



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Upper Mississippi Flyway Habitat Conservation Program  
ML 2026 Request for Funding

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### General Information

**Date:** 06/26/2025

**Proposal Title:** Upper Mississippi Flyway Habitat Conservation Program

**Funds Requested:** \$5,080,800

**Confirmed Leverage Funds:** -

**Is this proposal Scalable?:** Yes

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Wayne Ostlie

**Title:** Director of Land Protection

**Organization:** Minnesota Land Trust

**Address:** 2356 University Ave W Suite 240

**City:** St. Paul, MN 55114

**Email:** wostlie@mnland.org

**Office Number:** 651-917-6292

**Mobile Number:** 651-894-3870

**Fax Number:**

**Website:** www.mnland.org

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Todd, Stearns, Morrison, Sherburne, Isanti, Kanabec and Mille Lacs.

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

Forest / Prairie Transition

Northern Forest

Metro / Urban

**Activity types:**

Protect in Easement

Restore

Enhance

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Forest

Wetlands

**Narrative****Abstract**

The Upper Mississippi Flyway Habitat Conservation Program is focused on the protection and restoration/enhancement of wetlands, stream corridors, and their associated uplands in central Minnesota to benefit migrating birds and iconic wetland-associated wildlife species. These habitats are at high risk for land conversion and fragmentation due to the expanding Twin Cities and St. Cloud metro areas. We will protect 856 acres using conservation easements and restore/enhance 20 acres of wetland associated habitats for secretive marsh birds, bats, turtles, and other SGCN species. Conservation benefit will be maximized by targeting properties to strategically in-fill identified habitat cores and corridors.

**Design and Scope of Work**

The overall goal of this program is to expand the amount of permanently protected habitats that are within Important Bird Areas and/or prioritized within the Wildlife Action Network hotspots. These core and corridor areas would naturally include a diversity of forest, prairie, and savanna plant communities with numerous imbedded shallow lakes, hemi-marsh, and wetlands. Today, these lands are a mix of ownership with protected habitats interspersed with private lands developed for agriculture and now subject to increasing rural residential development.

Habitat for wetland/water associated birds and wildlife in central Minnesota, just north of the Twin Cities metro, is under significant threat of continuing fragmentation and loss from urban/suburban development and agriculture. These habitats are the kingpin that support birds using the Upper Mississippi flyway, one of the four major migratory corridors in the continental U.S. There are six Important Bird Areas (IBA) identified by the National Audubon Society found in this geography. These “core” areas, including Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Crane Meadows NWR, retain what is left of the region’s traditional stopover sites essential for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating bird species. Additionally, the rivers in this geography serve as forested aerial highways facilitating movement for 60% of North American’s bird species. Moreover, many of these habitat cores and corridors overlap with Minnesota’s Wildlife Action Plan (WAN) hotspots for our state’s SGCN reptiles, amphibians, and other water associated wildlife such as Blanding’s turtle.

Healthy freshwater ecosystems are the lifeblood of our communities and are vital to the quality of life for birds and other species. This geography falls principally within the Mississippi River Headwaters Basin, the only major drainage basin with its entire watershed contained entirely within Minnesota’s borders. This program will have a collateral benefit to water quality as wetland protection and restoration contribute to floodwater retention, nutrient uptake, filtration of runoff, groundwater recharge, and carbon sequestration.

The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) focus under this project will be to restore 20 acres of wetland habitats on properties with permanent protection using nature-based, state-of-the-art-engineering techniques to maximize water quality and quantity benefits as well as biodiversity outcomes. TNC has also begun restoring/enhancing wetlands, seasonal basins, hemi-marsh, and peatlands under 10-year agreements. TNC has restored 500 acres of

wetlands on 40 properties in the past two years using other non-OHF funding. The private property owners TNC worked with have demonstrated a commitment to habitat conservation. We believe many of these landowners are interested in permanently protecting these habitats.

Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will secure permanent conservation easements from willing landowners to protect 856 acres of quality wildlife habitat. The MLT will focus on properties around and within IBAs, WAN hotspots, or already restored by TNC. MLT employs a market-based approach to identifying and procuring easements, and program partners will encourage landowners to donate portions of their easement value, representing cost savings to the state.

