# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase XIX

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/08/2026

**Project Title:** Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase XIX

**Funds Recommended:** $4,750,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Sabin Adams
**Title:** MN State Coordinator
**Organization:** Pheasants Forever
**Address:** 1783 Buerkle Circle
**City:** St. Paul, MN 55110
**Email:** sadams@pheasantsforever.org
**Office Number:** 320-250-6317
**Mobile Number:** 3202506317
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** pheasantsforever.org

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Douglas, Renville, Nobles, Brown, Stearns, Meeker, Wilkin, Murray, Carver and Kandiyohi.

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

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

Metro / Urban

**Activity types:**

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

Wetlands

# Narrative

## Abstract

In this phase of Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program, Pheasants Forever (PF) seeks to protect, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat in the prairie, prairie forest transition, and metro regions of Minnesota. Acquired parcels will either be adjacent to or between existing public lands to create larger complexes or corridors for a variety of wildlife species. These properties will be restored to their greatest potential with regard to time and budgets.

## Design and Scope of Work

This proposal represents the latest phase of Pheasants Forever's Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area program. The longtime goal of this program is to prevent future loss of wetland and grassland habitat and improve public access in the prairie, forest-prairie transition, and metro regions. This mission helps to expedite goals set out by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (MPCP), and Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years plan. Concurrently, this proposal achieves three priority actions set by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council's Ecological Vision and Priorities as part of its FY2026/ML2025 Call for Funding. To date we've successfully protected and restored over 17,000 acres of priority wildlife habitat and wish to protect additional acres under this phase.

When selecting parcels for acquisition, PF and the MN DNR will approach willing sellers who often wish to leave their conservation legacy by providing wildlife habitat for all Minnesotans to enjoy. Factors considered when prioritizing parcels include location relative to other public land complexes, corridors, and habitat priority areas. Breeding waterfowl density, restoration potential, and the presence of threatened or endangered (T/E) species or species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) as identified by surveys such as the Minnesota Biological Survey are also parameters considered when evaluating the value of parcels. Criteria used to develop the potential project list including: 1) Does the parcel contain habitat restoration potential that will result in an increase in wildlife populations? 2) Does the parcel build upon existing investments in public and private land habitat (landscape scale significance)? 3) Does the parcel contain significant natural communities, or will it protect or buffer significant natural communities? 4) Does the parcel have the potential and focus for habitat protection and restoration in the future? 5) Does the parcel provide multiple benefits (recreation, access, water control, water quality, wellhead protection, riparian protection, local community support, etc.)? Upon purchase, PF and the MN DNR will work together to create a plan that ensures habitat is restored to the highest quality as funds and time allow. Plans may include farming current cropland for 1-2 years to mitigate any herbicide present in the soil or manage non-native species, planting high-diversity native seed mixes, restoring drained wetlands, and removing invasive trees when appropriate. Tracts will ultimately be transferred to the MN DNR to be enrolled in the Wildlife Management Area program or held as an HMA by PF (in which case the property will be permanently protected by PF or transferred to another agency to hold in perpetuity). In both cases, tracts will be open to the public to be used in accordance with state law.

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

Pheasants Forever works closely with the MN DNR and other partners to identify priority areas and habitat to protect in the prairie, forest/prairie transition, and the metro areas. This is done using up to date GIS data provided by the DNR and the USFWS that identify areas where rare, T/E, and SGCN are present. Priority is given to areas that will directly benefit rare, T/E, or SGCN. Tracts that provide the most wildlife benefit are often close to or directly adjacent to large complexes. This is a function of complex size and lack of habitat fragmentation, and landscape characteristics that are necessary for priority species. Providing additional and/or protecting current habitats aid in population expansion and stabilization for sensitive species in the area.

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

These funds will not be available for use, from the time of writing this proposal, until July 2027. Because of this we cannot know what time sensitive projects we will pursue. Any potential seller in May 2026 will almost certainly have moved on by July 2027. Properties with incredible habitat value are coming on and off the market in weeks or months, not years. In order to seize these time sensitive opportunities it is critical that this funding be utilized in a programmatic way allowing older grant funds to be spent on the most appropriate and time sensitive opportunities. In July of 2027 there will be incredibly important and time sensitive properties for sale and this funding will allow us to acquire those properties.

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

Proximity to and position relative to habitat corridors and complexes are part of our criteria when selecting tracts to purchase. Our partnership utilizes the latest geospatial data to inform decisions related to an acquisitions potential for increasing an existing complex size, adding another "stepping stone" to a corridor, and it's ability to reduce the impact of habitat fragmentation. Most often, highly sought after tracts meet one of these three characteristics as they provide the most benefit for fish and wildlife, reduce cost of future management (as a function of proximity), and provide high-quality areas for the public to enjoy.

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

**Metro / Urban**

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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

## Outcomes

### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands ~ *Parcels that increase the functionality of existing habitat will be acquired and restored to functioning wetlands with diverse upland prairie to serve as habitat for pollinators, resident and migratory game and non-game species. Outcomes will be measured by overall acres protected in prairie core areas or acres added to complexes. Lands will be transferred to the state as a WMA to provide accelerated wildlife habitat and public access, monitored by Minnesota DNR. Protected and restored acres will be measured against goals outlined in the "Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years" and the Minnesota Pheasant Action Plan.*

### Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

Protected habitats will hold wetlands and shallow lakes open to public recreation and hunting ~ *Parcels that increase the functionality of existing habitat will be acquired and restored to functioning wetlands with diverse upland prairie to serve as habitat for pollinators, resident and migratory game and non-game species. Lands will be transferred to the state as a WMA to provide accelerated wildlife habitat and public access, monitored by Minnesota DNR. Outcomes (restoration and protected acres) will be measured against goals outlined in the "Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years" and the Minnesota Pheasant Action Plan 2025-2030.*

### Programs in prairie region:

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Parcels that increase the functionality of existing habitat will be acquired and restored to functioning wetlands with diverse upland prairie to serve as habitat for pollinators, resident and migratory game and non-game species. Lands will be transferred to the state as a WMA to provide accelerated wildlife habitat and public access, monitored by Minnesota DNR. Protected and restored acres will be measured against goals outlined in the "Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years" and the Minnesota Pheasant Action Plan 2025-2030.*

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

This proposal supplements past investments and is aimed at accelerating the protection and restoration of strategic parcels.

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

Lands purchased to be donated to the state Wildlife Management Area system will be managed in perpetuity by the Minnesota DNR. All lands purchased as Pheasants Forever HMA's will have a deposit made into PF's Forever Stewardship Fund to pay for holding costs. All acquisitions will be restored to as high-quality habitat as practicable. In addition, our local PF chapter members and volunteers maintain a high interest in seeing the habitat and productivity of acquired parcels. They have a long history of providing sweat equity on PF owned parcels. PF and partners will develop an ecological restoration and management plan for each parcel. Grant and partner dollars will also be used for the initial site development and restoration/enhancement work.

## Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post Transfer | State of MN | Monitoring | Maintenance | Habitat Managment |

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

The goal of this program is to protect and restore wildlife habitat and make these areas accessible to all Minnesotans, regardless of cultural background or fiscal standing. Properties acquired under this program will be free and open to access by all. These properties can be recreated on by all levels of income from free hiking/wildlife watching to expensive hunting practices. This program spans all of the Prairie, Forest-Prairie, and Metro regions. Some acquisitions will be nearby areas with diverse or low-income communities. This program engages with everyone who wants to participate in public lands and the outdoors.

# Activity Details

## Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

**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:**
At a minimum PF and/or MN DNR will notify local government in writing of the intent to acquire and donate lands to the state and follow up with questions prior to acquisition. In cases where there is interest, we will also indicate our willingness to attend or ask to attend county or township meetings to communicate our interest in the projects and seek support.

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?**
No

**Describe the permanent protection and justification for additional protection:**
A limited number of the parcels may have a federal or state easement on a portion of the tract which provides permanent protection for wetlands or grasslands. If a parcel has one of these encumbrances, and is still deemed a high priority by the partnership, we will follow guidance established by the Outdoor Heritage Fund to proceed, or use non-state funding to acquire the residual value of the protected portion of the property.

## 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:**
This proposal may include initial development plans or restoration plans to utilize farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is a standard practice across the Midwest to prepare the seedbed for native seed planting. In these restorations, PF's policy is to use non neonicotinoid treated

seed and no herbicides other than glyphosate. On a small percentage of WMAs DNR Area Wildlife Managers may choose to create a food plot to provide a winter food source for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture-dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources. There are no immediate plans to use farming for winter food on any of the parcels in this proposal.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**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:**
There will be no variation from the State of Minnesota regulations.

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

State of MN

NGO

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

WMA

Other : Pheasants Forever Habitat Management Area

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
4

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**
Yes

All acquired parcels will be restored with funds from the contracts and materials lines of the budget.

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

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Complete restoration | 6/30/2035 |
| Close on tracts | 1/1/2031 |
| Contract appraisals ordered | 4/1/2028 |
| Purchase agreements | 9/1/2028 |
| Re-evaluate tract priority | 2/14/2028 |
| Purchase agreements | 2/1/2028 |
| Contract appraisals ordered | 9/1/2027 |
| Identify priority acquisitions | 7/1/2027 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 06/30/2035

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Totals

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $263,100 | - | - | $263,100 |
| Contracts | $650,200 | - | - | $650,200 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $3,000,800 | $595,400 | PF, Federal, Private | $3,596,200 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $250,100 | - | - | $250,100 |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $1,800 | - | - | $1,800 |
| Professional Services | $174,200 | - | - | $174,200 |
| Direct Support Services | $105,500 | $92,300 | PF | $197,800 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $90,000 | - | - | $90,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $139,300 | - | - | $139,300 |
| DNR IDP | $75,000 | - | - | $75,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$4,750,000** | **$687,700** | **-** | **$5,437,700** |

## Personnel

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PF GRANT STAFF | 0.1 | 5.0 | $13,000 | - | - | $13,000 |
| PF FIELD STAFF | 1.85 | 5.0 | $250,100 | - | - | $250,100 |

**Amount of Request:** $4,750,000
**Amount of Leverage:** $687,700
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 14.48%
**DSS + Personnel:** $368,600
**As a % of the total request:** 7.76%
**Easement Stewardship:** -
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
All line items are prorated

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**
Leverage is expected from multiple sources including but not limited to federal sources, land value donations, contractor donations and PF. Not every source is 100% confirmed at this point. However, PF has an exemplary track record of delivery and over-achievement of match commitments that further stretch OHF funding.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
If this project is reduced by 50% we would scale down all acres/activities and dollar amounts proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS will be scaled down proportionately.

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
We anticipate all of the contract funding will be used for restoration, enhancement, and initial development of the protected acres. This could include but is not limited to wetland/grassland restoration, tree removal, prescribed fire, building removal, posts, signs, and other development.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**
The proposed budget accounts for approximately 12 fee title acquisition transactions.

## Travel

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?**
No

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

**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?**

PF utilizes the Total Modified Direct Cost method. This methodology is annually approved by the U.S. Department of Interior's National Business Center as the basis for the organization's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. PF's allowable direct support services cost is 15%. In this proposal, PF has discounted its rate to 8% of the sum of personnel, contracts, professional services, and travel. We are donating the difference-in-kind.

## Federal Funds

**Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**

Yes

**Are the funds confirmed?**

No

**What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds?**

7/1/2029

# Output Tables

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 42 | 385 | - | - | 427 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 3 | 32 | - | - | 35 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **45** | **417** | **-** | **-** | **462** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $438,500 | $3,946,200 | - | - | $4,384,700 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $36,500 | $328,800 | - | - | $365,300 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$475,000** | **$4,275,000** | **-** | **-** | **$4,750,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 42 | 128 | - | 257 | - | 427 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 3 | 10 | - | 22 | - | 35 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **45** | **138** | **-** | **279** | **-** | **462** |

## 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 | $438,500 | $1,315,400 | - | $2,630,800 | - | $4,384,700 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $36,500 | $109,600 | - | $219,200 | - | $365,300 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$475,000** | **$1,425,000** | **-** | **$2,850,000** | **-** | **$4,750,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $10,440 | $10,249 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $12,166 | $10,275 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - |
| 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 | $10,440 | $10,276 | - | $10,236 | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $12,166 | $10,960 | - | $9,963 | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

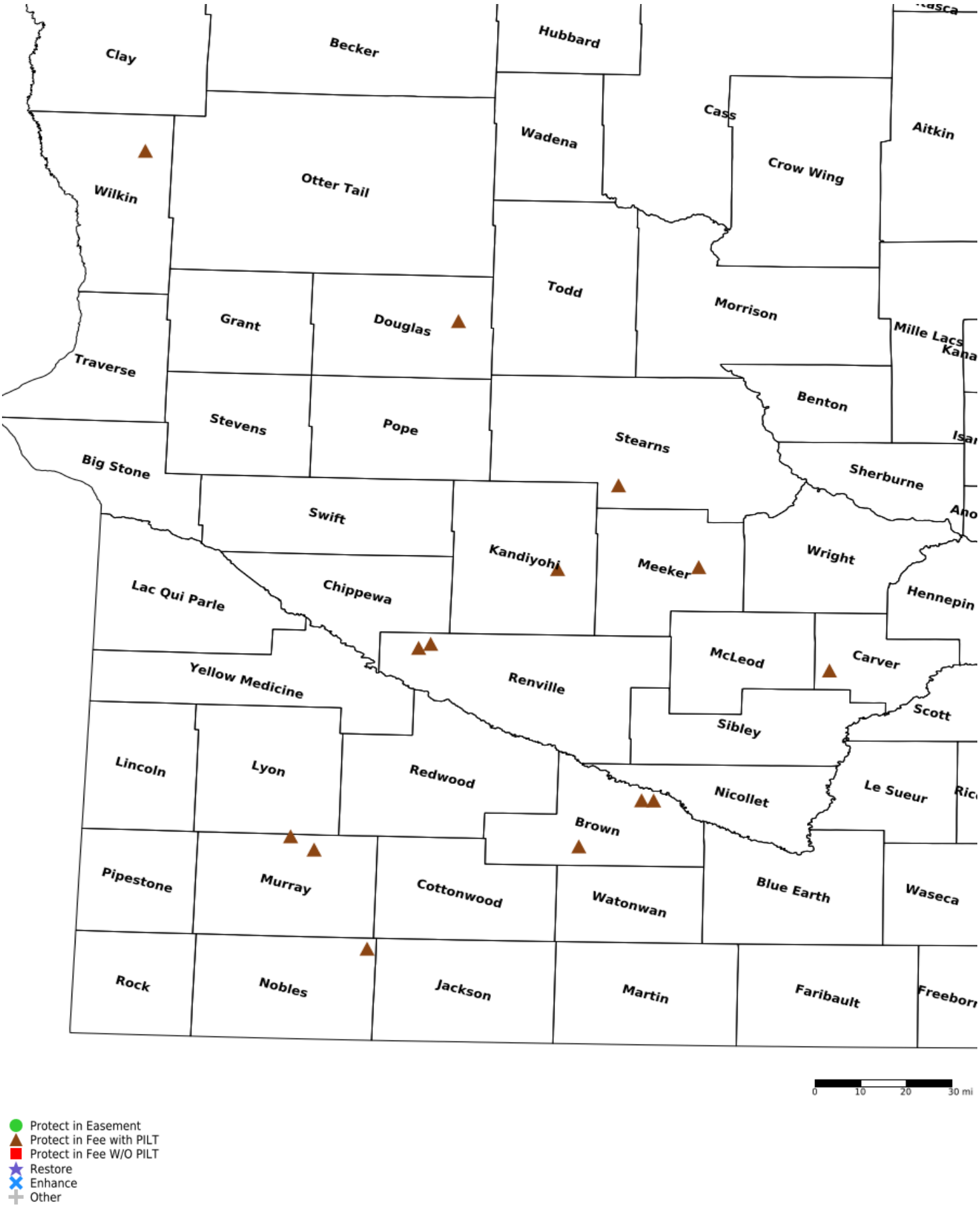
**Sign-up Criteria?**
No

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
Parcels are identified and strategically prioritized using the best science and decision support tools (e.g. HAPET Thunderstorm Maps) available. Preference is given to project sites that help deliver the goals of other recognized conservation initiatives and plans. Data layers (i.e. MN Biological Survey, Natural Heritage Database, MN Prairie Plan, Wellhead Protection Areas, Pheasant Action Plan, existing protected land, etc. ) are used to help justify projects and focus areas as well as to inform decisions on top priorities for protection and restoration efforts.

## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Middle Creek WMA Addn | Brown | 10833210 | 60 | $230,000 | No |
| Rosenau-Lambrecht WMA Addn | Brown | 11031215 | 28 | $380,500 | No |
| Rosenau-Lambrecht WMA Addn | Brown | 11031217 | 15 | $135,000 | No |
| Tiger Marsh WMA Addn | Carver | 11526209 | 29 | $145,000 | No |
| Belle River WMA Addn | Douglas | 12936230 | 124 | $1,057,400 | No |
| Yohi WMA Addn | Kandiyohi | 11934213 | 78 | $709,000 | No |
| Powers Lake WMA ADDN | Meeker | 11930211 | 200 | $1,400,000 | No |
| Shetek Inlet WMA Addn | Murray | 10841203 | 240 | $2,160,000 | No |
| Shetek WMA Addn | Murray | 10840220 | 450 | $5,000,000 | No |
| Kinbrae WMA Addn | Nobles | 10439214 | 76 | $864,000 | No |
| Chetomba Creek WMA Addn | Renville | 11637216 | 80 | $840,000 | No |
| Rosaasen Slough WMA Addn | Renville | 11637219 | 40 | $165,000 | No |
| Partners WMA Addn | Stearns | 12232203 | 79 | $550,830 | No |
| Rothsay WMA Addn | Wilkin | 13545217 | 404 | $1,400,000 | No |

## Parcel Map


Clay
Becker
Hubbard
Wilkin
Otter Tail
Wadena
Cass
Crow Wing
Aitkin
Todd
Morrison
Grant
Douglas
Traverse
Stevens
Pope
Stearns
Benton
Mille Lacs
Big Stone
Swift
Kandiyohi
Meeker
Sherburne
Wright
Lac Qui Parle
Chippewa
Hennepin
McLeod
Carver
Yellow Medicine
Renville
Sibley
Scott
Lincoln
Lyon
Redwood
Nicollet
Le Sueur
Brown
Pipestone
Murray
Cottonwood
Watonwan
Blue Earth
Waseca
Rock
Nobles
Jackson
Martin
Faribault
0
10
20
30 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase XIX

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program - Phase XIX
**Organization:** Pheasants Forever
**Manager:** Sabin Adams

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $15,955,500
**Appropriated Amount:** $4,750,000
**Percentage:** 29.77%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $883,800 | - | $263,100 | - | 29.77% | - |
| Contracts | $2,184,000 | - | $650,200 | - | 29.77% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $10,080,000 | $2,000,000 | $3,000,800 | $595,400 | 29.77% | 29.77% |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $840,000 | - | $250,100 | - | 29.77% | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $6,000 | - | $1,800 | - | 30.0% | - |
| Professional Services | $585,000 | - | $174,200 | - | 29.78% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $354,300 | $310,000 | $105,500 | $92,300 | 29.78% | 29.77% |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $302,400 | - | $90,000 | - | 29.76% | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $468,000 | - | $139,300 | - | 29.76% | - |
| DNR IDP | $252,000 | - | $75,000 | - | 29.76% | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$15,955,500** | **$2,310,000** | **$4,750,000** | **$687,700** | **29.77%** | **29.77%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
If this project is reduced by 50% we would scale down all acres/activities and dollar amounts proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS will be scaled down proportionately.

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
If this project is reduced by 70% we would scale down all acres/activities and dollar amounts proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS will be scaled down proportionately.

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 1,440 | 427 | 29.65% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 120 | 35 | 29.17% |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $14,728,100 | $4,384,700 | 29.77% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $1,227,400 | $365,300 | 29.76% |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 1,440 | 427 | 29.65% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 120 | 35 | 29.17% |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $14,728,100 | $4,384,700 | 29.77% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $1,227,400 | $365,300 | 29.76% |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

DNR Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection-Phase IX

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/26/2026

**Project Title:** DNR Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection-Phase IX

**Funds Recommended:** $1,291,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Judy Elbert
**Title:** Statewide Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Unit Supervisor
**Organization:** MN-DNR
**Address:** 500 Lafayette Road
**City:** St. Paul, MN 55155
**Email:** judy.elbert@state.mn.us
**Office Number:** 651-391-3168
**Mobile Number:**
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** dnr.state.mn.us/snap/prairiebank.html

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** .

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

Forest / Prairie Transition

Southeast Forest

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Protect in Easement

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

# Narrative

## Abstract

Native Prairie Bank will work with willing landowners to permanently protect 180 acres of native prairie and supporting habitat through perpetual conservation easements. Easement acquisition will focus on the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and Wildlife Action Plan identified landscapes and target Minnesota Biological Survey-identified threatened and endangered plant and animal species, high-quality native plant communities, and key habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and other wildlife species.

## Design and Scope of Work

Prairies are recognized as one of the most threatened ecosystems in North America and temperate grasslands as one of the most endangered in the world. Tallgrass prairie, savanna, and barren communities have declined by more than 98% nationwide. This proposal aims to permanently protect 180 acres of native prairie habitat through the acquisition of Native Prairie Bank conservation easements.

Native prairie is a fragile, unique natural ecosystem consisting of thousands of different organisms, plants, animals, bacteria, and soil fungi developed over thousands of years. These complex systems serve as critical habitat for a disproportionate number of rare species. In Minnesota, 41% of the state's rare species are associated with native prairie, even though native prairie comprises less than 0.5% of the land area. Native prairies provide a multitude of benefits to the people of the state, such as water filtration and recharge, carbon sequestration, soil health, erosion control, and outdoor recreation. High-quality native prairies offer the highest tier of habitat for grassland-dependent pollinators, birds, and animals. Despite decades of advancement, contemporary grassland restoration efforts still fall short of the diversity and habitat quality provided by native prairies.

Approximately 250,000 acres (1.3%) of Minnesota's original native prairie still exists, with nearly half remaining unprotected, with the vast majority occurring on privately-owned land. Threats to native prairie continue to be widespread, including cropland conversion, industrial activity, development, invasive/woody encroachment, and non-prairie-focused land use.

To recognize that grassland and wetland protection is one of the most critical conservation actions needed, leading conservation organizations came together to develop the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (Prairie Plan). Several outcomes are identified in the plan, one being the protection of all remaining native prairie, largely through conservation easements. One of the primary easement tools for native prairie protection in Minnesota is the DNR-administered Native Prairie Bank easement.

Native Prairie Bank, established by the 1987 legislature as a tool to protect native prairie in a long-term "bank", authorizes the state to acquire conservation easements from willing landowners. To date, 183 Native Prairie Banks protect more than 15,700 acres. Native Prairie Bank targets the protection of native prairie tracts and can also include adjoining lands as buffers and additional habitat.

Tracts eligible for Native Prairie Bank are prioritized based on several scientific factors, including:

1) Size and quality of habitat, focusing on diverse native prairie documented by the Minnesota Biological Survey.

2) Occurrence of endangered, threatened, or special concern species, or suitability of habitat for Species in Greatest Conservation Need.

3) Lands that are part of the Prairie Plan and Wildlife Action Plan-identified landscapes

Native Prairie Banks provide permanent protection to native prairies by placing restrictions on future land use and granting the DNR the right to monitor and implement prairie enhancement projects. The Native Prairie Bank program coordinates with Prairie Plan partners and utilizes the network of established Local Technical Teams (local staff from SWCDs, NRCS, USFWS, The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, etc.) to reach out to landowners and increase enrollment.

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

This proposal will result in the permanent protection of 180 acres of land containing high-quality native prairie using Native Prairie Bank easements. The Native Prairie Bank program prioritizes outreach to landowners of sites identified as native prairie by the Minnesota Biological Survey. The program also prioritizes lands that contain documented occurrences of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), and other rare plant and animal species associated with prairie habitats. Native prairies support a disproportionately high number of rare species in Minnesota. Approximately 41% of Minnesota's rare species are associated with native prairie, even though native prairie comprises less than one-half of one percent of the state's land area. Additionally, according to the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan (formally known as Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare), there are 89 Species of Greatest Conservation Need that occur in the prairie region of the state.

Each native prairie protected through this proposal will typically support several Species in Greatest Conservation Need. SGCNs found on native prairies include but are not limited to white-tailed jackrabbit, American badger, northern pintail, short-eared owl, Henslow's sparrow, upland sandpiper, sedge wren, marbled godwit, western meadowlark, greater-prairie chicken, Blanding's turtle, Great Plains toad, plains hog-nosed snake, gophersnake, common five-lined skink, and many other species of spiders, dragonflies, butterflies, moths, beetles, and bees.

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

Only a small fraction of Minnesota's original 18 million acres of native prairie still exist. These remaining native prairies are critically imperiled and at high risk of significant degradation and loss due to invasive species, woody encroachment, development, mineral extraction, cropland conversion, and lack of prairie-oriented management.

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan indicates that habitat-related stressors are a predominant stressor for 70% of Species in Greatest Conservation Need (241 of the 346 species), with habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation being top concerns. Multiple research studies show a direct correlation between declining grassland habitat and declining grassland wildlife populations further indicating that the current trajectory of grassland and prairie loss will increase the pressure and stress we are placing on grassland-dependent wildlife.

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

The Native Prairie Bank program scores and selects easement projects based on criteria including: 1) the diversity and quality of native prairie habitat as ranked by the Minnesota Biological Survey, 2) size of the prairie, 3) the

occurrence of or suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need, 4) location relative to other native prairie or protected lands (including Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan priority areas), 5) potential for long-term management and enhancement, and 6) other factors that would ensure long-term benefits and sustainability for Minnesota's critical wildlife species. Native Prairie Bank's numerical scoring and selection process prioritizes parcels that build on existing habitat complexes, avoids fragmentation, and targets Minnesota Biological Survey priority plant communities and areas of biodiversity significance. Please see the Native Prairie Bank scoring criteria uploaded as part of this proposal.

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

**Southeast Forest**

Protect, enhance, and restore remnant goat prairies

## Outcomes

### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands ~ *Acres of native prairie protected ensuring grassland habitat for upland birds*
*Acres protected within Prairie Plan Core, Corridors, and Strategic Habitat Complexes*
*Average size of protected complex*

### Programs in prairie region:

Remnant native prairies and wetlands are perpetually protected and adequately buffered ~ *Acres of native prairie protected ensuring grassland habitat for upland birds*
*Acres protected within Prairie Plan Core, Corridors, and Strategic Habitat Complexes*
*Average size of protected complex*

### Programs in southeast forest region:

Remnant goat prairies are perpetually protected ~ *Acres of native prairie protected*

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

This request accelerates Native Prairie Bank protection to a level not attainable but for the appropriation. Prior to receiving OHF, Native Prairie Bank protected an average of 328 acres/year. Since receiving OHF, Native Prairie Bank protects an average of 523 acres/year, almost doubling the rate of acquisition.

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

DNR's Conservation Easement Stewardship policy is to protect both the conservation values of the protected property and the state's investment in those interests. Stewardship elements include baseline property report creation, enforcement protocols, regular compliance monitoring, effective record keeping and reporting, and maintaining good working relationships with the easement landowners. Native Prairie Bank implements this policy by following DNR Operational Order 128 "Conservation Easement Stewardship" along with the "Ecological and Water Resources Division Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines", which call for annual landowner contact as well as on-the-ground monitoring once every three years. If a violation is found, annual site visits (or more frequently) are conducted until the violation is rectified. Budgeted into this proposal is funding to deposit into an account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal.

Native Prairie Bank staff in partnership with the landowner will actively seek funding to execute the best on-going prairie management activities. These management activities, such as prescribed burning, invasive species control, woody control, etc., will be completed when feasible through a variety of funding sources.

## Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| On-Going | Variety of Funding Sources (Landowner, ENRTF, OHF, Game & Fish, USDA Programs, etc.) | Native Prairie Bank staff in partnership with the landowner will actively seek funding to execute the best on-going prairie management activities. These management activities, such as prescribed burning, invasive species control, woody control, etc., will be completed when feasible. | - | - |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perpetually/Annually | Interest derived from dedicated Conservation Easement Stewardship Account established with this appropriation. | Ongoing landowner partnership, monitoring, reporting and easement stewardship as laid out in DNR Operational Order 128 and the Division of Ecological and Water Resources Conservation Easement Stewardship Division Guidelines. | - | - |
| FY28-35 | OHF | As needed, restore any cropped acres present at time of acquisition to local-ecotype native prairie seed (estimated 5 acres). | - | - |
| FY28-31 | OHF | Develop Baseline Property Report to be signed by both the landowner and DNR at time of closing. | Once easement closes, transfer funds to dedicated Conservation Easement Stewardship Account per OHF appropriation and accomplishment plan for long-term easement stewardship. | - |

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

DNR's OHF projects aim to serve all Minnesotans. At the same time, we are bringing more focus in all our work to BIPOC and diverse communities. The Minnesota DNR has adopted advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as a key priority in its strategic plan. The plan focuses on increasing the cultural competence of our staff, creating a workforce that is reflective of Minnesota, continuing to strengthen tribal consultation and building partnerships with diverse communities. This project will benefit all communities throughout the entire state of Minnesota by permanently protecting ecosystem services that provide clean drinking water, productive habitat, clean air, carbon sequestration, and sedimentation/erosion control.

