enhancement and restoration work. Typical contractors include private vendors and Conservation Corps of MN/IA. MLT will use contract funds for three purposes: to complete habitat management plans on new easement acquisitions; for restoration projects; and partnering with SWCDs on outreach.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Other : Environmental assessments, mapping, minerals reports

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

### What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?

We anticipate we will close 2 to 3 transactions and investigate 2 others.

## Easement Stewardship

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

The Minnesota Land Trust expects to close 10-15 projects. The average cost per easement to perpetually fund the Minnesota Land Trust's long-term monitoring and enforcement obligations is \$28,000; in extreme circumstances, a larger amount may be sought. This figure has been determined by using a stewardship funding "cost analysis" which is the industry standard according to the Land Trust Accreditation process. Periodic updates to this cost analysis are provided to 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

Vehicle rental is also included.

### 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?

TNC: DSS is based on The Nature Conservancy's Federal Negotiated Rate (FNR) as proposed and approved by the US Dept. of Interior on an annual basis. In this proposal we are requesting reimbursement of 7.5% of eligible base costs as determined by our annual FNR and based on suggestions from the Council in prior years' hearings. The amount requested for reimbursement represents 38 percent of the total reimbursable costs allowed under the FNR. Examples of expenses included in the FNR include services from in-house legal counsel; finance, human resources; and information technology support, all of which contribute directly to the implementation of the project. The FNR is not applied to capital equipment over \$50,000 or land acquisition.



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 will apply this DNR approved rate only to personnel expenses to determine the total amount of the direct support services.

TPL: The Trust for Public Land's DSS request is based upon our federally approved rate, which has been approved by the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant and 50% is contributed as leverage

### **Other Equipment/Tools**

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

Equipment and tools to be purchased will be those necessary for protection, restoration and management activities. Examples include Personal Protective Equipment, other field safety equipment, GPS units, backpack sprayers for herbicide application, bladder bags, and assorted hand tools for prescribed fire.

### **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	-	50	60	-	110
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	0	0	1,000	1,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	0	-	-	0
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	1,725	1,725
Enhance	-	1,000	1,500	0	2,500
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>1,050</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>2,725</b>	<b>5,335</b>

**Restoration/Enhancement Acres of OHF Acquired Lands (Table 1a.1)**

	RESTORE		Total	ENHANCE		Total
	Lands acquired in this proposal	Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)		Lands acquired in this proposal	Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	0	-	100	100
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	0	-	50	50
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>

**Restoration/Enhancement Acres Breakdown of Existing Protected Lands (Table 1a.2)**

	RESTORE		ENHANCE	
	Lands acquired with OHF	Lands NOT acquired with OHF	Lands acquired with OHF	Lands NOT acquired with OHF
DNR Lands (WMA, State Forests, etc)	-	100	900	1,610
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	-	-	-
Easements	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>100</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,610</b>

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

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-
Protect in Easement	-
Enhance	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$50,000	\$60,000	-	\$110,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$11,318,000	\$11,318,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$5,538,000	\$5,538,000
Enhance	-	\$830,000	\$1,248,000	-	\$2,078,000
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>\$880,000</b>	<b>\$1,308,000</b>	<b>\$16,856,000</b>	<b>\$19,044,000</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	110	0	0	110
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	1,000	0	0	1,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	1,725	0	0	1,725
Enhance	0	0	2,500	0	0	2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,335</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,335</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	\$110,000	-	-	\$110,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	\$11,318,000	-	-	\$11,318,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	\$5,538,000	-	-	\$5,538,000
Enhance	-	-	\$2,078,000	-	-	\$2,078,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$19,044,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$19,044,000</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	\$1,000	\$1,000	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$11,318
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$3,210
Enhance	-	\$830	\$832	-

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	\$1,000	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	\$11,318	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	\$3,210	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$831	-	-

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

## Parcels

### Sign-up Criteria?

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

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

For Protection in Fee Simple, parcels are prioritized based on:

- Location within a Conservation Opportunity Area or Area of Significant Native Biodiversity (allows for large landscape management and management efficiencies, i.e. large scale Rx fire)
- Presence of Minnesota Biological Survey mapped native plant communities
- Parcels equal to or greater than 80 acres in size are strongly preferred
- Proximity to a state-owned parcel
- A Conservation Partner willing to accept the property/meets partner objectives (SNA, WMA, Forestry)
- Must have a willing seller

Additionally, the Land Trust uses the attached criteria to prioritize parcels not currently on the parcel list. All protection parcels will be added to the parcel list before incurring any expenses in accordance with LSOHC guidance.