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

Permanently protecting and restoring/enhancing the unique and threatened habitats in this geography is critical to maintaining native plant and wildlife biodiversity in Minnesota. Migratory birds rely on the habitat systems found here for food, shelter, and rest along the migration flyway of the Mississippi River and other river corridors. Upon their return to central Minnesota each spring, many of these bird species require wetland basins with open water areas and emergent aquatic vegetation to provide suitable nesting habitat to rear their broods. This program will provide critical habitat for thousands of migrating water birds and help ensure resilience to population decline from increased land use and climate change. Bird species benefiting include but are not limited to secretive marsh birds such as black-crowned night-heron, yellow rail, king rail, American woodcock, great blue heron, and Wilson's snipe, as well as waterfowl such as mallard, blue wing teal, wood duck, and trumpeter swan.

Reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic organisms such as fishes continue to face rates of population decline in Minnesota that exceed the rates of population decline of birds and mammals. Reptiles such as Blanding's turtle, which were once widespread in this geography but are now restricted statewide, will benefit from this work via protection and restoration within key remaining habitat cores. Frogs and salamanders will similarly benefit from increased numbers of restored wetlands across the program area. Fishes and mussels will benefit from stream and riparian protection due to the increase in high-quality critical habitats for all life stages and reduction of nonpoint source nutrient and sediment pollution. Lastly, pollinators will benefit from the increase in native plant species that these restoration/enhancement projects will incorporate, including marsh milkweed and Joe-Pye weed.

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

Development pressure continues to increase in this geography and threaten critical aspects of existing ecosystems. Landowners in this geography have high and increasing interest in permanent conservation easements and habitat restoration/enhancement. In Mille Lacs County alone, MLT has identified, without doing any outreach, a list of nine high-quality properties totaling over 740 acres that have been proposed for conservation easements. Furthermore, TNC, USFWS, and other partners have been completing restoration in this geography for decades without many options for permanent protection. Many of the landowners that TNC and USFWS have worked with through 10-year restoration management agreements have expressed interest in permanently protecting their land if a conservation easement program was available. Without this program, there is a high risk that these restoration projects could be converted back to land uses that will adversely affect habitat and water quality benefits initially gained from those efforts.

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

This program is focused on protecting and restoring/enhancing priority wetland, riparian, and associated upland habitats as guided by the State Wildlife Action Plan. The program will work to build on initial conservation investments in the program area, expanding and buffering the footprint of existing protected areas (e.g., NWRs, existing conservation easements, WMAs, WPAs, and AMAs), facilitating the protection of habitat corridors, and reducing the potential for fragmentation of existing habitats while also restoring and enhancing habitat cores and corridors.

Once priority parcels are identified, MLT will work with private owners on protection strategies key to successful conservation in this region. MLT works closely with partners in the region to identify those habitat complexes where private land protection can make a significant contribution to existing conservation investments. Specific parcels available for acquisition of easements will be further reviewed relative to each other to identify priorities among the pool of applicants. This relative ranking is based on the amount of habitat on the parcel (size), the quality or condition of habitat, the parcel's context relative to other natural habitats and protected areas, and cost. Field visits to further identify and assess condition of habitats prior to easement acquisition will further ensure maximum conservation benefits.

**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 Resilient Land Mapping and Resilient Rivers tools, we will target properties that provide the best opportunities for maintaining biodiversity in the face of climate change. These tools identify and prioritize areas for maximizing ecological resiliency and target climate-resilient sites for a resilient landscape. Protection of climate-resilient sites keeps sensitive species from disappearing by protecting complexes of large and connected habitat blocks, reducing fragmentation, and allowing for species movement as the climate changes. This proposal will prioritize conserving habitats that are connected to other habitats and sites with greater topographic variability to maximize habitat diversity.

Furthermore, we'll utilize nature-based solutions for wetland and stream restoration/enhancements, which maximize biodiversity outcomes. These bioengineering approaches reduce the impacts of changing hydrology and temperature by increasing water storage and groundwater recharge, increasing complexity of restored habitats, reducing flood impacts, and reducing sediment and nutrient pollution.