# Activity Details

## Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

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

**Who will manage the easement?**
The easement will be managed through a partnership of the Minnesota DNR, the landowner, and other conservation partners.

**Who will be the easement holder?**
The easement holder will be the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA) Unit (Native Prairie Bank (NPB) Program).

**What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
We anticipate 4-5 easements will be acquired.

## 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?**
No

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**Will the eased land be open for public use?**
No

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**
Yes

> Minimal cropland acres (estimated 5 acres or less) may be acquired to "square up" or straighten the boundary lines of the native prairie parcels. These cropland acres would be restored to local-ecotype native prairie seed prior to the end of this appropriation.

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

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Restore approximately 5 acres of prairie (inclusion cropped acres acquired with these funds) | 06/30/2035 |
| Enroll 180 acres of Native Prairie Bank Easements | 06/30/2031 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 10/01/2035

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Totals

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $145,000 | - | - | $145,000 |
| Contracts | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $900,000 | - | - | $900,000 |
| Easement Stewardship | $100,000 | - | - | $100,000 |
| Travel | $22,800 | - | - | $22,800 |
| Professional Services | $100,000 | - | - | $100,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $20,200 | - | - | $20,200 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $3,000 | - | - | $3,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,291,000** | **-** | **-** | **$1,291,000** |

## Personnel

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Natural Resource Laborers/Student Workers | 0.03 | 4.0 | $10,000 | - | - | $10,000 |
| Natural Resource Specialist/Technician | 0.31 | 4.0 | $110,000 | - | - | $110,000 |
| Project/Acquisition Coordinators | 0.05 | 4.0 | $25,000 | - | - | $25,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $1,291,000
**Amount of Leverage:** -
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 0.0%
**DSS + Personnel:** $165,200
**As a % of the total request:** 12.8%
**Easement Stewardship:** $100,000
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 11.11%

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
The Prairie Bank Program will accommodate the appropriation recommendation by proportionally reducing the target goal from protecting 500 acres down to 180 acres. $1,291,000 is approximately 36% of the original request of $3,575,000, therefore 180 acres is 36% of the original goal of 500 acres.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
This project is scalable and can be proportionately cut in most circumstances. Essentially, less funding allocated would mean less native prairie acres protected. There are efficiencies with acquiring more acres at one time, especially if neighboring sites can be coordinated together for landowner meetings, site visits, survey activities, etc.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel could be proportionately adjusted. DSS would be recalculated using DNR's Direct and Necessary Calculator to take into account the overall reduction in the budget, at 70% budget reduction, it appears DSS would recalculate to an approximately 65% reduction.

## Personnel

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

## Professional Services

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

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?**
Four to five easements are anticipated with $20,000-$25,000 per easement budgeted into this accomplishment plan for long-term stewardship. For each specific Native Prairie Bank easement, initial investment dollars are determined by using a DNR approved Conservation Easement Stewardship Calculator, which estimates the annual stewardship expenses and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity. Only the calculated amount, no more, will be invested. These dollars once deposited into the DNR's Conservation Easement Stewardship Account are dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements. The dedicated stewardship funds will provide the support needed for long-term, ongoing monitoring and minor enforcement activities of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal.

## 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**
Most DNR activities tied to this proposal, such as boundary posting, seed harvest, planting, weed control, etc. will require the use of DNR fleet equipment which has standard costs tied to the amount of usage needed. An estimated 70% of the travel costs will go to necessary traditional travel and 30% will go towards equipment costs.

**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?**

The DNR Direct & Necessary Cost Calculator was used to determine Direct Support Service costs. DNR's Direct & Necessary Costs ($20,221) pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated projects and calculated based on the specific demands of this project. Direct and necessary costs cover HR support ($3,784), Safety Support ($496), Financial Support ($2,053), Communication support ($2,086), IT Support ($10,259) and Planning Support ($1,543).

## 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 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | 180 | - | - | 180 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **180** | **-** | **-** | **180** |

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

| Type | Native Prairie (acres) |
|---|---|
| Restore | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - |
| Protect in Easement | 150 |
| Enhance | - |
| **Total** | **150** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | $1,291,000 | - | - | $1,291,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **$1,291,000** | **-** | **-** | **$1,291,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | 35 | 5 | 140 | - | 180 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **35** | **5** | **140** | **-** | **180** |

## 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 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | $251,100 | $35,800 | $1,004,100 | - | $1,291,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **$251,100** | **$35,800** | **$1,004,100** | **-** | **$1,291,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | $7,172 | - | - |
| 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 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | $7,174 | $7,160 | $7,172 | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

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

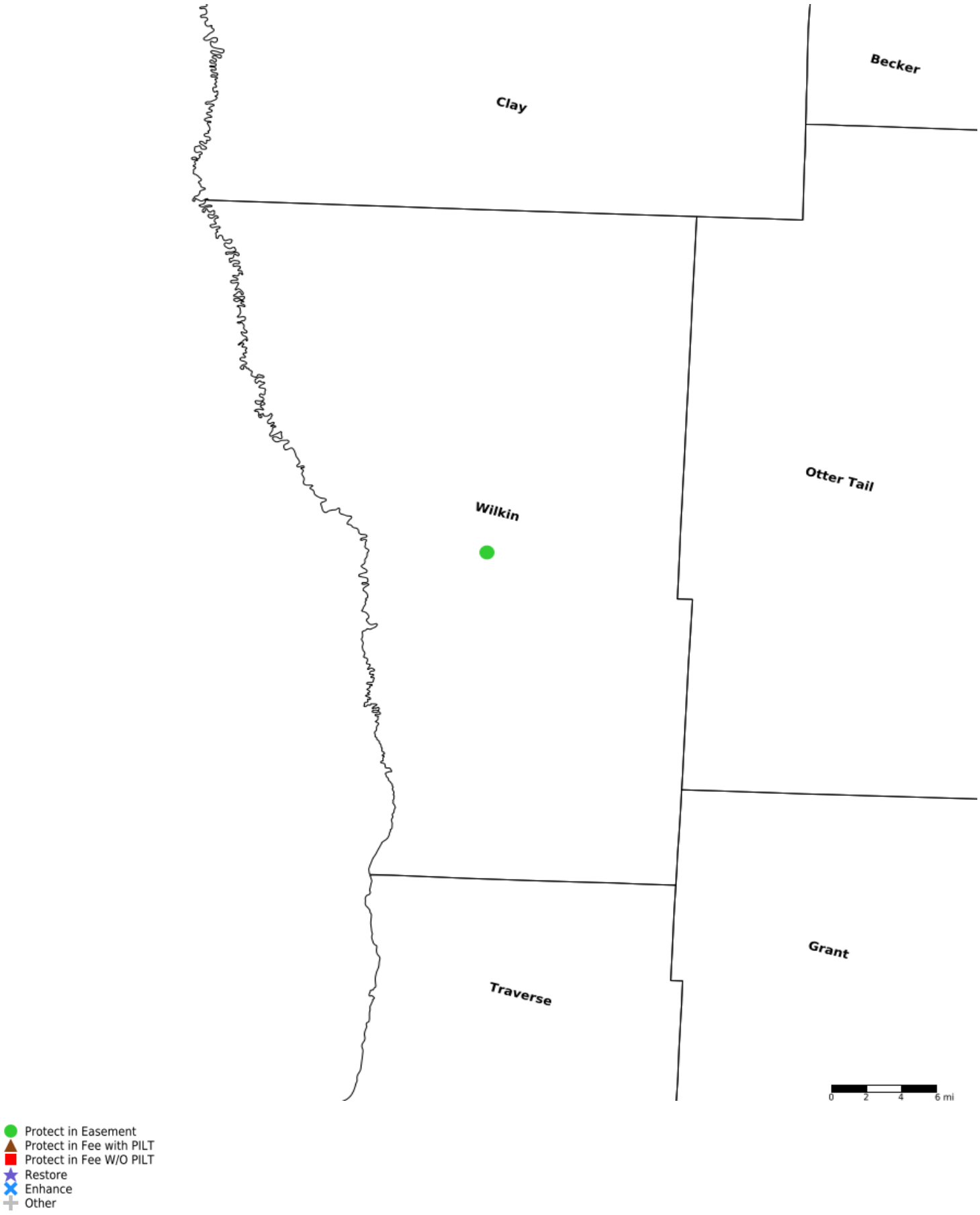
**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
Native Prairie Bank easements acquired through this proposal will be ranked and prioritized through the Native Prairie Bank acquisition evaluation process, which includes emphasis given to parcels within Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan and Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan identified landscapes.

The Native Prairie Bank acquisition evaluation process requires that each potential site be scored and selected based on criteria including, the diversity and quality of native prairie habitat as ranked by the Minnesota Biological Survey, size of the prairie, occurrence of or suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need, location relative to other native prairie or protected lands (includes Prairie Plan and Wildlife Action Plan target landscapes), potential for long-term management and other factors that would insure long-term benefits and sustainability for Minnesota's critical wildlife species. Native Prairie Bank's numerical scoring and prioritization process ensures that only the top-ranked prairie parcels are acquired. Please see the Native Prairie Bank scoring criteria uploaded as part of this proposal for detailed scoring information.

## Easement Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conservation easement acquisition will target protection of the last of Minnesota's high-quality remnant prairies with priority given to parcels in MN Prairie Conservation Plan and Wildlife Action Plan priority areas (please see attached map for more details). Specific parcels will be added to the parcel list as selected through the evaluation and ranking process described above. | - | 13346221 | 180 | $3,575,000 | No |

# Parcel Map


Clay
Becker
Wilkin
Otter Tail
Traverse
Grant
0
2
4
6 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

DNR Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection-Phase IX

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - DNR Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection-Phase IX
**Organization:** MN-DNR
**Manager:** Judy Elbert

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $3,575,000
**Appropriated Amount:** $1,291,000
**Percentage:** 36.11%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $400,000 | - | $145,000 | - | 36.25% | - |
| Contracts | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $2,500,000 | - | $900,000 | - | 36.0% | - |
| Easement Stewardship | $250,000 | - | $100,000 | - | 40.0% | - |
| Travel | $63,200 | - | $22,800 | - | 36.08% | - |
| Professional Services | $300,000 | - | $100,000 | - | 33.33% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $51,800 | - | $20,200 | - | 39.0% | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $10,000 | - | $3,000 | - | 30.0% | - |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$3,575,000** | **-** | **$1,291,000** | **-** | **36.11%** | **-** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
This project is scalable and can be proportionately cut in most circumstances. Essentially, less funding allocated would mean less native prairie acres protected. There are efficiencies with acquiring more acres at one time, especially if neighboring sites can be coordinated together for landowner meetings, site visits, survey activities, etc.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel could be proportionately adjusted. DSS would be recalculated using DNR's Direct and Necessary Calculator to take into account the overall reduction in the budget, at 50% budget reduction, it appears DSS would recalculate to an approximately 46% reduction.

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
This project is scalable and can be proportionately cut in most circumstances. Essentially, less funding allocated would mean less native prairie acres protected. There are efficiencies with acquiring more acres at one time, especially if neighboring sites can be coordinated together for landowner meetings, site visits, survey activities, etc.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel could be proportionately adjusted. DSS would be recalculated using DNR's Direct and Necessary Calculator to take into account the overall reduction in the budget, at 70% budget reduction, it appears DSS would recalculate to an approximately 65% reduction.

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 500 | 180 | 36.0% |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $3,575,000 | $1,291,000 | 36.11% |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 500 | 180 | 36.0% |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $3,575,000 | $1,291,000 | 36.11% |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

DNR WMA & SNA Acquisition, Phase XIV

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/06/2026

**Project Title:** DNR WMA & SNA Acquisition, Phase XIV

**Funds Recommended:** $3,375,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Jeff Tillma
**Title:** Division of Fish and WIldlife Acqusition Coordinator
**Organization:** DNR
**Address:** 1201 E. Hwy 2
**City:** Grand rapids, MN 55744
**Email:** jeff.tillma@state.mn.us
**Office Number:** 218-328-8834
**Mobile Number:**
**Fax Number:**
**Website:**

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Fillmore, Lincoln, Faribault, Jackson, Otter Tail, Chippewa and Yellow Medicine.

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

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

# Narrative

## Abstract

Acquire approximately 300 acres of high priority habitat for designation as Wildlife Management Area or Scientific and Natural Area in the LSOHC Prairie Planning Section emphasizing Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, Conservation That Works 3.0, WMA and AMA Acquisition & Management Strategic Plan and SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan with priority given to sites of high and outstanding biodiversity significance by the Minnesota Biological Survey. All lands will be open for public hunting and fishing (a limited number of SNA's are proposed for limited hunting for instance archery only or hunting but no trapping).

## Design and Scope of Work

Approximately 300 acres of wildlife habitat will be protected through fee title acquisition and development as Wildlife Management Areas or Scientific & Natural Areas. While the state cannot promise leverage or match without first having funding appropriated, previous Outdoor Heritage appropriations to DNR for WMA and SNA acquisitions have been leveraged through donations, Reinvest in Minnesota Critical Habitat Match, and Surcharge (a $6.50 surcharge on small game license sales).

Wildlife Management Areas. WMAs protect lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and provide for public hunting, fishing and trapping, wildlife viewing, hiking and other compatible outdoor recreation. While highly successful, the current WMA system does not meet all present and future needs for wildlife habitat, wildlife population management, hunter access and wildlife related recreation. This is notably true in the LSOHC Prairie Planning Section where public ownership in many counties is less than 5 percent. DNR Section of Wildlife uses a GIS-based tools to identify the highest priority tracts for potential WMA acquisitions. This quantitative approach scores and ranks acquisition proposals based on a set of weighted criteria and creates a standardized method for evaluating proposed acquisitions on a statewide level. Criteria are periodically reviewed and adapted to changing priorities.

Scientific & Natural Areas. The SNA Program will increase public hunting and fishing opportunities while protecting sites with outstanding natural values. Protection is targeted at high priority areas identified in the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan with emphasis on prairie core areas identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. A quantitative system scores and ranks acquisition proposals based on a weighted set of six criteria. Priority is given to sites of high and outstanding biodiversity significance by the Minnesota Biological Survey, high quality native plant communities and habitat for endangered and threatened species. Larger parcels which adjoin other conservation lands, improve habitat management, are under imminent threat and are partially donated are also rated highly.

