

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage CouncilSt. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 7ML 2026 Request for Funding

## General Information

**Date:** 06/26/2025

**Proposal Title:** St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 7

**Funds Requested:** $13,859,000

**Confirmed Leverage Funds:** $113,000

**Is this proposal Scalable?:** Yes

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Marc White **Title:** Natural Resources Manager **Organization:** Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix & Namekagon **Address:** 1015 N Cascade St  **City:** Osceola, WI 54020 **Email:** mwhite@wildriversconservancy.org **Office Number:** 7154833300 ex 25 **Mobile Number:** 4146406390 **Fax Number:**   **Website:** https://wildriversconservancy.org/

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Washington, Kanabec, Pine and Chisago.

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

Northern Forest

Metro / Urban

**Activity types:**

Protect in Easement

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Forest

Habitat

Prairie

## Narrative

### Abstract

Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix & Namekagon, Minnesota Land Trust, and Trust for Public Land will work in partnership to permanently protect approximately 1600 acres of critical wildlife habitat on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River watershed through fee-title acquisition and conservation easements. The goals of the program are to protect high quality wildlife habitat, improve conservation connectivity, and provide public access for outdoor recreation opportunities.

### Design and Scope of Work

The St. Croix River watershed spans 7,760 square miles between Minnesota and Wisconsin with the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway flowing through its heart. The St. Croix River was the first designated Wild and Scenic Riverway in 1968. The landscape of the watershed contains large swaths of unique ecosystems, wildlife habitat and is home to 195 rare, threatened and endangered species. The Riverway is a regional attraction for upwards of 1 million visitors annually due to its many recreation opportunities including high-quality fishing, hunting, birding, hiking, and boating. Although the status of the St. Croix as a Wild and Scenic River comes with federal protections, those protections only apply to a thin ribbon of land adjacent to the Riverway. Beyond the Riverway boundary, more than 75% of the watershed’s forest habitat remains unprotected and the threat of development, fragmentation and conversion to agriculture is substantial.

The partnership, consisting of the Wild Rivers Conservancy (Conservancy), the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT), and Trust for Public Land (TPL), will work to increase the amount of land permanently protected on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River watershed. The goals of the partnership are to protect large intact forests, sustain riparian forests, and restore and protect lands that are important to the 195 endangered, threatened and special concern species documented within the project area (Source: MN DNR Rare Species Guide).

Prior to the program’s establishment, landowners had few, if any, options for permanent land protection. The program has proven how eager landowners are for permanent protection options throughout the watershed. Strategic landowner outreach has led to a queue of interested landowners wanting to protect their land for generations to come. The partnership is requesting ML2026 funding for Phase 7 of the program to continue the important work of permanently protecting some of Minnesota's highest quality habitat.

To date, the St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration program partnership has protected 5,622 acres including 3,276 acres through conservation easements, 2,346 acres through fee-title acquisition, and 24.74 miles of shoreline.

Funding for Phase 7 (ML2026) of the St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration program will support the following activities:

TPL will protect approximately 720 acres through fee-title acquisition. TPL will convey lands to the DNR, except when LGU ownership is appropriate, for permanent ownership, management, and stewardship.

MLT will acquire approximately 880 acres of conservation easements. Projects within targeted priority areas will be identified through a competitive RFP process and subsequently ranked based on ecological value and cost, prioritizing the best projects and securing them at the lowest cost to the state. MLT will negotiate and close all conservation easements.

The Conservancy will provide overall program administration, project management, landowner outreach, and community engagement.

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

Permanently protecting high priority habitat within the St. Croix River watershed through conservation easements and fee title acquisitions, is a cost-effective strategy to conserve fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species. Areas targeted by this proposal have been identified and prioritized through state, regional, and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity, connectivity, and ability to preserve habitat for SGCN. The project area has a mixed representation of extensive forestland, brushland, prairie, oak savanna, wetlands, and riparian habitats. These habitats are home to 195 documented endangered, threatened and special concern species including: lake sturgeon, wood turtle, Blanding’s turtle, gray wolf, bald eagle, osprey, sandhill crane, trumpeter swan, yellow rail, and sharp-tailed grouse. The St. Croix River watershed is also globally recognized for its mussel diversity with 51 documented native unionid mussel species, including 5 listed as Federally endangered, and 23 state-listed species. The project area also contains a significant amount of high-quality brushland and regenerating forestland habitat critical to the breeding success of the golden-winged warbler.