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

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

## **Metro / Urban**

Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity

## **Northern Forest**

Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

### **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:**

MLT and TNC will focus protection and restoration/enhancement work on key wetlands, stream corridors, and their associated uplands. We work in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies and non-profit conservation partners to ensure our activities are complementary to those undertaken by others working in the program area. By doing so, we will build complexes of high-quality protected habitat, reduce fragmentation, and provide connectivity between core habitat areas that will improve populations of supported species. This funding will increase the number of acres enhanced, restored, and protected to reduce habitat fragmentation, degradation, and invasive species, which threaten SGCN and landscape resilience.

In obtaining conservation easements (whether by donation or through purchase) and implementing habitat restoration / enhancement, we work with willing, conservation-minded landowners. Our outreach and prioritization process will be targeted toward specific areas, such as properties adjacent to or near existing habitat cores, within IBAs, prioritized by the WAN, and/or that have already received restoration/enhancement funding through other funding sources. TNC will use a simple prioritization system developed with the USFWS for wetland and related aquatic restoration projects. Opportunities within the program area will be identified and prioritized based on the potential to build a permanent conservation legacy that includes positive outcomes for people and fish, game, and wildlife alike.

## **Outcomes**

### **Programs in forest-prairie transition region:**

Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need ~ *This program will permanently protect approximately 381 acres and enhance 10 acres of wetlands and associated upland habitat within the Forest-Prairie Transition. Measure: Acres protected; acres enhanced.*

### **Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:**

Core areas protected with highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities, including native prairie, Big Woods, and oak savanna ~ *This program will permanently protect approximately 75 acres of strategic Metro Urban habitat. Measure: Acres protected.*

### **Programs in the northern forest region:**

Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors ~ *This program will permanently protect approximately 400 acres and enhance 10 acres of wetlands and associated upland habitat within the Northern Forest region. Measure: Acres protected; acres enhanced.*

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

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

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

TNC enters restoration and enhancement projects with the goal of achieving a site threshold where continuing maintenance beyond the allocation period is achievable by landowners. TNC will also implement any repairs or similar post-restoration actions needed to ensure minimal long-term maintenance, which itself is reduced by using nature-based approaches for each restoration.

**Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2030 and in perpetuity	MLT Long-Term Stewardship and Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring of easements in perpetuity.	Enforcement as necessary.	-
2031	TNC in-kind	Monitoring every 1-3 years	Landowner engagement.	-

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

One of MLT's and TNC's core values are commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We work to demonstrate this commitment whenever possible across our work. For example, we look to find opportunities to protect and restore critical habitats associated within camps and nature centers that serve diverse constituencies, allowing access to nature in a welcoming and safe environment. MLT and TNC intend to continue to use diversity, equity, and inclusion as a lens in project, partner, and contractor selection. We will continue to listen and seek out potential, authentic partnerships that can advance our goals of conserving the best of Minnesota's remaining habitats and, at the same time, being more inclusive organizations.

Additionally, MLT and TNC will continue to use diversity, equity, and inclusion as a lens in project, partner, and contractor selection. We will listen and seek out potential, authentic partnerships that can advance our goals of conserving the best of Minnesota's remaining habitats while being a more inclusive organization, building relationships with and working collaboratively with diverse communities – Tribal Nations, rural farmers, multi-generational families.

## Activity Details

### Requirements

**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

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

WPA

County/Municipal

### Land Use

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

Yes

**Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:**

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

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



invasive species, and require the landowner to submit seed tags to MLT's Stewardship Team on an annual basis after the planting of food plots.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this proposal either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**

No

**Will the eased land be open for public use?**

No

**Are there currently trails or roads on any of the proposed acquisitions?**

Yes

**Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:**

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

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

Yes

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

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

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?**

No

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

Yes

## Other OHF Appropriation Awards

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

No

## Timeline

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



## Budget

### Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$495,000	-	-	\$495,000
Contracts	\$326,000	-	-	\$326,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$3,500,000	\$350,000	Landowners	\$3,850,000
Easement Stewardship	\$308,000	-	-	\$308,000
Travel	\$24,200	-	-	\$24,200
Professional Services	\$294,000	-	-	\$294,000
Direct Support Services	\$124,600	\$47,400	-, TNC	\$172,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$4,000	-	-	\$4,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$5,080,800</b>	<b>\$397,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$5,478,200</b>