DNR strategic acquisition priorities include, but are not limited to, protection of:
- Prairies, Grasslands, and associated Wetlands
- Existing, high quality significant or rare natural resources
- Water resources
- Critical pollinator habitat essential for native species and agricultural crops
- Large blocks of habitat or natural intact communities, that improve riparian and terrestrial connectivity or maintain ecosystem services through protection of climate resilient, high biodiversity areas.

Potential acquisition opportunities from willing sellers are coordinated with stakeholders and partners to eliminate duplication and identify concerns and support. Properties acquired through this appropriation require County Board of Commissioners' written approval in the county of acquisition, will be designated as WMA or SNA

through a Commissioner's Designation Order, brought up to minimum DNR standards, and listed on the DNR website. Basic site improvements will include boundary and LSOHC acknowledgement signs and may include any necessary site cleanup, habitat restoration and parcel initial development.

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

Potential acquisitions for WMAs and SNAs are objectively scored for their wildlife habitat value. The DNR uses weighted criteria and prioritizes high scoring parcels for acquisition. For example, candidates for WMAs score higher with a prairie grouse lek, in a pheasant habitat complex, presence of shallow lakes, and occurrence of deer wintering areas; candidates for WMAs and SNAs score higher which contain threatened, endangered, and other rare species and species of greatest conservation need and protect high quality native plant communities which support wildlife.

Native plant communities with exceptional value as wildlife habitat proposed for protection through this proposal include Southern dry prairie, dry sand-gravel prairie, mesic prairie, dry hill prairie, mesic brush prairie, wet seepage prairie, and other priority plant communities.

The following species in greatest conservation need and rare species targeted in this proposal include but are not limited to: mammals– white-tailed jackrabbit, prairie vole, harvest mouse, northern grasshopper mouse, and western harvest mouse; birds – bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, oven bird, chestnut-collared longspur (endangered), upland sandpiper, American bittern, marbled godwit, Nelson's sparrow, Henslow's sparrow, black-throated blue warbler, red-shouldered hawk, Loggerhead shrike, cerulean warbler; reptiles/amphibians - wood turtle (threatened) and mudpuppy; Topeka shiner; invertebrates – regal fritillary, Dakota skipper, Iowa Skipper, Ottoe Skipper, Pawnee Skipper, Poweshiek skipper, leadplant flowermoth, phlox moth, and plants/trees – small white lady's slipper and Western prairie fringed orchid, slender naiad, butternut.

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

This proposal aims to place under permanent protection key habitat types currently facing a range of urgent threats in Minnesota, from development to degradation.

Minnesota once had millions of acres of native prairie and wetlands as part of prairie grassland/wetland habitat complexes. Today, only a small percentage of those acres remain. And, each year additional acres of grassland and wetland habitat are lost to agriculture, drainage, development, and degradation due to invasive species. Retiring CRP acres further reduce grassland habitat. There is an urgent, and ongoing need to permanently protect what remains of our states grasslands and grassland/wetland habitat complexes.

Landowners interest in selling to DNR fluctuates with the real estate market and we currently have more quality parcels available for purchase than we have funding available and market conditions may change in the future.

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

The DNR uses GIS-based scoring systems to objectively rank potential acquisitions and develop statewide priority lists.

These systems incorporate scientific data giving priority to locations within and that add to: 1) an important habitat corridor or complex (such as identified by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, Pheasant Action Plan,

SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan, and the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan), 2) native plant communities and sites of outstanding and high biodiversity significance mapped by Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS), and 3) parcels that adjoin existing units or other conservation lands.

The end result is the prioritization of acquisitions that protect larger blocks of habitat or natural intact communities, improve riparian and terrestrial connectivity or maintain ecosystem services through protection of climate resilient, high biodiversity areas.

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

Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

## Outcomes

### Programs in prairie region:

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*

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

This request is an acceleration of the DNR WMA and SNA acquisition program work to a level not attainable but for this appropriation.

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

According to WMA/AMA Directive on development standards, WMAs are developed to at least minimum standards within two years of acquisition for facility and habitat development that will provide basic asset preservation, public access and safety, environmental and cultural resource protection and soil and water resource conservation.

Initial development efforts can extend 2-3 years beyond the“minimum standard” time table to establish high quality native plant communities. All new WMA acquisitions require a WMA Initial Development Plan (IDP) be completed by the Area Wildlife Supervisor responsible for land management and approved by the Region.

SNAs have similar standards with site specific work being directed by each site’s Adaptive Management Plan. As part of the state outdoor recreation system, ongoing maintenance will be accomplished through routine management activities accomplished by our network of DNR offices. Periodic enhancements will be accomplished by staff, CCM crews, temporary project staffing, through vendor contract or by volunteers if appropriate.

Long-term management costs (e.g., invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to the Game and Fish Fund, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund, federal grants, and small game surcharge.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2031 and beyond | Game and Fish Fund, Surcharge, other | Ongoing management to DNR standards for WMA and SNA units | - | - |
| 2030 | Outdoor Heritage, ML27 | Boundary survey, parking area development, boundary signs and other sign posting | Additional initial site development | - |
| 2031 | Outdoor Heritage, ML27 | Initial habitat development, native vegetation established, invasive species control, wetlands restored (as needed) | - | - |

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

DNR's OHF projects aim to serve all Minnesotans. At the same time, we are bringing more focus in all our work to BIPOC and diverse communities. The Minnesota DNR has adopted advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as a key priority in its 2020-22 strategic plan. The plan focuses on increasing the cultural competence of our staff, creating a workforce that is reflective of Minnesota, continuing to strengthen tribal consultation and building partnerships with diverse communities.

The OHF funds high quality habitat projects that provide ecosystem services like clean water and carbon sequestration that support environmental justice. OHF also supports public access and recreational opportunities on these lands. OHF projects and outcomes benefit BIPOC and diverse communities through recreational opportunities that are close-to-home, culturally responsive and accessible to Minnesotans with disabilities.

The DNR has diversity, equity and inclusion strategies that benefit all OHF projects:

- Multilingual and culturally specific hunting and fishing education programs take place on public lands.
- All hiring is equal opportunity, affirmative action, and veteran-friendly. Contracting seeks out Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned businesses.
- Public engagement seeks out BIPOC voices and involves diverse communities. Outreach and marketing of projects has this focus as well.
- Partnerships are at the center of all projects. Tribes in particular are consulted in all pertinent areas of the DNR's work, under EO 19-24.

## Activity Details

### Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

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

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?**
No

**Describe the permanent protection and justification for additional protection:**
Some lands proposed for acquisition may contain a portion of protected land. In these cases, we will seek LSOHC approval, appraise protected acres separately and seek to have that value donated or pay for them using non-OHF funds.

## Land Use

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

**Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:**
WMA's are part of the State's Outdoor Recreation System established by State Statute 86A. Subdivision 8 of that statute defines the purpose of use of WMA's as, " A state wildlife management area shall be established to protect those lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and to develop and manage these lands and waters for the production of wildlife, for public hunting, fishing, and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses."

To fulfill those goals, the DNR may use limited farming on a small percentage of WMA's (<1%) specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife, recreation or reduce crop depredation from neighboring properties in agriculture-dominated landscapes with limited winter food sources.

Commonly planted crops include corn, soybeans, small grains and hay that can include alfalfa or a wildlife mix. Crops are chosen based on a particular wildlife or recreational need and follow crop rotations that adhere to soil health principles. Most food plots occupy a small portion of a particular tract and may include up to 5% of a particular parcel. Percentages are much lower considering the entire WMA system.

We don't have any plans to plant food plots on the parcels currently listed in this proposal. However, future management needs may change or additional parcels may be added later that may include food plots.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**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:**
All WMA lands to be acquired will be open for hunting and fishing with no variations from State of Minnesota regulations.

All SNAs acquired with this funding would be open to the most appropriate types of hunting for the particular parcels. Priority will be given to acquiring lands to be open to all hunting, trapping and fishing.

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

State of MN

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

WMA

SNA

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
1 to 4

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**
Yes

All parcels will be restored including prairie and wetland restorations using funds from this appropriation. We may use additional nonLSOHC funds if restoration costs exceed our appropriation budgets.

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

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Develop acquired lands to minimum WMA/SNA standards including signage, parking areas, and native vegetation planting if necessary | 6/30/2035 |
| Acquire in fee 300 acres for designation as Wildlife Management Areas and Scientific and Natural Areas | 6/30/2031 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 09/03/2035

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:

(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Totals

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $20,000 | - | - | $20,000 |
| Contracts | $245,000 | - | - | $245,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $2,700,000 | - | - | $2,700,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $10,000 | - | - | $10,000 |
| Professional Services | $80,000 | - | - | $80,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $31,700 | - | - | $31,700 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $288,300 | - | - | $288,300 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$3,375,000** | **-** | **-** | **$3,375,000** |

## Personnel

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WMA Acquisition Coordinator | 0.25 | 3.0 | $20,000 | - | - | $20,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $3,375,000
**Amount of Leverage:** -
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 0.0%
**DSS + Personnel:** $51,700
**As a % of the total request:** 1.53%
**Easement Stewardship:** -
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
Project outputs and budget line items would be reduced proportionately

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Project outputs and budget line items (excluding personnel and DSS) would be reduced proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel would not be reduced. DSS would be recalculated to take into account the overall reduction in the budget.

Why?

1) WMA acquisition personnel are at part-time levels
2) DSS is determined by a calculator, not directly proportional to funding

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
Includes anticipated needs related to habitat such as prairie and wetland restoration as well as site development to bring newly acquired parcels up to MN DNR WMA/SNA standards.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Other : Title opinions, property and deed taxes, recording fees, and other legal services to secure easements and drainage agreement releases

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**
1 to 4

## Travel

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?**
No

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

**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?**

Direct Support Services is determined using the standard DNR Direct & Necessary Cost Calculator. Landowner payments and real estate transaction costs are deleted from the top before other parts of the calculator are applied.

## 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 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | 300 | - | - | 300 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **300** | **-** | **-** | **300** |

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

| Type | Native Prairie (acres) |
|---|---|
| Restore | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 15 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - |
| Protect in Easement | - |
| Enhance | - |
| **Total** | **15** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $3,375,000 | - | - | $3,375,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **$3,375,000** | **-** | **-** | **$3,375,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

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

## 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 | - | - | - | $3,375,000 | - | $3,375,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **$3,375,000** | **-** | **$3,375,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $11,250 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - |
| 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 | - | - | - | $11,250 | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

**Sign-up Criteria?**
No

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
The DNR uses GIS-based scoring systems to objectively rank potential acquisitions and develop state wide priority lists.

These systems incorporate scientific data giving priority to locations within and that add to: 1) an important habitat corridor or complex (such as identified by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, Pheasant Action Plan, SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan, and the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan), 2) native plant communities and sites of outstanding and high biodiversity significance mapped by Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS), and 3) parcels that adjoin existing units or other conservation lands.

In addition, scoring takes into account habitat containing endangered, threatened, and other rare species, watershed/wetland qualities as well as habitat management considerations and suitability for public access, hunting and fishing

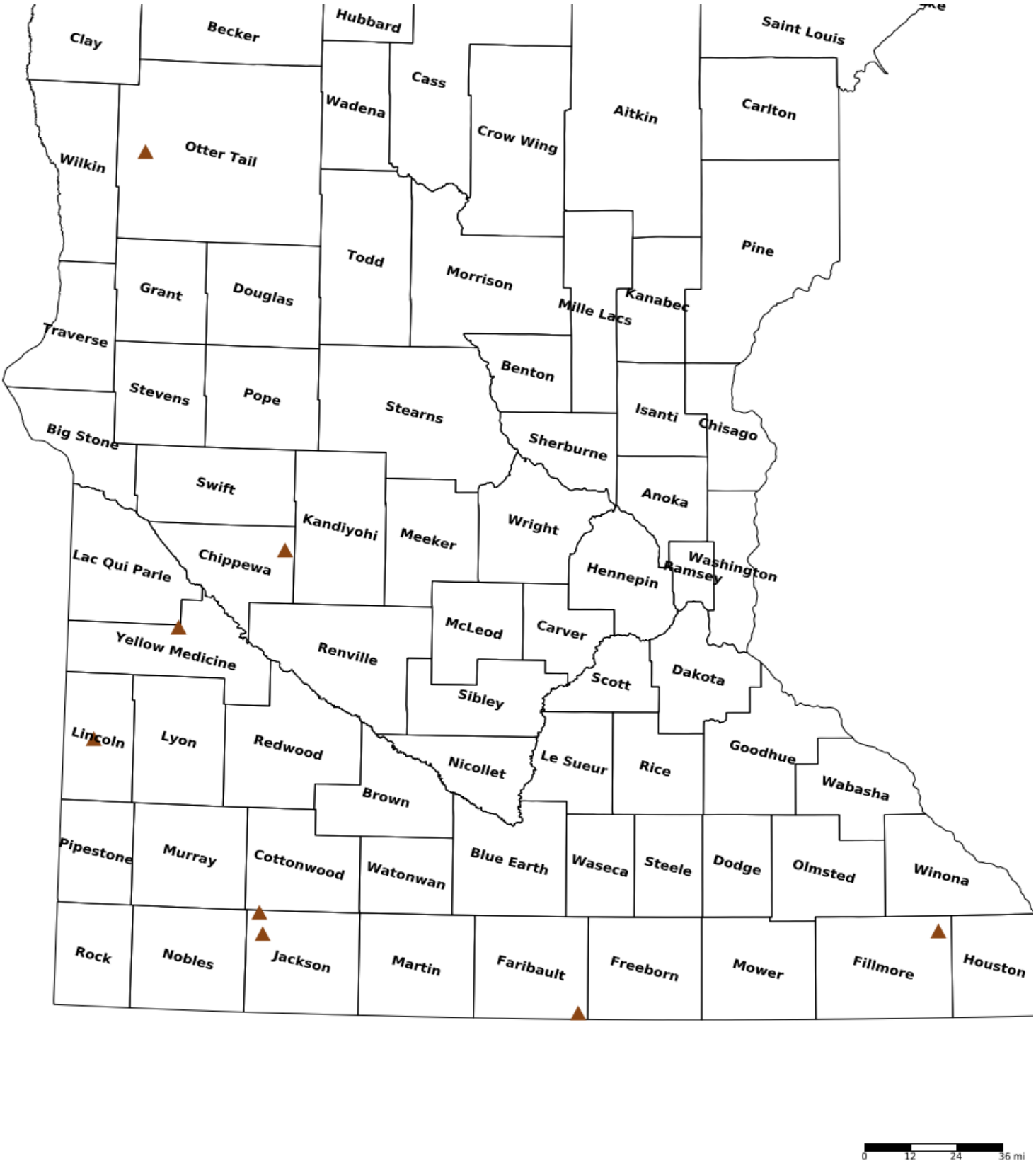
## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cuka WMA Tract 7 | Chippewa | 11937234 | 160 | $1,500,000 | No |
| Brush Creek WMA Tract 27 | Faribault | 10124227 | 80 | $750,000 | No |
| Rushford Sand Barrens SNA | Fillmore | 10408221 | 21 | $114,515 | No |
| Cotton Jack WMA Tract 8 | Jackson | 10438203 | 79 | $550,000 | No |
| Oxbow WMA Tract 22a | Jackson | 10438235 | 197 | $1,500,000 | No |
| Herschberger WMA Tract 6 | Lincoln | 11145220 | 152 | $1,160,000 | No |
| Flinks Slough WMA Tracts 6a & 6C | Yellow Medicine | 11542201 | 180 | $1,500,000 | No |