### Restore / Enhance Parcels

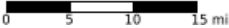
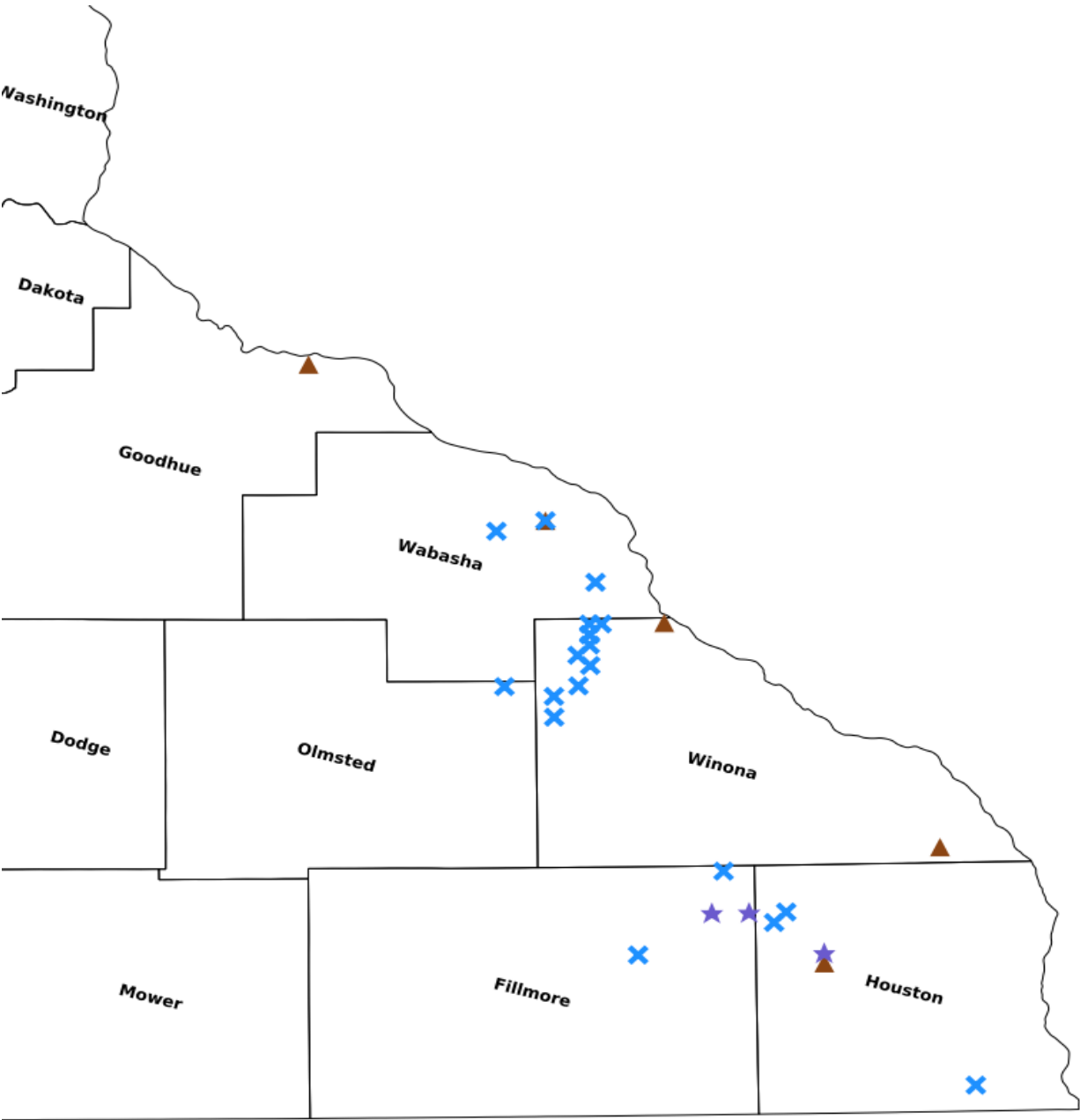
Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
7 Springs	Fillmore	10201216	67	\$80,000	Yes	Cedar and Invasive species Removal. Bluff Prairie, Oak Savanna, and Woodland Enhancement
Gribben Creek	Fillmore	10309216	11	\$27,500	Yes	Tree Planting, Direct Hardwood Seeding, and Riparian Forest Enhancement
Rushford Sand Barrens Ag Fields	Fillmore	10408228	20	\$47,000	Yes	Direct Hardwood Seeding Forest Restoration
Rushford South Ag Fields	Fillmore	10408225	23	\$10,000	Yes	Tree Planting and Direct Hardwood Seeding Forest Enhancement and Restoration
Schueler Bluff	Fillmore	10408203	60	\$60,000	Yes	Rx grazing for up to 3 seasons
Whitewater Siebenaler Bluff	Fillmore	10810214	66	\$75,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal Bluff Prairie and Oak Savanna Enhancement
Ferndale Bluffs	Houston	10407232	40	\$50,000	Yes	Prairie and savanna enhancement
Kronseder Burn Unit	Houston	10105224	500	\$150,000	Yes	Rx Burn Unit Preparation, Establish Fire Breaks
Vinegar Ridge Oak Barrens	Houston	10407228	30	\$15,000	Yes	Oak Barrens Enhancement
Wet Bark Ag Fields	Houston	10307213	58	\$145,000	Yes	Direct Hardwood Seeding Forest Restoration
Whitewater HVCF - North Fork	Olmsted	10711203	100	\$100,000	Yes	Forest Enhancement, Invasive Species Removal
Krueger Bluff Prairies	Wabasha	11010218	80	\$150,000	Yes	Prairie Enhancement, Invasive Species Removal