**Partner: Minnesota Land Trust**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$350,000	-	-	\$350,000
Contracts	\$86,000	-	-	\$86,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$3,500,000	\$350,000	Landowners	\$3,850,000
Easement Stewardship	\$308,000	-	-	\$308,000
Travel	\$20,000	-	-	\$20,000
Professional Services	\$294,000	-	-	\$294,000
Direct Support Services	\$95,000	-	-	\$95,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$4,660,000</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>	-	<b>\$5,010,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Land Protection Staff	0.88	4.0	\$350,000	-	-	\$350,000

**Partner: The Nature Conservancy**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$145,000	-	-	\$145,000
Contracts	\$240,000	-	-	\$240,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$4,200	-	-	\$4,200
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$29,600	\$47,400	TNC	\$77,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$420,800</b>	<b>\$47,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$468,200</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Grant Administration	0.05	4.0	\$35,000	-	-	\$35,000
Restoration Ecologist	0.37	4.0	\$110,000	-	-	\$110,000

**Amount of Request:** \$5,080,800

**Amount of Leverage:** \$397,400

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 7.82%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$619,600

**As a % of the total request:** 12.19%

**Easement Stewardship:** \$308,000

**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 8.8%

Total Leverage (from above)	Amount Confirmed	% of Total Leverage	Amount Anticipated	% of Total Leverage
\$397,400	-	0.0%	\$397,400	100.0%

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

The Land Trust encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements to the program; this leverage amount is a conservative estimate of value we expect to see donated by landowners.

**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?**

Outputs would be reduced by 50-60 percent. Activities will be curtailed, but less than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program success.

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

Personnel and DSS will be scaled, but less than proportional. Some costs are fixed (e.g., landowner recruitment, grant management) and must occur regardless of grant amount. Projects may fail midstream after investment of time. Donation of easement value can inflate the number of projects pursued/completed.

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

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

Outputs would be reduced by 70-80 percent. Activities will be curtailed, but less than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program success.

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

Personnel and DSS will be scaled, but less than proportional. Some costs are fixed (e.g., landowner recruitment, grant management) and must occur regardless of grant amount. Projects may fail midstream after investment of time. Donation of easement value can inflate the number of projects pursued/completed.

### Personnel

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

No

### Contracts

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

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

TNC: Funds in the contract line are for all actions necessary for restoration and enhancement field services.

### Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Other : Phase 1 Environmental Assessments, Minerals Reports, Mapping

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Easement Stewardship

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

MLT expects to close up to 11 conservation easements under this appropriation. The average cost per easement to fund the Minnesota Land Trust's perpetual monitoring and enforcement obligations is \$28,000, although in extraordinary circumstances additional funding may be warranted. This figure is derived from MLT's detailed stewardship funding "cost analysis" which is consistent with Land Trust Accreditation standards. MLT shares periodic updates to this cost analysis with LSOHC staff.

## Travel

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

Yes

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging**

MLT and TNC staff occasionally rent vehicles for grant-related purposes, which can be a cost savings over use of personal vehicles on longer trips.

**I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:**

Yes

## Direct Support Services

**How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?**

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

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% 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.

## Other Equipment/Tools

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

GPS devices, field and safety gear, tools

## 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	20	0	0	0	20
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	285	0	571	0	856
Enhance	-	0	-	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>876</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	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	10	10	-	-	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</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)	-	-	-	-
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	-	-	-
Easements	10	10	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	\$420,800	-	-	-	\$420,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$1,553,300	-	\$3,106,700	-	\$4,660,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,974,100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$3,106,700</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$5,080,800</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	10	0	0	10	20
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	75	381	0	0	400	856
Enhance	-	-	0	0	-	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>876</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$210,400	-	-	\$210,400	\$420,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$1,000,000	\$1,660,000	-	-	\$2,000,000	\$4,660,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$1,870,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$2,210,400</b>	<b>\$5,080,800</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	\$21,040	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$5,450	-	\$5,440	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	\$21,040	-	-	\$21,040
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$13,333	\$4,356	-	-	\$5,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