## Fee Parcels with Buildings

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection | Buildings | Value of Buildings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pelican River WMA Tracts 1-8 | Otter Tail | 13443220 | 322 | $1,600,000 | No | 2 | $30,000 |

# Parcel Map




- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- Restore
- Enhance
- Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

DNR WMA & SNA Acquisition, Phase XIV

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - DNR WMA & SNA Acquisition, Phase XIV
**Organization:** DNR
**Manager:** Jeff Tillma

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $10,000,000
**Appropriated Amount:** $3,375,000
**Percentage:** 33.75%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $60,000 | - | $20,000 | - | 33.33% | - |
| Contracts | $650,000 | - | $245,000 | - | 37.69% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $8,100,000 | $1,000,000 | $2,700,000 | - | 33.33% | 0.0% |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $50,000 | - | $10,000 | - | 20.0% | - |
| Professional Services | $240,000 | - | $80,000 | - | 33.33% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $36,600 | - | $31,700 | - | 86.61% | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $863,400 | - | $288,300 | - | 33.39% | - |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$10,000,000** | **$1,000,000** | **$3,375,000** | **-** | **33.75%** | **0.0%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Project outputs and budget line items (excluding personnel and DSS) would be reduced proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel would not be reduced. DSS would be recalculated to take into account the overall reduction in the budget.

Why?

1) WMA acquisition personnel are at part-time levels
2) DSS is determined by a calculator, not directly proportional to funding

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Project outputs and budget line items (excluding personnel and DSS) would be reduced proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel would not be reduced. DSS would be recalculated to take into account the overall reduction in the budget.

Why?

1) WMA acquisition personnel are at part-time levels
2) DSS is determined by a calculator, not directly proportional to funding

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 900 | 300 | 33.33% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $10,000,000 | $3,375,000 | 33.75% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 900 | 300 | 33.33% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $10,000,000 | $3,375,000 | 33.75% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Great Prairie Lakes and Wetlands Restoration Initiative
Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/14/2026

**Project Title:** Great Prairie Lakes and Wetlands Restoration Initiative

**Funds Recommended:** $1,966,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** John F. Smeltzer
**Title:** President
**Organization:** Spirit Lake Protective Association
**Address:** P.O. Box 51
**City:** Spirit Lake, IA 51360
**Email:** Spiritlakeprotective@gmail.com
**Office Number:**
**Mobile Number:**
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** theSLPA.org

### Partners Contact

**Ducks Unlimited:** Jake Chronister - jchronister@ducks.org - (507) 706-1904

**Spirit Lake Protective Association:** John F. Smeltzer - Spiritlakeprotective@gmail.com -

**The Conservation Fund:** Stacy Salvevold - ssalvevold@conservationfund.org -

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Jackson.

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

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

Wetlands

# Narrative

## Abstract

The Great Prairie Lakes and Wetlands Restoration Initiative seeks $4.8 million to protect and restore prairie and wetland habitats in Jackson and Nobles counties, Minnesota. Led by the Spirit Lake Protective Association in partnership with Ducks Unlimited and The Conservation Fund, the project will convert marginal cropland into permanent conservation areas, improving water quality, reducing flooding, and enhancing habitat for fish, wildlife, and threatened species. By strategically expanding habitat complexes and corridors, the initiative aims to create lasting ecological benefits and public recreation opportunities while strengthening watershed resilience.

## Design and Scope of Work

The Spirit Lake Protective Association strives to improve the health and resiliency of the great prairie lakes of Southern Minnesota and Northwest Iowa. We aim to do this by protecting and restoring prairie and wetland habitats in the watershed that have been drained and under plow for the last century. The great prairie lakes region is an eleven-lake chain of glacially formed lakes, including 7 of the biggest natural lakes in Iowa and 4 shallow lakes in Minnesota. The largest lake in the chain is Big Spirit Lake, and over 54% of the lake's watershed lies in Minnesota. This program is a partnership among Spirit Lake Protective Association (SLPA), The Conservation Fund (TCF), and Ducks Unlimited (DU), where SLPA leads the efforts by organizing and communicating to the community, finding willing sellers, and holding title to lands purchased. TCF's expertise in realty work for conservation will facilitate land protection by conducting all due diligence and closing work, and DU will lead habitat restoration activities. These restored habitats will be donated to US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) or to MN Department of Natural Resources as a State Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Over the last 50 years, as agriculture has intensified in the region, our prairie landscape has been transformed to one of drainage and plow. Only those lakes and wetlands too large to drain persist, and almost all are significantly degraded by agricultural runoff and drainage with sediment, nutrients, and chemical pollutants. Further, the extensive drainage into area lakes creates intense surges of water which would have historically been retained on the landscape. Our ecosystems are not adapted for this altered hydrology, causing degraded shorelines, turbid water, and decreased fish and wildlife populations. A recent study of the Great Lakes' watershed has decisively concluded that permanent restoration of prairie grasslands and wetlands in Minnesota are the most effective solution to decrease nutrient loading and flood events (Doyle et al, 2025).

We propose to protect and restore marginal cropland to create a protective sponge throughout Jackson and Nobles Counties, Minnesota, where all major lakes and streams are on the MN DNR's impaired waters list. At this scale we can build on existing habitat complexes, restore the most highly degraded croplands contributing significant sediment and nutrients downstream, and compound our investments by leveraging other funding sources without the pitfalls of a small focus area such as limited willing sellers or restricting and fatiguing leverage partners.

For nearly a century, the Spirit Lake Protective Association has spearheaded the preservation of habitat surrounding Spirit Lake by transforming vulnerable properties into permanent conservation strongholds. Recently, SLPA contributed $250,000 to the Moore Slough WPA project in Jackson County, where 195 acres were restored to prairie and a 76-acre shallow lake. As a result of this successful project, the momentum, energy, and excitement for local conservation is growing, and now is the time build on the support to return quality habitat and a quality way of life.

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

This proposal will increase and improve habitat in our focus area by protecting marginal croplands and restoring prairie grasslands and wetlands on these acres. Parcels adjacent to existing habitat complexes will be prioritized to have the most impactful benefits for wildlife. The downstream habitats will see indirect effects of reduced sediment and nutrient loading and reduced flood surge into area lakes and streams, which will improve those habitats for long term fish and wildlife benefit. 12 plant and animal species on state or federally threatened and endangered lists have known populations in our focus area.

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

SLPA has invested in habitat conservation in the Iowa portion of the watershed for decades. A recent study of the Iowa Great Lakes watershed has decisively concluded that permanent restoration of prairie grasslands and pothole wetlands in the Minnesota portion of the watershed are key to accomplishing our mission (Doyle et al, 2025). Because of these findings, we are focusing our major conservation efforts in Minnesota.

Recently, SLPA and conservation partners have completed a large, critical habitat restoration project in the heart of our MN focus area. Personal experience, new partnerships, and community momentum catalyze this group to be successful now.

Further, average MN farmland values have increased by 5,200% in the last half-century (FBN, 2026; USDA-NASS, 2018). Buying land for conservation will never be cheaper – Now is the time to act.

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

This funding will be used to protect and restore new acres of habitat strategically located adjacent to existing protected habitat, including critical shoreline protection when possible. Working with our MN DNR and US FWS partners, we have identified habitat complexes to build on and those which need a corridor between two existing patches. These enlarged complexes will provide important breeding habitat and quality stopover areas for migration. In summer 2026, SLPA, The Conservation Fund, and Ducks Unlimited will host a set of meetings consisting of local conservation leaders, local officials, and biologists to work together to identify long-term goals for community-supported priority areas that will generate the greatest fish, game and wildlife habitat benefits.

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

Long Range Duck Recovery Plan

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Habitat Conservation Model

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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

# Outcomes

## Programs in prairie region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *The plans referred to above for identifying, prioritizing, and selecting parcels also have measurable outcomes. Those plans outline monitoring efforts and measurable goals including acres of wetlands and grasslands required to meet the desired outcomes. The monitoring planned by partners in this region will drive conservation investment in this region. Moreover, we can complete detailed analysis of water retention and nutrient and sediment reduction of each completed project to map our progress toward larger watershed planning goals.*

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

This request will not supplant or substitute any previous funding not from the legacy fund.

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

These parcels will be donated to the US FWS or MN DNR as part of their public lands program. SLPA and other local individuals will continue to monitor restorations for invasive species and management needs and will donate funds or volunteer time to help manage as needed and available.

## Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2028 and beyond | SLPA | monitor sites for invasives | raise funds, work with land mgmt partner | conduct invasive species removal |

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

Nobles County is the 3rd most diverse county in Minnesota. Further, the city of Worthington, which is mostly included within our focus area, is a high poverty area according to the US Census Bureau. Lands protected and restored by this plan will increase available free, public recreation spaces within accessible distances of these communities. Further, the improved habitat and environmental services from these projects and associated downstream benefits will improve the quality of life for all residents nearby.

# Activity Details

## Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

**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 inform local governments of land acquisitions at least 30 days prior to closing. We have spoken to County Commissioners and they are supportive of our efforts.

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) 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:**
Short term farming may be needed to best restore the uplands to native prairie habitats. This will be needed on agricultural conversions where herbicides with lag-times were used prior to our acquisition. We will use restrictive chemical farming practices to allow those residual herbicides to break down before planting our native prairie species.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**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:**
No variations are expected.

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

State of MN

Federal

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

WMA

WPA

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
1 or 2.

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**
Yes

We will use this appropriation and/or leveraged funds to complete restoration.

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

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Transfer to MN DNR or USFWS | 3-12 months following acquisition |
| Complete restorations | Following acquisitions 2028 - 2034 |
| Design restoration | following acquisition 2027 - 2030 |
| Conduct due-diligence for acquisition(s) | August 2027 - June 2030 |
| Outreach to identified parcel owners | February 2026 - February 2028 |
| Conduct community outreach/planning event | August - October 2026 |
| Begin strategic parcel identification | Jan 2026 - April 2026 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 10/01/2031

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $80,000 | $45,000 | DU, NAWCA, SLPA | $125,000 |
| Contracts | $260,000 | $20,000 | DU, NAWCA | $280,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $688,400 | - | - | $688,400 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $688,400 | $250,000 | -, USFWS | $938,400 |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $10,400 | $4,500 | DU, NAWCA, SLPA | $14,900 |
| Professional Services | $31,200 | - | - | $31,200 |
| Direct Support Services | $7,600 | - | - | $7,600 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $45,000 | - | - | $45,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $4,000 | - | - | $4,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $130,000 | - | - | $130,000 |
| DNR IDP | $21,000 | - | - | $21,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,966,000** | **$319,500** | **-** | **$2,285,500** |

## Partner: Ducks Unlimited

### *Totals*

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $60,000 | $20,000 | DU, NAWCA | $80,000 |
| Contracts | $260,000 | $20,000 | DU, NAWCA | $280,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $8,000 | $2,000 | DU, NAWCA | $10,000 |
| Professional Services | $6,000 | - | - | $6,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $4,800 | - | - | $4,800 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $4,000 | - | - | $4,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $130,000 | - | - | $130,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$472,800** | **$42,000** | **-** | **$514,800** |

### *Personnel*

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DU Biologist & Engineers | 0.5 | 1.9 | $60,000 | $20,000 | DU, NAWCA | $80,000 |

## Partner: Spirit Lake Protective Association

### *Totals*

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | - | $25,000 | SLPA | $25,000 |
| Contracts | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $688,400 | - | - | $688,400 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $688,400 | $250,000 | USFWS | $938,400 |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | - | $2,500 | SLPA | $2,500 |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | - | - | - | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $45,000 | - | - | $45,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | - | - | - | - |
| DNR IDP | $21,000 | - | - | $21,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,442,800** | **$277,500** | **-** | **$1,720,300** |

### *Personnel*

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grant admin | 0.25 | 4.0 | - | $25,000 | SLPA | $25,000 |

## Partner: The Conservation Fund

***Totals***

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $20,000 | - | - | $20,000 |
| Contracts | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $2,400 | - | - | $2,400 |
| Professional Services | $25,200 | - | - | $25,200 |
| Direct Support Services | $2,800 | - | - | $2,800 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | - | - | - | - |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$50,400** | **-** | **-** | **$50,400** |

***Personnel***

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MN TCF staff | 0.1 | 4.0 | $20,000 | - | - | $20,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $1,966,000
**Amount of Leverage:** $319,500
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 16.25%
**DSS + Personnel:** $87,600
**As a % of the total request:** 4.46%
**Easement Stewardship:** -
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
We have scaled budgets back proportionately to complete acquisition and restoration of 120 acres.

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**
DU will work diligently to leverage OHF grant funds with additional sources, but OHF acquisition expense is typically needed first. SLPA will provide leverage through volunteer hours and travel costs at their own expense. USFWS has contributed $250,000 from towards the project.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The number of acres would be reduced proportionally. At 50% reduction, we could protect and restore about 160 acres, or 1 project, as most parcels sell as a quarter section in Southern MN. We don't believe we could find many parcels to purchase for less than 50% of requested.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS are budgeted by number of projects in this program. A baseline amount of time and effort are needed for every project, regardless of size of the project. Therefore, personnel and DSS will not be adjusted at the same proportions as acres, contracts, and other categories.

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
Contracts are for private contractor charges to restore/enhance wetlands (earthmoving) and grasslands (native seeding) on lands acquired. Wetland restoration in Southern MN is very expensive and requires engineering due to intensive landscape drainage via complex networks of private/public tile/ditches that affect private neighbors and public roads.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Design/Engineering

Other : Environmental assessment surveys (contaminants, archeology)

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**
1-2

## 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**
DU - travel costs consist of in-state mileage and lodging for land manager, biologists, and engineering field staff. DU generally does not spend OHF grant funds on food.

