



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 7

ML 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

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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 appropriations (<5yrs old)		Lands acquired in this proposal	Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<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](#)

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.

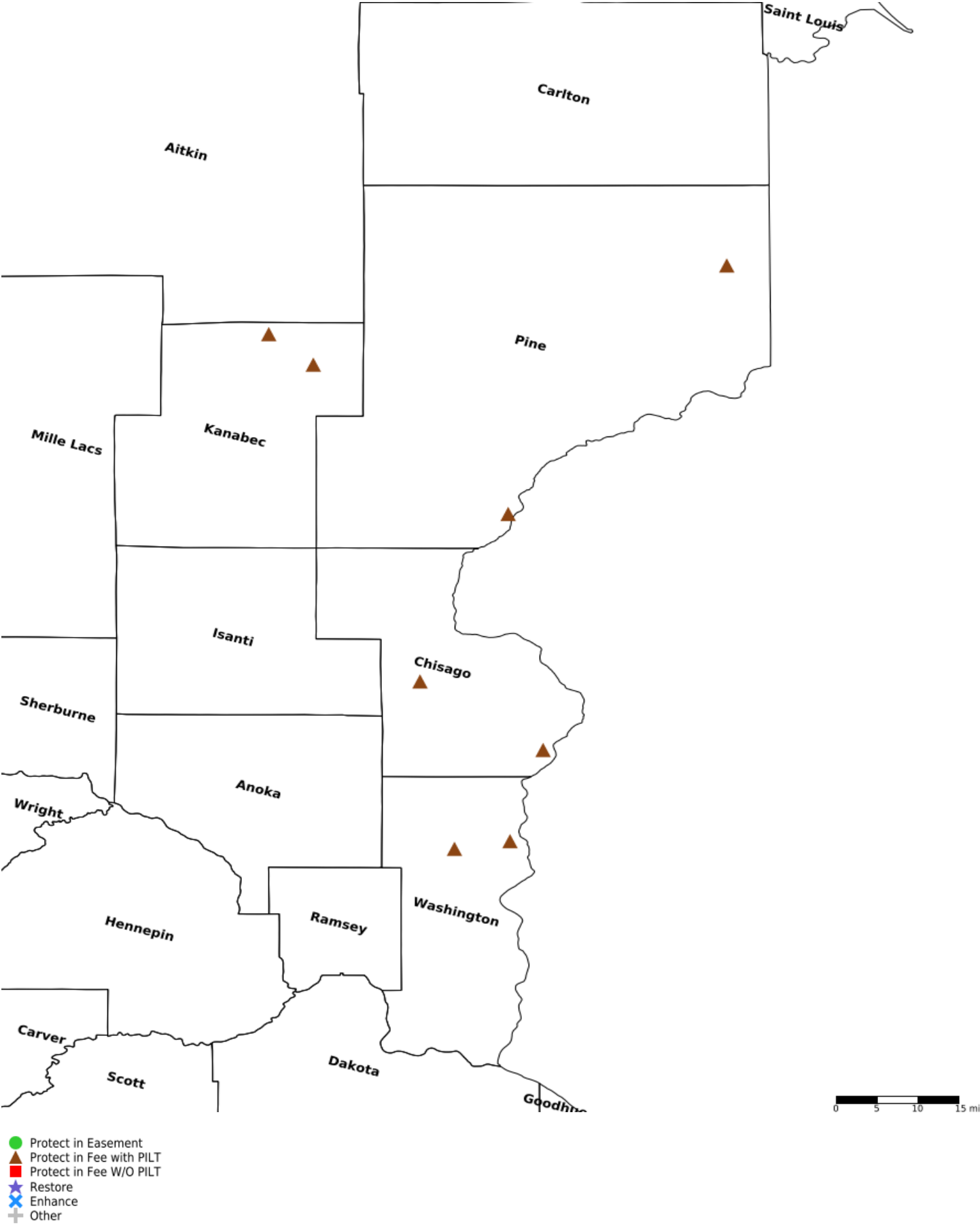
Protect Parcels

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



ST. CROIX WATERSHED

HABITAT PROTECTION AND RESTORATION PHASE 7



OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND REQUEST

\$13,859,000 to protect 1,600 acres

through conservation easement and
fee-title acquisitions.