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

The St. Croix watershed faces increasing development pressure from population growth. From 2020-2024, Minnesota counties within the St. Croix watershed experienced an average of 4.3% increase in population, nearly triple the state average of 1.5% (Source: United States Census Bureau). Four of the top ten fastest growing Minnesota counties from 2022-2023 lie within the project area, including Pine County - the fastest growing county in Minnesota. Based on current projections, these population growth trends are expected to accelerate. Increases in housing density and associated development on rural forest lands is linked to reductions in private forest services across watersheds including reductions in native wildlife, forest health, water quality, carbon storage, timber production, and recreational benefits.

Protecting healthy watersheds with permanent conservation options, such as conservation easements and fee title acquisitions, is a cost-effective strategy to ensure that the ecosystem and economic services provided by healthy watersheds remain.

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

This proposal uses a science-based multiple benefits approach for prioritizing and targeting areas of greatest conservation value. We will use The Nature Conservancy's St. Croix Basin GIS-based Priority Protection Analysis which incorporates Minnesota Biological Survey Sites of Biodiversity Significance, Lakes of Biological Significance, habitat complexes and connectivity, along with other data sets to spatially prioritize the most important sites for protection. The intent of this model was to develop and score priorities where multiple benefits overlap – habitat, biodiversity, water quality, water quantity, and resiliency. Evaluation criteria include: 1) aquatic and terrestrial habitat protection priorities, 2) lands important to drinking water quality and groundwater recharge, and 3) resilience of lands and waters to climate change and other anticipated future changes and disturbance.

More specifically, this approach includes data on habitat quality, target species and natural communities, and habitat complexes for terrestrial species with emphasis on expanding corridors adjacent to public lands. The most heavily weighted component of this approach uses data from the Minnesota Biological Survey focused on fish and wildlife that includes data on biodiversity, wetlands, native plant communities, Lakes of Biological Significance, wild rice catchments, cold water refuge for trout, proximity to protected lands, and ecological connections. Added benefits for water quality are assessed using data on wellhead protected areas, groundwater contamination susceptibility, private well density, and groundwater recharge.

Using results of this multiple benefits approach, areas will be targeted down to the parcel level for landowner engagement and outreach for implementing permanent protection activities. For MLT easements, a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process will be used to generate applications from landowners. Potential projects will be scored along ecological grounds and will also consider donative value from landowners.

### 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.

Using TNC's climate resiliency data set (Anderson et al., 2023), our Partnership targets those lands for protection and restoration that provide the best opportunities for maintaining biodiversity in the face of climate change. Increasing connectivity and targeting climate-resilient sites sets the stage for a resilient landscape. 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.

Protecting complexes of large and connected habitat blocks reduces fragmentation and allows for species movement as climate changes. Keeping forested lands forested improves water retention, which promotes resilience to drought both in upland systems and associated streams and rivers. Forests are crucial in mitigating against effects caused by excessive rainfall events given their water retention ability.

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

**Metro / Urban**

Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

**Northern Forest**

Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement

### 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:

The range, quality and diversity of habitats within the St. Croix watershed offer unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate a permanent wildlife conservation legacy. The St. Croix River watershed contains the best-preserved examples of pre-settlement natural communities in the Upper Mississippi drainage. Minnesota’s Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 has identified St. Croix River Watersheds as a Conservation Focus Area (CFA). Permanent land protection parcels targeted by this proposal are identified and prioritized through the lens of this plan and due to their high biodiversity, connectivity, and ability to preserve habitat for SGCN. The diversity of habitat within the St. Croix Rivers Watersheds CFA supports 195 documented endangered, threatened and special concern species including: lake sturgeon, wood turtle, Blanding’s turtle, gray wolf, bald eagle, osprey, sandhill crane, trumpeter swan, yellow rail, and sharp-tailed grouse. The St. Croix River watershed is a globally recognized mussel diversity hot-spot with 51 documented native unionid mussel species, including 5 Federally endangered, and 23 state-listed species. The project area also contains high-quality brushland and regenerating forest habitat critical to the breeding success of the golden-winged warbler.

Through permanent land protection, the St. Croix Watershed Conservation and Restoration Project will significantly advance wildlife conservation in the St. Croix watershed. This project will improve and increase the amount of available public land for hunting, angling and recreation within easy access from the Twin Cities Metro area.

## Outcomes

### Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *This project will be measured by the acres of wildlife corridors protected and evaluated based on the observed use by wildlife populations and evidence of SGCN.*

### Programs in the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *This project will be measured by the acres of high quality forestlands that are permanently protected from development and fragmentation. Protected land will also be evaluated by its proximity to existing public lands as well as connectivity to other protected forestlands.*

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

N/A

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

Funding requested by the Partnership will not supplant or substitute for any previous non-legacy funding used for the same purpose.