TCF – Travel costs consist of rental car or mileage and lodging for TCF staff working directly on these projects. TCF generally does not spend OHF grant funds on food, fuel or per diem.

**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?**
Direct Support Services has been reviewed and approved by MN DNR grants staff and is determined using the approved and audited rate as the basis for calculating DSS as a percentage of the budgeted personnel costs.

## Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**
Equipment and tools to facilitate restoration contracts such as wooden lath, tile marker flags, seeding equipment, tree removal tools.

# Federal Funds

**Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**
Yes

**Are the funds confirmed?**
Yes

**Is Confirmation Document attached?**
Yes, on file

In Kind : $250,000

# Output Tables

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 12 | 48 | - | - | 60 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 12 | 48 | - | - | 60 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **24** | **96** | **-** | **-** | **120** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $196,600 | $786,400 | - | - | $983,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $196,600 | $786,400 | - | - | $983,000 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$393,200** | **$1,572,800** | **-** | **-** | **$1,966,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | 60 | - | 60 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | 60 | - | 60 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **120** | **-** | **120** |

## 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 | - | - | - | $983,000 | - | $983,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | $983,000 | - | $983,000 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **$1,966,000** | **-** | **$1,966,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $16,383 | $16,383 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $16,383 | $16,383 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - |
| 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 | - | - | - | $16,383 | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | $16,383 | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

**Sign-up Criteria?**
No

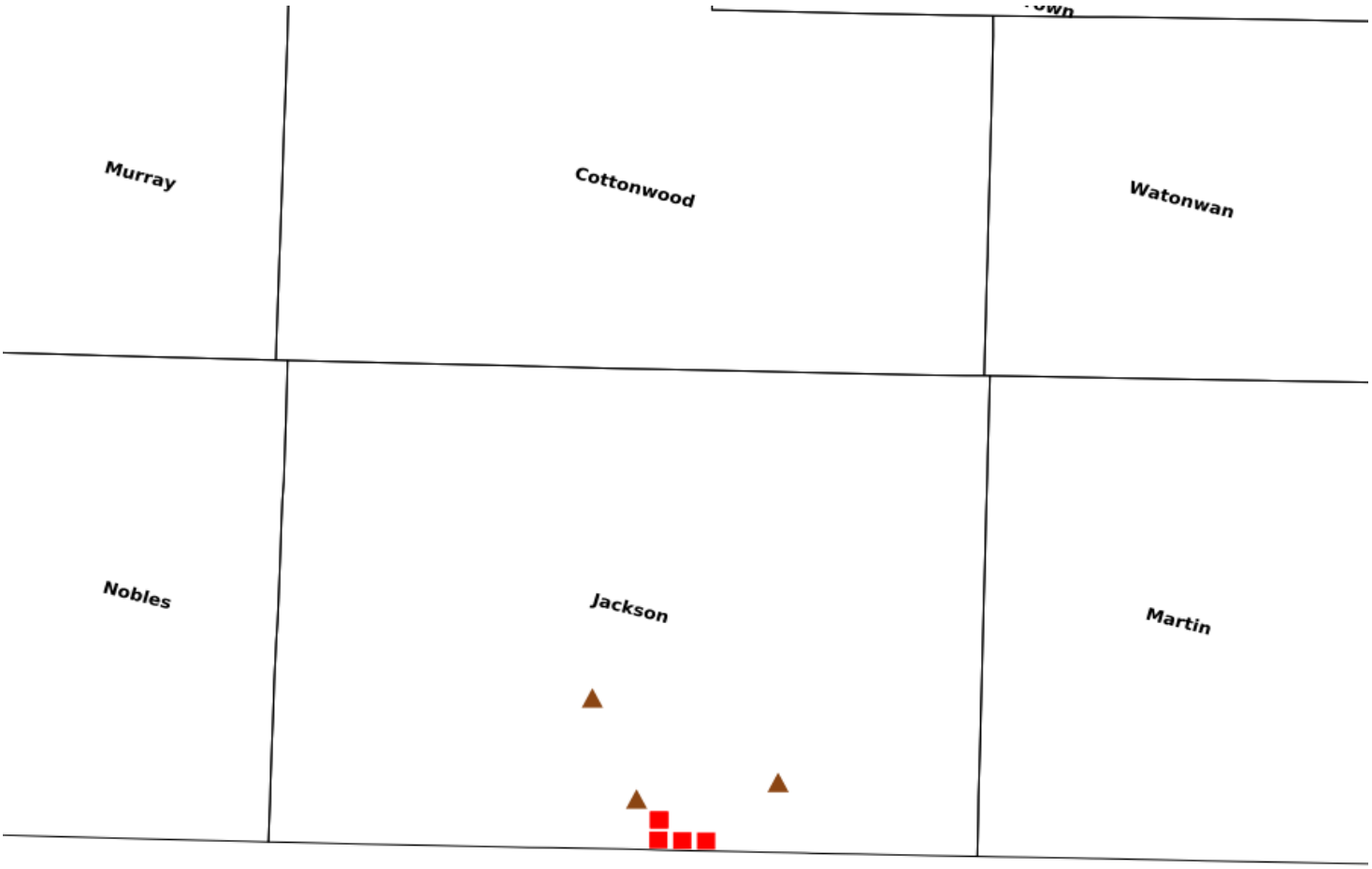
**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
We worked with biologists from USFWS, MN DNR, and Ducks Unlimited to map parcels adjacent to existing habitat with high wetland restoration potential. Focus areas are further developed using multiple plans and studies to identify areas where conservation investments will do the most good for fish, wildlife and their habitats as well as people who depend on habitat and natural resources.

We will look for lands available from willing sellers within our priority resource areas and amend to this project when and as appropriate during the grant period beginning July 2027. Current parcels are not fully known, but our top priorities as of submission are listed below.

## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Husen WMA - South Parcel | Jackson | 10236229 | 80 | $300,000 | No |
| Moore Slough WPA - West Parcel | Jackson | 10135231 | 365 | $4,015,000 | No |
| Pavelko WMA - North Parcel | Jackson | 10135215 | 80 | $300,000 | No |
| Sangl WMA - East Parcel | Jackson | 10136222 | 113 | $1,243,000 | No |
| Spirit Lake WPA - East Parcel | Jackson | 10136236 | 120 | $1,320,000 | No |
| Spirit Lake WPA - Little Spirit Parcel | Jackson | 10136235 | 75 | $825,000 | No |
| Spirit Lake WPA - Sec26 North | Jackson | 10136226 | 80 | $880,000 | No |
| Spirit Lake WPA - Sec26 South | Jackson | 10136226 | 62 | $682,000 | No |

## Parcel Map


Murray
Cottonwood
Watonwan
Nobles
Jackson
Martin
0
2
4
6 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Great Prairie Lakes and Wetlands Restoration Initiative

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - Great Prairie Lakes and Wetlands Restoration Initiative
**Organization:** Spirit Lake Protective Association
**Manager:** John F. Smeltzer

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $4,838,200
**Appropriated Amount:** $1,966,000
**Percentage:** 40.63%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $198,000 | $75,000 | $80,000 | $45,000 | 40.4% | 60.0% |
| Contracts | $650,000 | $50,000 | $260,000 | $20,000 | 40.0% | 40.0% |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $1,760,000 | - | $688,400 | - | 39.11% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $1,760,000 | $250,000 | $688,400 | $250,000 | 39.11% | 100.0% |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $26,000 | $10,500 | $10,400 | $4,500 | 40.0% | 42.86% |
| Professional Services | $78,000 | - | $31,200 | - | 40.0% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $18,800 | - | $7,600 | - | 40.43% | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $60,300 | - | $45,000 | - | 74.63% | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $10,000 | - | $4,000 | - | 40.0% | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $325,000 | - | $130,000 | - | 40.0% | - |
| DNR IDP | $27,900 | - | $21,000 | - | 75.27% | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$4,838,200** | **$385,000** | **$1,966,000** | **$319,500** | **40.63%** | **82.99%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The number of acres would be reduced proportionally. At 50% reduction, we could protect and restore about 160 acres, or 1 project, as most parcels sell as a quarter section in Southern MN. We don't believe we could find many parcels to purchase for less than 50% of requested.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS are budgeted by number of projects in this program. A baseline amount of time and effort are needed for every project, regardless of size of that project. Therefore, personnel and DSS will not be adjusted at the same proportions as acres, contracts, and other categories.

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The number of acres would be reduced proportionally, and we would target priority projects with funding available. With 30% of requested funding, we don't believe we could find many parcels to purchase in our focus area.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS are budgeted by number of projects in this program. A baseline amount of time and effort are needed for every project, regardless of size of the project. Therefore, personnel and DSS will not be adjusted at the same proportions as acres, contracts, and other categories.

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 160 | 60 | 37.5% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 160 | 60 | 37.5% |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $2,419,100 | $983,000 | 40.63% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $2,419,100 | $983,000 | 40.63% |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 160 | 60 | 37.5% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 160 | 60 | 37.5% |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $2,419,100 | $983,000 | 40.63% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $2,419,100 | $983,000 | 40.63% |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Martin County WMA Acquisition Phase 11

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/13/2026

**Project Title:** Martin County WMA Acquisition Phase 11

**Funds Recommended:** $2,616,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Doug Hartke
**Title:** Grant Coordinator
**Organization:** Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc.
**Address:** PO Box 212
**City:** Sherburn, MN 56171
**Email:** doughartke@gmail.com
**Office Number:**
**Mobile Number:** 507-236-1700
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** Foxlakeconservation.com

### Partners Contact

**Ducks Unlimited:** Jake Chronister - jchronister@ducks.org - (507) 706-1904

**Fox Lake Conservation League:** Doug Hartke - doughartke@gmail.com - 507-236-1700

**The Conservation Fund:** Stacy Salvevold - ssalvevold@conservationfund.org - (651) 243-4149

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Watonwan and Martin.

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

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

Wetlands

# Narrative

## Abstract

This program will continue our conservation partnership into Phase 11 to protect and restore diverse prairie and wetland habitat in areas that adjoin existing DNR WMA. Parcels are identified with representatives of local government, Windom area MN DNR, Ducks Unlimited (DU), The Conservation Fund (TCF), the Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc (FLCL), and other local partners. Wetland restoration and additional grasslands are needed to make our WMA habitats resilient and productive. We will optimize this process by utilizing real estate expertise of TCF, wetland restoration know-how of DU, and the local conservation efforts of FLCL.

## Design and Scope of Work

This proposal will restore 200 acres of prairie wetlands and grasslands in Martin and Watonwan Counties. Our partnership brings together the expertise of three organizations with a strong history working in the area. The Conservation Fund (TCF) will negotiate the acquisition and lead the real estate process for properties targeted in this proposal. Fox Lake Conservation League will hold and monitor the properties during the restoration work, which will be completed by Ducks Unlimited. The completely restored lands will then be conveyed to the MN DNR for perpetual protection and management. All projects are done in partnership with neighboring landowners and without disruption to existing drainage of their lands.

Shallow lake and wetland restorations are top priority actions in all major conservation plans for Minnesota. Our work addresses the habitat goals identified in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan, and Minnesota's Duck Recovery Plan which calls for the active management of 1,800 shallow lakes and restoring 64,000 wetlands to Minnesota's landscape. This work is time-sensitive because complex shallow lake and wetland restoration projects take several years to design and implement. Additionally, grasslands surrounding these wetlands are critical to the prairie ecosystem but difficult to acquire in the agricultural landscape of Martin County. This proposal will best prepare the partnership to act when landowners are willing to sell their lands to conservation.

Priority land acquisition areas have been identified with considerations for proximity to existing protected lands (DNR Wildlife Management Areas), threatened and endangered species' key habitats, and important watersheds. Acquired lands will be restored using best management practices to accurately represent and manage for pre-settlement conditions. The extensive agricultural and drainage history of Southwest Minnesota has resulted in the loss of 90% of our prairie wetlands and 99% of the native prairie on the landscape. What remains of the lakes and wetlands are only those which were too deep to drain and have now become nutrient rich, invaded by exotic species, and are overall unproductive to wetland-dependent species. These factors have caused a significant decline in Minnesota's once diverse waterfowl population, and as a result, in Minnesota's rich waterfowling traditions.

Through this funding, TCF, FLCL, and DU will acquire and restore much needed habitats to the landscape where wetland-wildlife, prairie species, and people will flourish. Further, these sites will improve water quality, soil conservation, and water storage in the region.

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

This program protects and restores threatened habitats in Martin County. Native prairie and high-quality wetlands will be protected, buffered, and expanded upon. Restoration sites will provide the opportunity to expand populations of at-risk and threatened plant species that Martin SWCD has propagated and introduced into permanent protected sites. The FLCL is continuing work initiated by Martin County SWCD, by selecting locally rare, at-risk species for propagation and use on these and future habitat restoration projects to protect the local native seed source. While hundreds of Sullivant's milkweed (Asclepia sullivantii) and Tuberous Indian Plantain (Cacalia tuberosa) have been introduced into WMAs and other protected land, Small white lady's slipper (Cypripedium candidum) and Rattlesnake master (Eryngium yuccifolium) will continue to be propagated using local source plant material for use in this project. Parcels selected for this proposal expand habitat protection for the threatened Blanding's Turtle (Emydoidea blandigii) Perch Creek population that has been studied by the MN DNR and featured in the "MN Volunteer". In 2025, this partnership protected 307 acres at Perch Creek and Manyaska WMA's. This proposal is largely targeting parcels adjacent to those recent additions.

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

We continue to have great success with our previous funding by protecting over 2,500 acres to existing WMA's since phase 1 of this program. It can be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity when we find a willing seller that owns some of our highest priority native habitat and marginal agricultural lands in proximity to WMAs and other protected natural habitats. If we don't act immediately, these lands may never become available in the future or may be converted to other uses, with degradation or complete elimination of natural features and high-value resources that currently exist. Additionally, wind easements are quickly sweeping across Southwest Minnesota and directly compete with our interests and ability to protect affected lands. This proposal will financially prepare us to act quickly when parcels in our focus area become available.

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

Our "Martin County Conservation Alliance" has grown into a planning group that includes wildlife group representatives, NGO's, local government, and state agencies. There is a wide range of expertise and experience within the group. We utilized Historic information, the MN County Biological Survey, GIS spatial data, and local knowledge to identify areas where habitat restoration will be most beneficial. Expanding habitat complexes by protecting and restoring lands adjacent to existing high-quality native habitat and habitat already protected through public ownership or permanent conservation easements is our key focus. Parcels which will link or expand sites with threatened or endangered species and species-in-decline further narrowed our focus area. We additionally highlighted opportunities to protect and enhance habitat buffers along water courses and lake chains. On our parcel list, we have the following tracts that have areas of biodiversity significance as identified by the MN County Biological Survey:

Caron WMA: moderate level of biodiversity significance and has a Priority Shallow Lake as identified by DNR Wildlife. Caron WMA is also part of a Pheasant Habitat Complex.
Perch Creek WMA: High level of biodiversity significance.