**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:

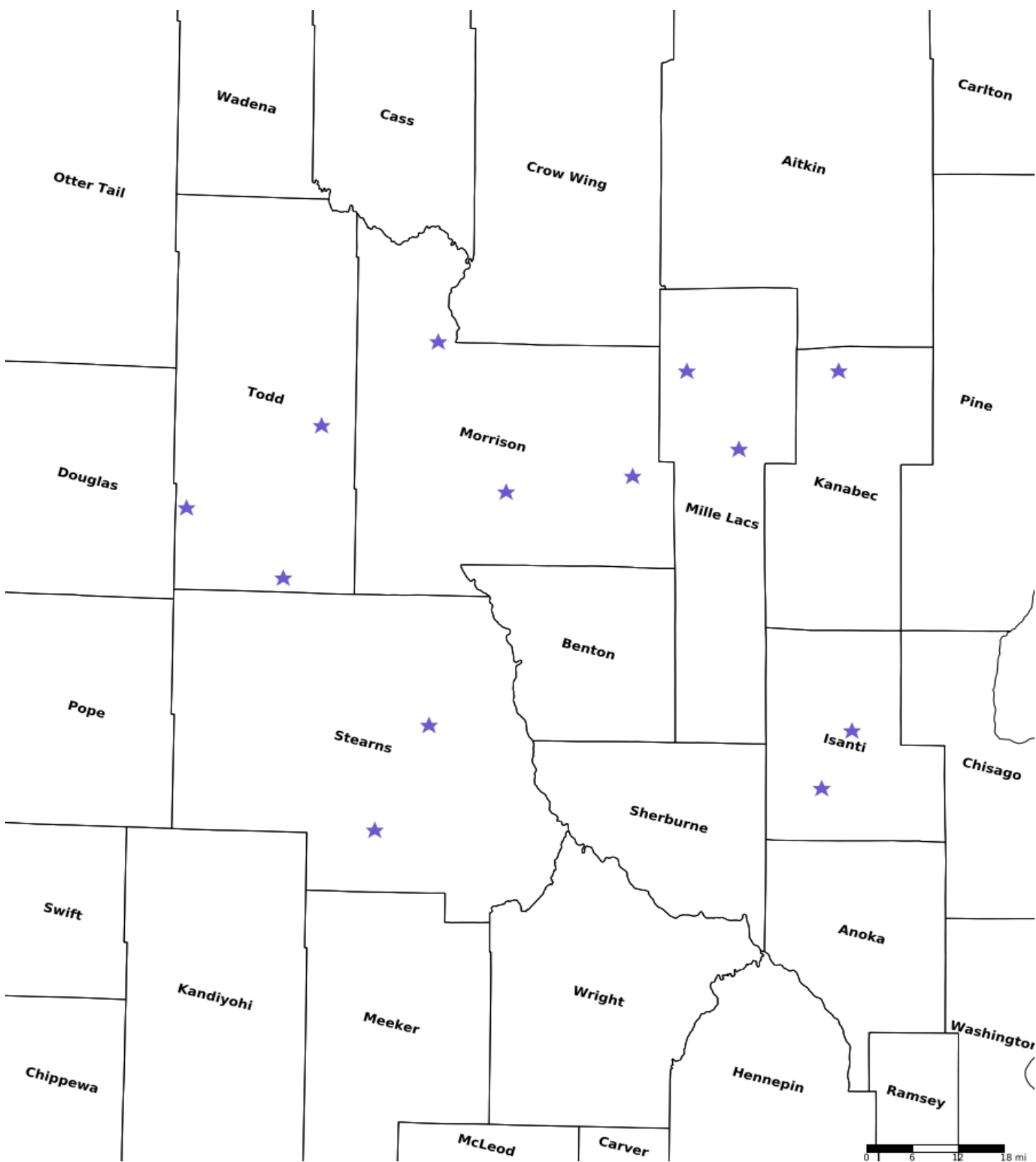
The Land Trust uses a competitive, market-based approach through an RFP process to identify interested landowners and prioritize parcels for conservation easement acquisition. All proposals submitted by landowners are evaluated and ranked relative to their ecological significance based on three primary factors: 1) size of habitat on the parcel; 2) condition of habitat on the parcel; and 3) the context (both in terms of amount/quality of remaining habitat and protected areas) within which the parcel lies. We also ask the landowner to consider contributing all or a portion of fair market value to enable our funds to make a larger conservation impact (see attached sign-up criteria). We will undertake a variety of landowner outreach approaches to identify and encourage landowner participation in the program.