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

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 case of a true violation. MLT will assist landowners in the development of habitat management plans to help ensure that the land will be managed for its wildlife and water quality benefits. 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.

TPL will convey all fee-title land to the DNR or LGUs for permanent stewardship. Once land has been conveyed, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. Estimated costs for initial restoration work are included in this proposal. TPL will work with DNR or LGUs to complete a restoration and management plan, and implementation of that plan will be completed in the following years. These properties will be managed and maintained by the respective government entities according to OHF standards.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Source of Funds** | **Step 1** | **Step 2** | **Step 3** |
| 2027 | TPL - OHF and DNR | Post property | Develop restoration/management plan for property | - |
| 2028 | TPL - DNR | Develop restoration/management plan for property | Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation | - |
| 2029 - 2030 | TPL - DNR | Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation | - | - |
| 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 may celebrate cultural diversity or reach diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

The Conservancy, TPL, and MLT all hold a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values. Examples of that commitment include, but are not limited to: The Conservancy’s ongoing partnership with BIPOC communities to improve access to public resources through outdoor experiences; TPL’s work with diverse communities to put a park, trail, or natural area within a 10-minute walk of every Minnesotan living within a city; TPL’s mentored hunt and angling program, which in partnership with the MN BHA is facilitating hunting and angling opportunities for diverse communities on public lands and waters with a focus on lands protected with Outdoor Heritage funds; MLT’s protection of camps and nature centers that serve a diversity of Minnesota youth; MLT's work to build and strengthen connections between landowners and diverse community groups through its Ambassador Lands Program that has led to increased access to land for cultural or ceremonial use, conservation employment training, recreation, and mentored hunts for youth.

This program provides significant benefits for all Minnesotans, including BIPOC and diverse communities, when land is protected through fee-title acquisition and conservation easements, and otherwise restored (e.g., clean air and water, abatement of climate change, and other ecosystem services). Beyond that, public land provides an opportunity for all people, but particularly for those who do not have access or resources to connect with private natural lands, to directly connect with the outdoors through hunting, fishing, hiking, or other outdoor recreational pursuits.

## 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 the 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

### 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 - 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. We are not aware of any long-term plans to use food plots on lands acquired with this appropriation.

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 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 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:**N/A

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

State of MN

County

Local Unit of Government

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

WMA

AMA

SNA

State Forest

County Forest

**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:**MLT - Most conservation easements are established on private lands, many of which have driveways, field roads and trails located on them. Often, these established trails and roads are permitted in the terms of the easement and can be maintained for personal use if 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.

TPL is not aware of any trails or roads on any of the 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?**MLT - Existing trails and roads are identified in the project baseline report and will be monitored annually as part of the MLT's stewardship and enforcement protocols. Maintenance of permitted roads/trails in line with the terms of the easement will be the responsibility of the landowner.

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:**Estimated costs for initial restoration of lands protected through in-fee acquisition are included in this proposal. TPL will convey all fee-title land to the DNR or LGUs for permanent stewardship. Once land has been conveyed, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. TPL will work with DNR or LGUs to complete a restoration and management plan to help ensure that the land will be managed for its wildlife and water quality benefits. Implementation of that plan will be completed over the following 2-3 years. Long-term maintenance and management of these lands will fall to the respective government entities according to OHF standards.

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.

### 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 | $3,184,000 | - | - | - |
| 2024 | $4,049,000 | $27,051 | $4,021,949 | 0.67% |
| 2023 | $13,306,000 | $10,773,846 | $2,532,154 | 80.97% |
| 2022 | $3,704,000 | $2,899,762 | $804,238 | 78.29% |
| 2021 | $3,112,000 | $3,049,721 | $62,279 | 98.0% |
| 2019 | $3,751,000 | $3,676,835 | $74,165 | 98.02% |
| Totals | $31,106,000 | $20,427,215 | $10,678,785 | 65.67% |

## Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity Name** | **Estimated Completion Date** |
| MLT - Conservation easements completed | June 30, 2030 |
| TPL - Landowner negotiations, agreements, and due diligence | June 30, 2030 |
| TPL - Initial site development/restoration | Fall 2032 |
| TPL - Land acquired | June 30, 2030 |