Additionally, some of the targeted parcels occur in landscapes that are estimated to support 10-25 breeding ducks per square mile as per USFWS. Breeding pair accessibility will only increase with increased wetland restoration in these areas. One highlight of this program's work is increasing Perch Creek WMA complex to over the threshold of 40% grasslands and 20% wetlands. This is the scientifically recognized threshold at which waterfowl populations

can have an overall net gain in production. This habitat goal has been recognized in the MN Duck Recovery Plan, MN Prairie Conservation Plan, MN Working Lands Initiative, Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, and others.

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

Long Range Duck Recovery Plan

Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years

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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

## Outcomes

### Programs in prairie region:

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *By adding these important parcels to the Martin County WMA complexes we are restoring valuable wetlands and grasslands to the WMAs of Southern Minnesota. These added diverse prairies will provide much needed habitat for many wildlife species. This program will also add valuable acres for public hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities with all of the fish, game, and rare species that will be found on this new public land.*

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

This proposal does not supplant or substitute previous funding for the same purpose.

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

Initial restoration efforts focus on long term, low maintenance solutions to water control structures and native prairie plantings. Maintaining habitat and infrastructure after our restoration and donation to DNR is complete will be the responsibility of the MN DNR. However, local groups within the "Martin County Conservation Alliance" will be there to assist the DNR with future private dollars and partner ECP CPL grants, if and when available. Local partners will continue to install additional local source native plant species to enhance habitat to support more species, including pollinators. Local partner monitoring will assist in identifying invasive species threats and aid with eradication or control when necessary.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ongoing | Local | Monitor and add local species | Monitor for invasive species | Treat and plant as needed |
| Ongoing | MN DNR Budget | Monitoring | Maintenance | Management |

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

13.2% of Martin County is below the poverty line, according to the 2023 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates. Restoration of wetlands and grasslands will create high-quality habitat to support healthy wildlife populations in

the area for all people to enjoy with low-barrier recreation opportunities. These actions will help improve air quality, water quality, support pollinator populations, and help fight climate change and the disproportionate effects it has on BIPOC and low-income communities. These newly restored lands will be open to the public and will provide numerous opportunities for all people to enjoy through hunting, wildlife viewing, kayaking, canoeing, and various other forms of outdoor recreation and education. This proposal includes a shallow lake restoration just outside of Fairmont, which will provide recreation as well as improve drinking water supply and decrease flooding of this community.

## Activity Details

### Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

**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:**
Local governments will be informed at least 30 days prior to any sale using OHF funds in writing via email and/or paper copy.

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) 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:**
Food Plots could be utilized by the MN DNR as part of their WMA management plans. Short-term farming may be necessary in the timetable to best restore the uplands to native habitats.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**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:**
All of these lands will be part the DNR WMA system.

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

State of MN

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

WMA

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
1-3

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**
Yes

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

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Follow-up/Maintenance/Weed Control | 2028 and Beyond |
| Plan Restoration | Winter 2027 - Winter 2031 |
| Complete Restoration | 2027-2032 |
| Transfer to MN DNR | 2027 - 2030 |
| Acquire Parcel (s) | Summer 2027 - Summer 2030 |
| Begin Parcel qualification and review | Summer and Fall 2027 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 06/30/2032

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $108,000 | $20,000 | -, DU, NAWCA | $128,000 |
| Contracts | $242,000 | $50,000 | -, DU, NAWCA | $292,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $1,920,800 | - | - | $1,920,800 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $26,400 | $2,000 | DU, NAWCA | $28,400 |
| Professional Services | $47,400 | - | - | $47,400 |
| Direct Support Services | $10,400 | - | - | $10,400 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $60,000 | - | - | $60,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $5,000 | - | - | $5,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $161,000 | - | - | $161,000 |
| DNR IDP | $35,000 | - | - | $35,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$2,616,000** | **$72,000** | **-** | **$2,688,000** |

## Partner: Ducks Unlimited

### *Totals*

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $80,000 | $20,000 | DU, NAWCA | $100,000 |
| Contracts | $242,000 | $50,000 | DU, NAWCA | $292,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $25,000 | $2,000 | DU, NAWCA | $27,000 |
| Professional Services | $17,400 | - | - | $17,400 |
| Direct Support Services | $6,400 | - | - | $6,400 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $5,000 | - | - | $5,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $161,000 | - | - | $161,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$536,800** | **$72,000** | **-** | **$608,800** |

### *Personnel*

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DU Conservation Staff - Biologists and Engineers | 0.33 | 3.0 | $80,000 | $20,000 | DU, NAWCA | $100,000 |

## Partner: Fox Lake Conservation League

***Totals***

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | - | - | - | - |
| Contracts | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $1,920,800 | - | - | $1,920,800 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | - | - | - | - |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | - | - | - | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $60,000 | - | - | $60,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | - | - | - | - |
| DNR IDP | $35,000 | - | - | $35,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$2,015,800** | **-** | **-** | **$2,015,800** |

## Partner: The Conservation Fund

***Totals***

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $28,000 | - | - | $28,000 |
| Contracts | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $1,400 | - | - | $1,400 |
| Professional Services | $30,000 | - | - | $30,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $4,000 | - | - | $4,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | - | - | - | - |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$63,400** | **-** | **-** | **$63,400** |

***Personnel***

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MN TCF staff | 0.1 | 4.0 | $28,000 | - | - | $28,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $2,616,000
**Amount of Leverage:** $72,000
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 2.75%
**DSS + Personnel:** $118,400
**As a % of the total request:** 4.53%
**Easement Stewardship:** -
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
the number of acres and budgets will be reduced proportionately

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**
DU will work diligently to leverage OHF grant funds with additional sources, but OHF acquisition expense is typically needed first.

FLCL will provide leverage through volunteer hours and travel costs at their own expense, which is estimated in the table above.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The number of acres would be reduced proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS are budgeted by number of projects in this program. A baseline amount of time and effort are needed for every project, regardless of size. Therefore, personnel and DSS will not be adjusted at the same proportions as acres, contracts, and other categories.

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
Contracts are for private contractor charges to restore/enhance wetlands (earthmoving) and grasslands (native seeding) on lands acquired. Wetland restoration in Martin County is very expensive and requires engineering due to intensive landscape drainage via complex networks of private/public tile/ditches that affect private neighbors and public roads.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Other : Soil investigations, county tile petition fees, Phase I environmental review

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

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

## 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**
DU - travel costs consist of in-state mileage and lodging for land manager, biologists, and engineering field staff. DU generally does not spend OHF grant funds on food.
TCF - Mileage or car rental with fuel and lodging are charged for project specific travel. TCF does not spend OHF grant funds on food.

**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?**
FLCL- we will not charge DSS.
TCF: Direct Support Services has been reviewed and approved by Minnesota DNR grants staff, and is determined using our Federally-approved and audited rate as the basis for calculating Direct Support Services as a percentage of the budgeted personnel costs.
DU: Minnesota DNR grants staff previously reviewed and approved DU accounting methodology for Direct Support Services, which are calculated and included in DU staff costs. DU Direct Support Services constitute approximately 8% of DU overall staff costs on average among DU conservation staff billing categories.

## Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**
GPS survey equipment for performing engineering wetland restoration survey work and engineering surveys of shallow lake and wetland projects, including survey equipment lease charges instead of actual outright equipment purchases to avoid buying equipment that becomes obsolete due to upgrades and advancements. Other examples include hand tools and other field equipment as needs arise.

# Federal Funds

**Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**
Yes

**Are the funds confirmed?**
No

**What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds?**
Beginning in 2027 via future NAWCA grants leveraged to help restore lands acquired via OHF. This first requires expenditures of state OHF grant funds on land acquisitions to leverage federal NAWCA grant funds to restore lands acquired.

# Output Tables

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 40 | 160 | - | - | 200 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **40** | **160** | **-** | **-** | **200** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $523,200 | $2,092,800 | - | - | $2,616,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$523,200** | **$2,092,800** | **-** | **-** | **$2,616,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | 200 | - | 200 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **200** | **-** | **200** |

## 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 | - | - | - | $2,616,000 | - | $2,616,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **$2,616,000** | **-** | **$2,616,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $13,080 | $13,080 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - |
| 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 | - | - | - | $13,080 | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

**Sign-up Criteria?**
No

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
We utilized historic information, the MN County Biologic Survey, GIS spatial data, and local knowledge to identify areas where habitat restoration will be most beneficial. Expanding habitat complexes by protecting and restoring lands adjacent to existing high-quality native habitat and habitat already protected through public ownership or permanent conservation easements is our key focus. Parcels which will link or expand sites with threatened or endangered species and species-in-decline further narrowed our focus area. We additionally highlighted opportunities to protect and enhance habitat buffers along water courses and lake chains.

## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Caron WMA Parcel 14 | Martin | 10333224 | 80 | $900,000 | No |
| Manyaska WMA | Martin | 10232222 | 30 | $400,000 | No |
| Manyaska WMA | Martin | 10232222 | 50 | $680,000 | No |
| Manyaska WMA | Martin | 10232222 | 35 | $450,000 | No |
| Manyaska WMA | Martin | 10232222 | 20 | $325,000 | No |
| Rooney Run WMA | Martin | 10332228 | 80 | $1,350,000 | No |
| Perch Creek WMA | Watonwan | 10530219 | 320 | $3,370,200 | No |
| Perch Creek WMA | Watonwan | 10530231 | 80 | $880,000 | No |
| Perch Creek WMA Parcel 17A | Watonwan | 10530230 | 140 | $1,217,800 | No |

## Parcel Map


Redwood
Brown
Nicollet
Le Su
Cottonwood
Watonwan
Blue Earth
Jackson
Martin
Faribault
0
3
6
9 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Martin County WMA Acquisition Phase 11

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - Martin County WMA Acquisition Phase 11
**Organization:** Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc.
**Manager:** Doug Hartke

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $12,972,000
**Appropriated Amount:** $2,616,000
**Percentage:** 20.17%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $512,000 | $90,000 | $108,000 | $20,000 | 21.09% | 22.22% |
| Contracts | $1,210,000 | $400,000 | $242,000 | $50,000 | 20.0% | 12.5% |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $9,573,000 | - | $1,920,800 | - | 20.06% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $132,000 | $12,000 | $26,400 | $2,000 | 20.0% | 16.67% |
| Professional Services | $234,000 | - | $47,400 | - | 20.26% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $47,700 | - | $10,400 | - | 21.8% | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $287,200 | - | $60,000 | - | 20.89% | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $25,000 | - | $5,000 | - | 20.0% | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $805,000 | - | $161,000 | - | 20.0% | - |
| DNR IDP | $146,100 | - | $35,000 | - | 23.96% | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$12,972,000** | **$502,000** | **$2,616,000** | **$72,000** | **20.17%** | **14.34%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The number of acres would be reduced proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS are budgeted by number of projects in this program. A baseline amount of time and effort are needed for every project, regardless of size. Therefore, personnel and DSS will not be adjusted at the same proportions as acres, contracts, and other categories.

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The number of acres would be reduced proportionately and we would target priority projects with funding available.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS are budgeted by number of projects in this program. A baseline amount of time and effort are needed for every project, regardless of size. Therefore, personnel and DSS will not be adjusted at the same proportions as acres, contracts, and other categories.

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 835 | 200 | 23.95% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $12,972,000 | $2,616,000 | 20.17% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 835 | 200 | 23.95% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $12,972,000 | $2,616,000 | 20.17% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/19/2026

**Project Title:** Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)

**Funds Recommended:** $3,541,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Dusty Van Thuyne
**Title:** Easement Program Coordinator
**Organization:** Board of Water and Soil Resources
**Address:** 520 Lafayette Road North
**City:** St. Paul, MN 55155
**Email:** dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us
**Office Number:** 651-539-2573
**Mobile Number:**
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** https://bwsr.state.mn.us/

### Location Information

**County Location(s):**

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

Northern Forest

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

Metro / Urban

Southeast Forest

**Activity types:**

Protect in Easement

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

Wetlands

## Narrative

### Abstract

This program will use the Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP) partnership to protect and restore approximately 360 acres of previously drained wetlands, uplands, and riparian areas on approximately 6 easements. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will utilize the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to restore high priority habitat within the 66 county MN CREP area. The program will utilize a ranking and selection process and be implemented locally by SWCD staff with assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

### Design and Scope of Work

This program will utilize funds to the greatest extent possible by leveraging federal funding through MN CREP. The MN CREP is a partnership between the USDA and BWSR that provides voluntary conservation easement opportunities for landowners. MN CREP focuses on protecting environmentally sensitive land across 66 counties in southern and western Minnesota. Through this program, farmers and agricultural landowners establish and maintain permanent conservation practices, ensuring long-term environmental benefits.

How it works:

- Landowners enroll in the federally funded Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for 14-15 years. Administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA), CRP repurposes agricultural land for conservation rather than farming or ranching.
- The same land is also enrolled in a state-funded perpetual conservation easement through the RIM program, managed by BWSR. Landowners retain private ownership while the land is permanently restored and enhanced for conservation benefits.

MN CREP will protect the highest-priority areas across 66 counties by:

- Targeting riparian areas and marginal agricultural land for conservation.
- Enhancing habitat for wildlife, pollinators, and non-game species.
- Restoring hydrology, improving water infiltration, and mitigating flood risks.
- Reducing nitrate contamination in drinking water supplies.

MN CREP focuses on four main Conservation Practices (CPs) that have been identified the MN CREP Agreement:

- CP2 Native Grasses
- CP21 Filter Strips
- CP23 Wetland Restoration, Floodplain
- CP23A Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain

MN CREP is a local-state-federal partnership delivered locally by SWCDs and BWSR. In addition, the MN CREP partnership is possible through collaboration among many local, state and federal partners including the USDA-

FSA, USDA-NRCS, Pheasants Forever (PF), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and over 70 supporting organizations and agencies.

BWSR staff will coordinate with federal partners on the overall MN CREP process and program oversight. In addition, BWSR staff will be responsible for easement acquisition. Local staff will promote CRP contracts and RIM easements, assist with easement processing and provide key essential technical assistance and project management services.

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

An expansion of wetland, prairie, and riparian habitat availability through this program may alleviate pressure on those species that are most sensitive to habitat changes occurring on the landscape. This proposal targets wetlands, prairies, and buffers, some of the most important habitats used by the Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). "A statewide look at the species-habitat relationships show that prairies, rivers, and wetlands are the three habitats used by the most SGCN. These are the habitats that have also experienced some of the greatest loss and degradation in the state." (Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild & Rare, p.30). MN CREP will help protect and restore these habitats.