TNC will use a combination of our Resilient Land Mapping and Resilient Rivers tools and a prioritization system developed with the USFWS for wetland and related aquatic restoration projects within the project Area. The resiliency tools were created to target properties for protection and R/E that provide the best opportunities for maintaining biodiversity in the face of climate change. These tools identify and prioritize areas for maximizing ecological resiliency and target climate-resilient sites for a resilient landscape and will be used to identify, prioritize, and select previously protected parcels for restoration. The TNC-USFWS prioritization system is finer-scaled and is comprised of a combination of landowner capacity and interest, cost/financial elements, benefits to fish and wildlife resources, and water quality and carbon storage benefits.

### Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Rum River - Cambridge WAN	Isanti	03624225	-	-	Yes	WAN and vicinity
Mille Lacs WMA/Rum River State Forest WAN	Kanabec	04126226	-	-	Yes	-
Kathio State Park WAN/IBA	Mille Lacs	04227215	-	-	Yes	-
Snake River WAN	Mille Lacs	04224213	-	-	Yes	-
Crane Meadows NWR WAN/IBA	Morrison	04031229	-	-	Yes	WAN/IBA and vicinity
Fort Ripley WAN/IBA	Morrison	13130214	-	-	Yes	WAN/IBA and vicinity
Hillman Hills WAN	Morrison	04028218	-	-	Yes	WAN and vicinity
Sherburne NWR WAN/IBA	Sherburne	03524229	-	-	Yes	WAN/IBA and vicinity
Avon Hills WAN/IBA	Stearns	12430203	-	-	Yes	WAN/IBA and vicinity
North Fork Crow River WAN	Stearns	12331233	-	-	Yes	WAN and vicinity
Lake Osakis WAN/IBA	Todd	12835217	-	-	Yes	WAN/IBA and vicinity
Long Lake WAN	Todd	12733221	-	-	Yes	WAN and vicinity
Todd County Hills WAN	Todd	13032232	-	-	Yes	WAN and vicinity

Parcel Map



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

# Upper Mississippi Flyway Habitat Conservation Program



Grayson Smith

The Upper Mississippi Flyway, located just north of the Twin Cities metro, is under significant threat of continued fragmentation from urban/suburban and agricultural development. River corridors—Mississippi, Sauk, and Rum—are important migratory pathways for over 60% of North America's birds. Moreover, habitat cores as identified through the Wildlife Action Network and Audubon's Important Bird Areas, provide for resilient species' populations.

Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will secure conservation easements from willing landowners to protect 856 acres of the highest-quality wildlife habitat remaining and steward them in perpetuity. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) will enhance 20 acres of wetlands. The work will focus on seasonal basins, hemi-marsh, mineral wetlands, and peatlands. Our collective focus will be on expanding the footprint and enhancing the habitat quality within existing habitat cores and corridors that are within Important Bird Areas (IBAs) as identified by the National Audubon Society and/or prioritized within Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan (WAN).

## Outcomes:

- Permanently protect 856 acres of wetland systems.
- Enhance 20 acres of wetland systems.
- Increased participation of private landowners in habitat projects.
- Land protection efforts will directly benefit SGCN that occur in the program area.