Snake Creek Bluff	Wabasha	10910214	20	\$20,000	Yes	Prairie Enhancement, Cedar and Invasive Species Removal
Zumbro Bottoms Seed Plantation	Wabasha	11011221	20	\$25,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater Burnt Oaks Savanna	Winona	10810211	65	\$100,000	Yes	Oak Savanna Enhancement, Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater Fairwater Bluff	Winona	10710208	50	\$70,000	Yes	Prairie Enhancement, Cedar and Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater HVCF - Sand Savannas	Winona	10810211	50	\$50,000	Yes	Forest Enhancement, Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater HVCF - South Fork	Winona	10710220	50	\$50,000	Yes	Forest Enhancement, Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater Hoosier Ridge	Winona	10810202	50	\$50,000	Yes	Forest Enhancement, Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater Hwy 26 Bluff	Winona	10710203	45	\$50,000	Yes	Prairie Enhancement, Cedar and Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater Lupine Valley Savanna	Winona	10810201	150	\$175,000	Yes	Oak Savanna Enhancement, Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater Marnach Bluff	Winona	10810222	30	\$50,000	Yes	Prairie Enhancement, Cedar and Invasive Species Removal
Whitewater Turkey Valley Savanna	Winona	10810226	150	\$100,000	Yes	Oak Savanna Enhancement, Invasive Species Removal

## Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Wacouta Bay	Goodhue	11314236	449	\$6,200,000	No
Houston County State Forest Addition	Houston	10307224	163	\$1,300,000	No
Zumbro Addition to Dorer Forest	Wabasha	11010218	155	\$800,000	No
Dorer State Forest Addition - Minneiska	Winona	10809202	142	\$900,000	No
Weber Springs	Winona	10505228	800	\$4,800,000	No

Parcel Map



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

# Southeast Minnesota Protection & Restoration



The Blufflands Region of Southeast Minnesota contains some of the highest quality, most diverse and least protected wildlife habitat in Minnesota. This program will invest in targeted land protection through fee simple and conservation easement acquisitions and the restoration of important habitat types. This program builds on existing protected lands to improve large landscape management for Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Habitat protection will focus on areas of Biodiversity Significance. This proposal includes the opportunity to protect the 500-acre Wacouta Bay Bluffs property (pictured below), home to 25 different SGCN. Restoration and enhancement projects will return communities to healthy conditions and improve their stability, making ongoing management easier and more effective in the future.

<b>Request</b>	<b>\$19,044,000</b>
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<b>Leverage</b>	<b>\$966,800</b>
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<b>Acres protected</b>	<b>2,725</b>
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<b>Acres restored</b>	<b>2,610</b>
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## For more information:

### Nick Bancks

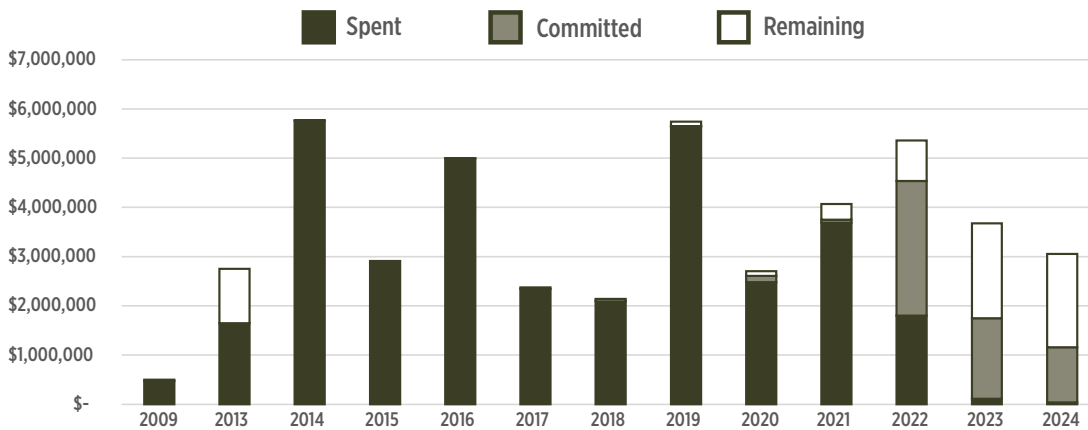
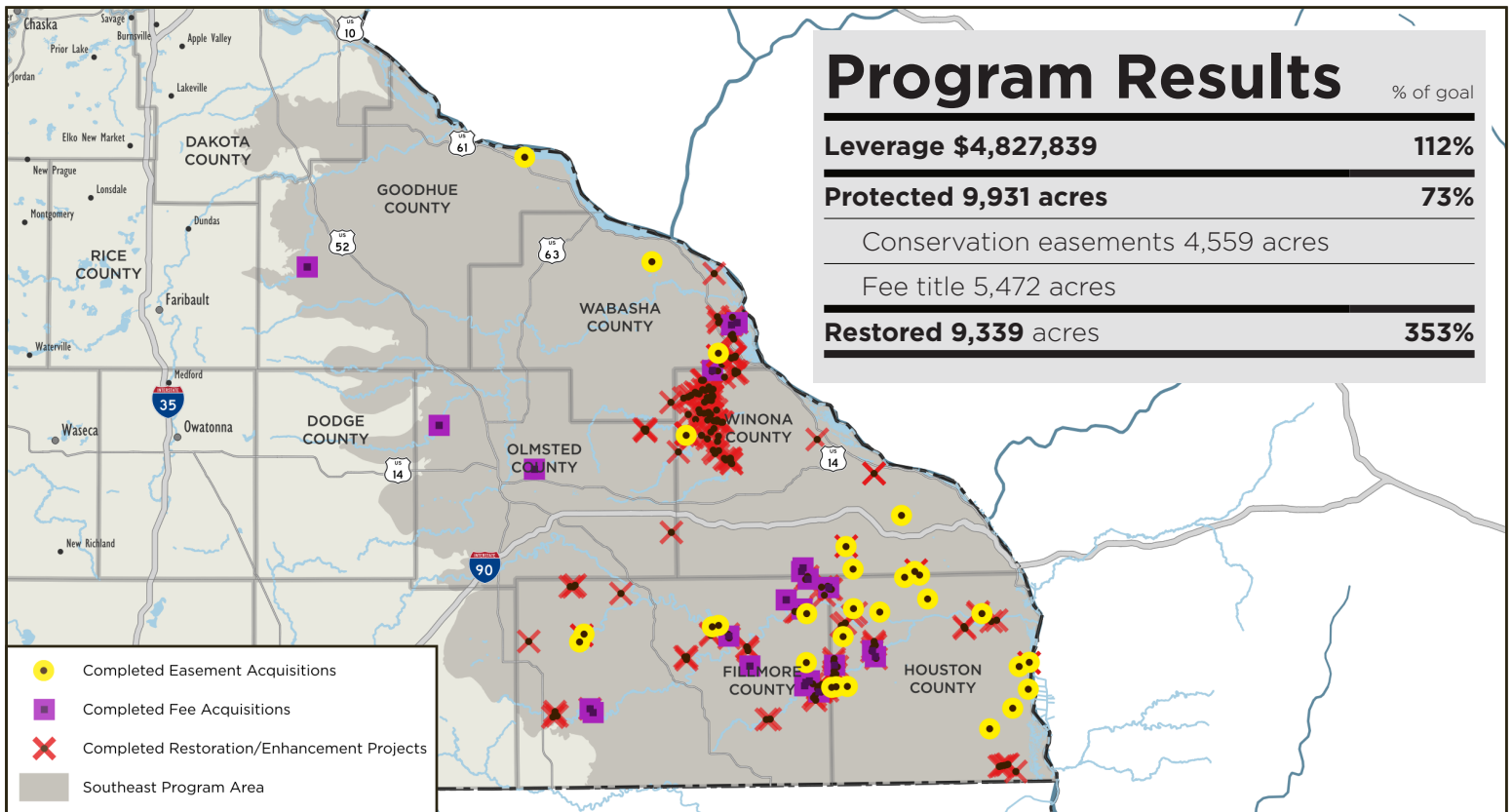
Project Manager  
Trust for Public Land  
[nick.bancks@tpl.org](mailto:nick.bancks@tpl.org)  
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## Partners

Trust for Public Land will complete all fee simple land acquisitions in collaboration with the Minnesota DNR and local government units. The Nature Conservancy will coordinate habitat restoration and enhancement with DNR. The Minnesota Land Trust will complete permanent conservation easements in partnership with private landowners.





This partnership is in need of additional funding to continue our pace of conservation wins. The funding for contracts and acquisitions remaining in existing appropriations is almost entirely either spent, legally obligated, or internally allocated to an existing project.



*Marsh marigolds growing in a groundwater seep on the recently protected Moon Valley WMA.*



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