ASK: \$13,859,000

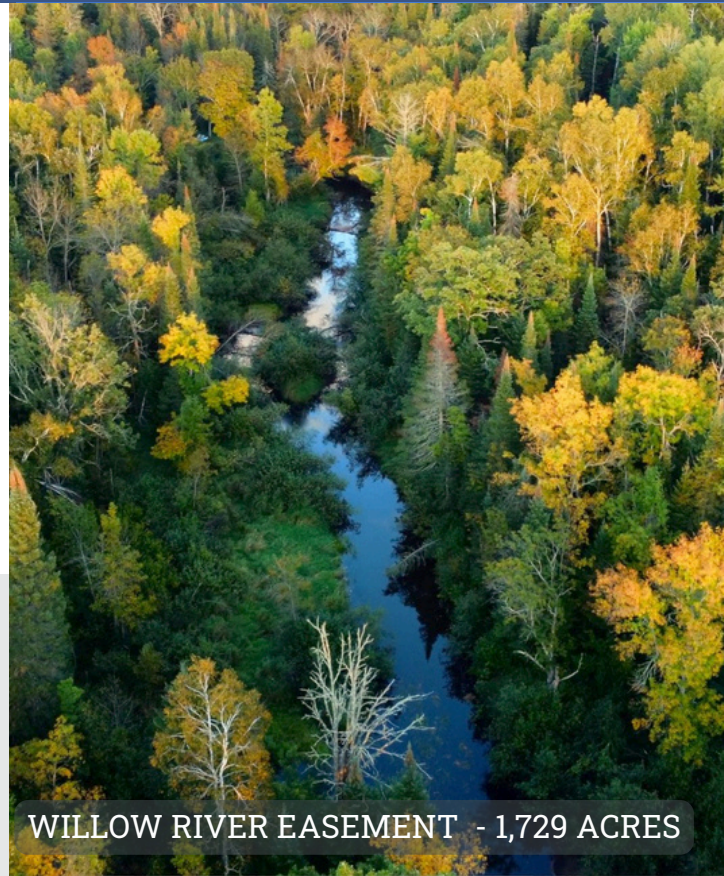
PROPOSED OUTCOMES: 1,600 Acres

LAND FOR WILDLIFE

Wild Rivers Conservancy, Minnesota Land Trust, and Trust for Public Land will continue to work in partnership to permanently protect approximately **1,600 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.**

LONG LASTING IMPACT

Twelve projects have been completed to date - **protecting 5,669 acres and 27.14 miles of shoreline.** These projects are vital to providing habitat and water quality benefits to the St. Croix Watershed which is at high risk from development & fragmentation.



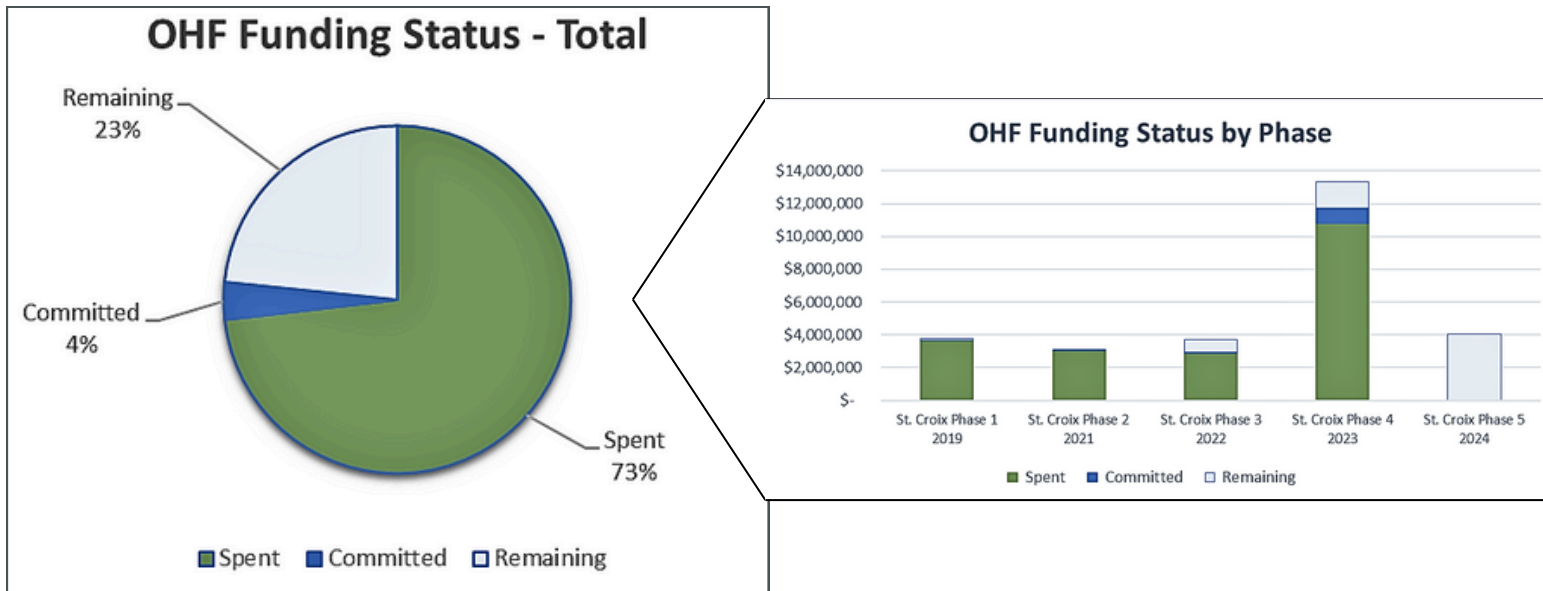
WILLOW RIVER EASEMENT - 1,729 ACRES



KEYSTONE WOODS WMA - 1,833 ACRES

FUNDING NEED

This partnership is in need of additional funding to continue our pace of conservation wins. There is high demand for permanent land protection within the St. Croix Watershed. We expect to utilize all of our funding - all of our acquisition capital is either spent or allocated.



ROCK LAKE EASEMENT - 154 ACRES

PHASE 7 PROJECT GOALS

- Protect **880 acres** of private land through conservation easement.
- Protect **720 acres** of **new public land**.
- Support the **195 Species in Greatest Conservation Need** (SGCN) that call the program area home.
 - Parcels targeted by this proposal will be identified and prioritized through the lens of Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 and scored on biodiversity, connectivity, and ability to preserve habitat.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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