**Request \$5,169,800**

**Leverage \$406,800**

**Acres protected 856**

**Acres restored 20**

### State Goals Supported:

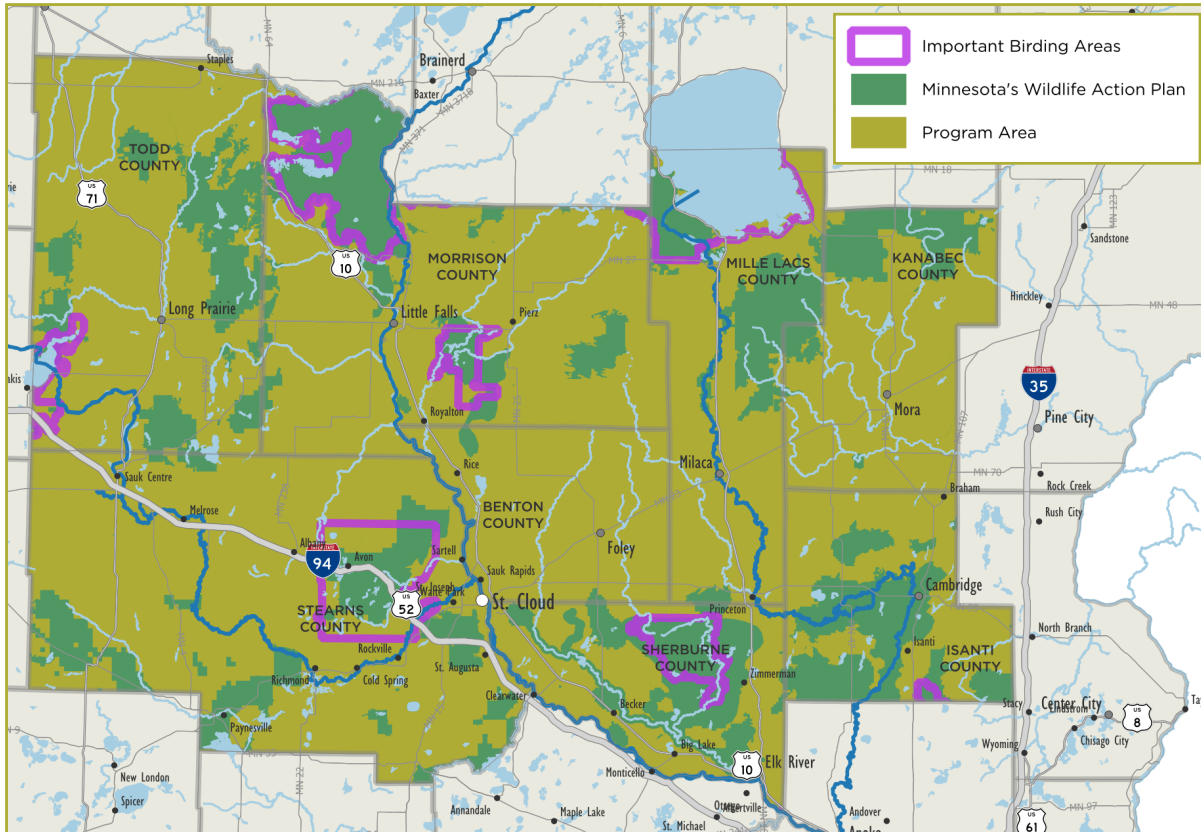
Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan  
Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25  
Year Framework

### For more information:

**Leah Hall**

Program Manager  
Minnesota Land Trust  
lhall@mnland.org  
(651) 240-7878





The Upper Mississippi Flyway program area is traversed by three significant river corridors—the Mississippi, the Rum, and the Sauk—making it an extremely important migration corridor for birds. Continued development pressure from the Twin Cities and St. Cloud poses an ongoing threat to the remaining habit in this region. The program partners will leverage our longstanding presences in this region to broaden our scope to prioritize conservation along these riparian corridors, in priority areas identified by the Wildlife Action Plan, and within one of seven IBAs found in this area.



Rebecca Field



**MINNESOTA  
LAND TRUST**

2356 University Ave.  
W. Suite 240  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
(651) 647-9590  
mnland@mnland.org  
www.mnland.org

The Nature  
Conservancy 

1101 West River Pkwy.  
Suite 200  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
(612) 331-0700  
nature.org