## Budget

### Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Funding Request** | **Total Leverage** | **Leverage Source** | **Total** |
| Personnel | $930,000 | - | - | $930,000 |
| Contracts | $203,000 | - | - | $203,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $7,000,000 | - | - | $7,000,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $4,535,000 | $453,500 | -, Landowners | $4,988,500 |
| Easement Stewardship | $252,000 | - | - | $252,000 |
| Travel | $23,000 | $2,000 | Private | $25,000 |
| Professional Services | $406,000 | - | - | $406,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $206,000 | $111,000 | -, Private | $317,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $168,000 | - | - | $168,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $3,000 | - | - | $3,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $7,000 | - | - | $7,000 |
| DNR IDP | $126,000 | - | - | $126,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$13,859,000** | **$566,500** | **-** | **$14,425,500** |

### Partner: Minnesota Land Trust

#### Totals

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Funding Request** | **Total Leverage** | **Leverage Source** | **Total** |
| Personnel | $350,000 | - | - | $350,000 |
| Contracts | $87,000 | - | - | $87,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $4,535,000 | $453,500 | Landowners | $4,988,500 |
| Easement Stewardship | $252,000 | - | - | $252,000 |
| Travel | $20,000 | - | - | $20,000 |
| Professional Services | $306,000 | - | - | $306,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $95,000 | - | - | $95,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $3,000 | - | - | $3,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $1,000 | - | - | $1,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$5,649,000** | **$453,500** | **-** | **$6,102,500** |

#### Personnel

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Annual FTE** | **Years Working** | **Funding Request** | **Total Leverage** | **Leverage Source** | **Total** |
| MLT Land Protection Staff | 0.87 | 4.0 | $350,000 | - | - | $350,000 |

### Partner: The Trust for Public Land

#### Totals

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Funding Request** | **Total Leverage** | **Leverage Source** | **Total** |
| Personnel | $475,000 | - | - | $475,000 |
| Contracts | $100,000 | - | - | $100,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $7,000,000 | - | - | $7,000,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | - | $2,000 | Private | $2,000 |
| Professional Services | $100,000 | - | - | $100,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $111,000 | $111,000 | Private | $222,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $168,000 | - | - | $168,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | - | - | - | - |
| DNR IDP | $126,000 | - | - | $126,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$8,080,000** | **$113,000** | **-** | **$8,193,000** |

#### Personnel

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Annual FTE** | **Years Working** | **Funding Request** | **Total Leverage** | **Leverage Source** | **Total** |
| Protection and Legal Staff | 0.92 | 3.0 | $475,000 | - | - | $475,000 |

### Partner: Wild Rivers Conservancy

#### Totals

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Funding Request** | **Total Leverage** | **Leverage Source** | **Total** |
| Personnel | $105,000 | - | - | $105,000 |
| Contracts | $16,000 | - | - | $16,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $3,000 | - | - | $3,000 |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | - | - | - | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $6,000 | - | - | $6,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$130,000** | **-** | **-** | **$130,000** |

#### Personnel

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Annual FTE** | **Years Working** | **Funding Request** | **Total Leverage** | **Leverage Source** | **Total** |
| Conservancy Staff | 0.5 | 4.0 | $105,000 | - | - | $105,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $13,859,000 **Amount of Leverage:** $566,500 **Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 4.09% **DSS + Personnel:** $1,136,000 **As a % of the total request:** 8.2% **Easement Stewardship:** $252,000 **As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 5.56%

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Leverage (from above)** | **Amount Confirmed** | **% of Total Leverage** | **Amount Anticipated** | **% of Total Leverage** |
| $566,500 | $113,000 | 19.95% | $453,500 | 80.05% |

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**MLT encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements to the program. One-half of TPL's DSS costs and all of TPL's travel costs are provided as privately sourced.

**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?**Since some costs are fixed, a somewhat greater than proportionate reduction in activities and acres would occur.

**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, these reductions will be less than proportional, since program development and grant management costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount. These are gross estimates of personnel time.

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

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**Since some costs are fixed, a somewhat greater than proportionate reduction in activities and acres would occur.

**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, these reductions will be less than proportional, since program development and grant management costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount. These are gross estimates of personnel time.

### 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?**FTEs listed in the proposal are an estimate of the personnel time required to produce the grant deliverables put forward in this proposal. Personnel funds are only used when necessary to achieve the goals of the grant.

An array of staff draw from these funds for legal work, negotiating with landowners, crafting conservation easement and acquisition documents, writing baseline reports, coordinating partners, outreach to landowners, and project management and coordination.

### Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**MLT - Writing of habitat management plans for easement lands.
TPL - Potential site clean-up and initial restoration activities.
WRC - Outreach and community engagement within the project area.

### Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Design/Engineering

Other : Environmental Assessments; Mineral Assessments; Mapping

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?**MLT anticipates 7-11 conservation easements will be closed depending on size and cost. The average cost per easement to fund the Minnesota Land Trust's perpetual monitoring and enforcement obligations is $28,000, but may be greater in extraordinary circumstances. This figure is derived from MLT’s assessment of long-term stewardship costs which is consistent with Land Trust Accreditation standards. MLT shares periodic updates 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**MLT staff regularly rent vehicles for grant-related purposes, which is a significant cost savings over use of personal vehicles.

**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 MLT's proposed federal indirect rate. We will apply this DNR approved rate only to personnel expense to determine the total amount of the direct support services.

TPL: DSS request is based upon our federal rate which has been approved by the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant, 50% is contributed as leverage.

### Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**GPS systems, field 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 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | - | 360 | 360 | 720 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - | - | 0 |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - | 880 | 880 |
| Enhance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **0** | **0** | **360** | **1,240** | **1,600** |

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

|  | **RESTORE** |  | **Total** | **ENHANCE** |  | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Lands acquired in this proposal** | **Lands acquired with previous OHF approprations (<5yrs old)** |  | **Lands acquired in this proposal** | **Lands acquired with previous OHF approprations (<5yrs old)** |  |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** |

### 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) | - | - | - | - |
| Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.) | - | - | - | - |
| Easements | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Wetland** | **Prairie** | **Forest** | **Habitat** | **Total Funding** |
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | $4,079,000 | $4,079,000 | $8,158,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | $5,701,000 | $5,701,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **$4,079,000** | **$9,780,000** | **$13,859,000** |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Metro/Urban** | **Forest/Prairie** | **SE Forest** | **Prairie** | **N. Forest** | **Total Acres** |
| Restore | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 360 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 360 | 720 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 |
| Protect in Easement | 293 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 587 | 880 |
| Enhance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **653** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **947** | **1,600** |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Metro/Urban** | **Forest/Prairie** | **SE Forest** | **Prairie** | **N. Forest** | **Total Funding** |
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $5,805,000 | - | - | - | $2,353,000 | $8,158,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $2,799,000 | - | - | - | $2,902,000 | $5,701,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$8,604,000** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **$5,255,000** | **$13,859,000** |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Wetland** | **Prairie** | **Forest** | **Habitat** |
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | $11,330 | $11,330 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | $6,478 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Metro/Urban** | **Forest/Prairie** | **SE Forest** | **Prairie** | **N. Forest** |
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $16,125 | - | - | - | $6,536 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $9,552 | - | - | - | $4,943 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

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

1 shoreline mile

## Parcels

**Sign-up Criteria?**[Yes - Sign up criteria is attached](https://lsohcprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/lsohc/proposal/signup_criteria/378a9801-b17.pdf)

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**Minnesota 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). The Conservancy works to provide outreach services and contracting with county SWCDs as a way to connect effectively with local landowners.

Trust for Public Land works with its public partners to identify and prioritize projects that meet their objectives and are on their priority lists. Criteria includes whether the land provides critical habitat for game and non-game species, quality public recreational opportunities, presence of unique plants and animal species (including SGCN), goals of conservation plans, adjacency to other public land or habitat complexes, existence of local support, immediacy of threats, land owner willingness and time frame.

### Protect Parcels

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **County** | **TRDS** | **Acres** | **Est Cost** | **Existing Protection** |
| Franconia SNA Addition | Chisago | 03319216 | 85 | $450,000 | No |
| Janet Johnson Memorial WMA Addition II | Chisago | 03521234 | 53 | $530,000 | No |
| Kroschel WMA Addition | Kanabec | 04222232 | 320 | $1,050,000 | No |
| Snake River State Forest Addition | Kanabec | 04223210 | 840 | $1,000,000 | No |
| Chengwatana State Forest Addition IV | Pine | 03820212 | 80 | $260,000 | No |
| Keystone Woods WMA Addition | Washington | 03120219 | 120 | $2,000,000 | No |
| Tanglewood WMA | Washington | 03120213 | 240 | $4,000,000 | No |

### Protect Parcels with Buildings

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **County** | **TRDS** | **Acres** | **Est Cost** | **Existing Protection** | **Buildings** | **Value of Buildings** |
| Nemadji State Forest Addition IV | Pine | 04416228 | 80 | $250,000 | No | 2 | $20,000 |

## Parcel Map