Of the over 2,000 known wildlife species in Minnesota, 543 species, or approximately 27%, are at risk because they are rare, their populations are declining, or they face serious threats that may cause them to decline. Examples of SGCN in the MN CREP area include the Common Five-lined Skink (state status = species of special concern), Twospotted Skipper, Northern Pintail, American Black Duck, Grasshopper Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Dickcissel, and Western Grebe. In addition to the SGCN, the threatened or endangered species targeted in this proposal include the Dakota Skipper (state status = endangered; federal status = threatened), Poweshiek Skipper (state and federal status = endangered), and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee (federal status = endangered).

Diverse vegetation, access to a water resource, and protection from pesticides are important to Minnesota's native pollinator species. BWSR's native vegetation guidelines and pollinator initiative have outlined the RIM program's commitment to protecting native pollinators. Complexes and corridors targeted through MN CREP provide areas that are safe from pesticides and are natural passageways for pollinators. Targeted pollinator species include the Monarch Butterfly and solitary bee species including Leafcutter Bees, Mason Bees, and Yellow-faced Bees.

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

This proposal has the opportunity to leverage federal funding through CRP. CRP is USDA’s flagship conservation program, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2025.

Minnesota continues to see a loss of grasslands and CRP acres each year. This exodus is being driven by high land prices and increased pressure for alternative uses. CRP contracts continue to expire (275,672 acres with a contract expiring in Minnesota during federal fiscal years 2027 - 2030) and farming pressure leads to more habitat fragmentation and agricultural fields within the floodplain. It is critical to retain as many acres of habitat in the most important locations. A combination of permanent protection with RIM and re-enrollment of CRP, when possible, will reduce this impact from habitat loss.

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

Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, each site is considered on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, as well as the site-specific features.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to evaluate a site's importance as a corridor or extension to an existing habitat complex. Applications are awarded points based on the adjacency of permanently protected land, including publicly accessible land, or another RIM easement; with the highest number of points being awarded to applications creating the largest habitat complex size or with the most number of permanently protected land, including publicly accessible land, or another RIM easement within 1.5 miles. The lowest number of points are awarded to applications that do not create large habitat complexes are have little permanently protected land, including publicly accessible land, or another RIM easement within 1.5 miles.

As we implement this project, we will utilize similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM programs.

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

Long Range Duck Recovery Plan

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

**Metro / Urban**

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

**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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

**Southeast Forest**

Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

## Outcomes

### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Wetland and upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands, and restored shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

### Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

### Programs in the northern forest region:

Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

### Programs in prairie region:

Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

### Programs in southeast forest region:

Rivers, streams, and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

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

This funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

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

BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of RIM easements. BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry out oversight, monitoring and inspection of conservation easements. Easements are inspected every year for the first five years beginning the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs document findings and report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

## Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 - Ongoing | Stewardship Account | Inspections every year for the first five years; then every third year. | Corrective actions of any violations. | Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General's office. |
| 2027 - Ongoing | Landowner Responsibility | Maintain compliance with easements. | - | - |

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

Generally, RIM priority areas are focused on rural communities across the state due to the nature of the program and payment rates. Review of the Environmental Justice map produced by the MPCA shows RIM easement programs overlap with many identified environmental justice areas across the state, particularly those areas that are identified by lower than state median incomes. Lower annual income areas of the state benefit from RIM in several ways, including financial benefits for landowners through easement payments. The individual program may also require seeding and wetland restoration work by local contractors. The work by SWCD staff also includes outreach, monitoring and maintenance which helps maintain and grow rural jobs and economies.

# Activity Details

## Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

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

**Who will manage the easement?**
The State of Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will be the responsible party for monitoring and enforcing easements with assistance from the appropriate SWCD for monitoring.

**Who will be the easement holder?**
The State of Minnesota through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

**What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
6; the actual number will depend on the cost of easements.

## 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:**
In certain circumstances, wildlife food plots are an allowable use on RIM easements as part of an approved Conservation Plan. Annual or perennial food plots may be allowed at the owner's expense. Food plots must be maintained annually. If a food plot is discontinued, it must be immediately replanted to appropriate high-quality, permanent native vegetative cover and the associated establishment cost is the responsibility of the landowner(s). Food plot size and the number of food plots allowed are based on the size of the easement. Food plots will not exceed more than 10% of the easement area or will not exceed a maximum acreage depending on the size of the easement.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

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

**Describe the expected public use:**
RIM easements do not require that private land is open for public use; however, this question is also evaluated on public benefit and RIM easements do provide a significant public benefit; often expanding wildlife habitat near public lands; and do not limit the potential for the land to be open to the public through other programs. SWCD and other partner staff who work with landowners on RIM easements are also usually the staff who enroll landowners into the DNR Walk-In Access (WIA) program. The WIA program is available in 54 counties, all of which are eligible for RIM. Conversations about WIA between the SWCDs and interested landowners occur at the time the landowner submits an easement application. BWSR's Conservation Easement Application includes a question for a landowner to indicate if they are interested in enrolling in WIA if eligible.

RIM's statutory language requires restriction of building and agricultural activities on an easement. If RIM also required public access, the landowner would be retaining almost no private rights to the land and still paying property taxes. RIM easement land is still in private ownership and the landowner still pays property taxes and is still consistent with the statutory goals of the Outdoor Heritage Fund of protection and restoration of habitat. Minnesota Statute 97A.056 states ". . . the fund must be expended to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife." and "The council shall make recommendations . . . that directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and that prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie."

Criteria in RIM program scoresheets used to evaluate and prioritize parcels funded include proximity of the easement land to lands that are in public ownership and/or open to public hunting. Parcels immediately adjacent to public land or that would connect or expand larger existing habitat areas receive additional points in the scoring and ranking process than a parcel that does not provide that benefit. Wildlife do not follow property lines; therefore protected private lands adjacent to and near public lands create complexes of public and private land that provide high quality habitat supporting wildlife, including recreationally hunted species, allowing them to thrive on and off public lands. Protected private lands also add visual and noise buffers that allow users of public land to better enjoy their experiences.

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**

Yes

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

Though uncommon, new trails may be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (fire breaks, berm maintenance, forest stewardship) and are noted on the conservation plan. Narrow mowed trails for personal use are allowed for landowner access on RIM easements. Unauthorized trails are a violation of the easement.

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

Under the terms of the easement, a conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement and the conservation plan. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implements a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms and the conservation plan.

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**

Yes

Vegetative and wetland restoration is planned to occur and these restoration costs are included in the Easement Acquisition line of the budget table.

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

Yes

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Restorations completed | June 30, 2035 |
| Easements recorded | June 30, 2031 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 10/01/2035

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Totals

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $242,100 | - | - | $242,100 |
| Contracts | $30,000 | - | - | $30,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $3,119,800 | $3,119,800 | USDA - Farm Service Agency | $6,239,600 |
| Easement Stewardship | $60,000 | - | - | $60,000 |
| Travel | $6,200 | - | - | $6,200 |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | $71,300 | - | - | $71,300 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $8,900 | - | - | $8,900 |
| Supplies/Materials | $2,700 | - | - | $2,700 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$3,541,000** | **$3,119,800** | **-** | **$6,660,800** |

## Personnel

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Engineering | 0.13 | 4.0 | $81,900 | - | - | $81,900 |
| Easements | 0.28 | 4.0 | $160,200 | - | - | $160,200 |

**Amount of Request:** $3,541,000
**Amount of Leverage:** $3,119,800
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 88.11%
**DSS + Personnel:** $313,400
**As a % of the total request:** 8.85%
**Easement Stewardship:** $60,000
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 1.92%

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
A reduction in funding reduced outputs (acres/activities) almost proportionately.

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**
January 17, 2017, Governor Dayton signed a $500 million MN CREP Agreement with the USDA, which consists of approximately $350 million from USDA. Governor Walz extended the agreement on January 2, 2025. CRP soil rental rates on easements secured through MN CREP contribute to the amount of federal leverage achieved.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
The contracts line amount will be used for payments to SWCD staff for easement acquisition. Estimated restoration costs are included in the easements acquisition line.

## Easement Stewardship

**What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?**
6 easements at $10,000 per easement; the actual number will depend on the cost of easements. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship covers costs of the BWSR and local government unit staff time, travel costs, and other costs for easement monitoring, encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations, and legal enforcement.

## Travel

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?**
No

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging**
The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

**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?**
BWSR annually reviews and updates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

## Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**
Steel posts, hardware, and signs to mark the easement boundaries.

## Federal Funds

**Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**
Yes

**Are the funds confirmed?**
Yes

**Is Confirmation Document attached?**
Yes, on file

Other : The $500 million agreement utilizes $150 million in state funding leveraging $350 million in federal funding. Landowners enrolling into the CRP program receive annual contract payments, sign-up incentive payments, practice incentive payments, and receive cost-share for practice installation. The exact dollar amount is dependent on the CRP contract size (acres), enrollment type (new land or re-enrollment), and type of restoration needed.

# Output Tables

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 72 | 288 | - | - | 360 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **72** | **288** | **-** | **-** | **360** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $708,200 | $2,832,800 | - | - | $3,541,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$708,200** | **$2,832,800** | **-** | **-** | **$3,541,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 24 | 24 | 24 | 270 | 18 | 360 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **24** | **24** | **24** | **270** | **18** | **360** |

## 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 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $236,100 | $236,100 | $236,100 | $2,655,700 | $177,000 | $3,541,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$236,100** | **$236,100** | **$236,100** | **$2,655,700** | **$177,000** | **$3,541,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $9,836 | $9,836 | - | - |
| 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 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $9,837 | $9,837 | $9,837 | $9,835 | $9,833 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

3,727 feet

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

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

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
Through a combination of eligibility screening followed by a scoring and ranking process, this program evaluates each application on the potential to restore ecological functions and values; optimizing wildlife habitat benefits and providing other benefits including water quality. Each site is evaluated on its benefits to the surrounding landscape and any site-specific features that are important for permanent protection of habitat.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to indicate a site's usefulness as an extension of an existing habitat complex.

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)
**Organization:** Board of Water and Soil Resources
**Manager:** Dusty Van Thuyne

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $10,000,000
**Appropriated Amount:** $3,541,000
**Percentage:** 35.41%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $710,900 | - | $242,100 | - | 34.06% | - |
| Contracts | $85,000 | - | $30,000 | - | 35.29% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $8,810,200 | $8,810,200 | $3,119,800 | $3,119,800 | 35.41% | 35.41% |
| Easement Stewardship | $170,000 | - | $60,000 | - | 35.29% | - |
| Travel | $17,500 | - | $6,200 | - | 35.43% | - |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | $173,900 | - | $71,300 | - | 41.0% | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $25,000 | - | $8,900 | - | 35.6% | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $7,500 | - | $2,700 | - | 36.0% | - |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$10,000,000** | **$8,810,200** | **$3,541,000** | **$3,119,800** | **35.41%** | **35.41%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A 30% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 1,020 | 360 | 35.29% |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $10,000,000 | $3,541,000 | 35.41% |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 1,020 | 360 | 35.29% |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $10,000,000 | $3,541,000 | 35.41% |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Minnesota River Watershed Habitat Conservation Program Phase 2

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/19/2026

**Project Title:** Minnesota River Watershed Habitat Conservation Program Phase 2

**Funds Recommended:** $2,681,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Todd Rexine
**Title:** Conservation Director
**Organization:** Great River Greening
**Address:** 251 Starkey Street, Suite 2200
**City:** Saint Paul, MN 55107
**Email:** trexine@greatrivergreening.org
**Office Number:**
**Mobile Number:**
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** www.greatrivergreening.org

### Partners Contact

**Great River Greening:** Todd Rexine - trexine@greatrivergreening.org -

**Minnesota Land Trust:** Wayne Ostlie - wostlie@mnland.org - (651) 917-6292

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Chippewa, Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Big Stone, Redwood, Nicollet and Brown.

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

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Enhance

Protect in Easement

Restore

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Forest

Habitat

Prairie

Wetlands

# Narrative

## Abstract

Funding for conservation in the Minnesota River watershed has been applied unevenly to date, with some priorities receiving significant funding resulting in enormous conservation outcomes; others far less. The Minnesota River Watershed Habitat Conservation Program brings a holistic approach to conservation action within the watershed, targeting resources/actions where they are needed most – priorities insufficiently funded. Great River Greening and Minnesota Land Trust will target action within priority areas identified in Minnesota's Wildlife Action Network, emphasizing Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), protecting 169 acres through conservation easements and in fee, and restoring/enhancing 274 acres of priority habitat.

## Design and Scope of Work

The Minnesota River watershed covers 20% of the state's land area, stretching from the South Dakota and Iowa borders to the Twin Cities Metro area. Historically, the watershed traversed a great variety of ecosystems ranging from grasslands and prairie pothole regions to Big Woods and oak savanna. Scattered throughout these major systems were over three million acres of wetlands and lakes.

That historic natural landscape has greatly diminished. While prairie once covered one-third of Minnesota, only 1% remains today. Over 90% of wetlands have been drained, 80-85% of the historic Big Woods are lost, and rock outcrops in the region were targeted for mineral extraction. This loss of habitat has had profound impacts on Minnesota's native species. More than 140 SGCN are known or expected to occur within the watershed.

Protecting these habitats, improving the condition of what remains, and rebuilding connectivity between remnants is key for ensuring the long-term viability of these systems and Minnesota's SGCN. This is the goal of our program.

To date, significant investment through the Outdoor Heritage Fund has been delivered to portions of the Minnesota River watershed. The Metro Big Rivers partnership has achieved significant outcomes in the lower reaches of the Minnesota River near the Twin Cities. A variety of funded programs – led by Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Land Trust and others – have been successful in delivering conservation in the western portions of the watershed.

Building off momentum from Phase 1, program partners Great River Greening (GRG) and Minnesota Land Trust

(MLT) will bring their respective expertise to bear in elevating conservation impacts across the watershed with added focus in the central portion of the watershed where OHF and other sources of conservation investments have remained insufficient in comparison to needs. Greening will work with the MN DNR, county municipalities, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to undertake targeted habitat improvement projects. Greening will address the greatest present threats to protected lands within the watershed - cedar and invasive woody encroachment and lack of diversity to support SGCN. Greening will restore and enhance 274 acres on three state Wildlife Management Areas and one wildlife refuge across three counties.

The Land Trust will protect 169 acres of wetlands, rock outcrops, riparian forest, prairies, prairie streams and associated upland habitat through conservation easements and fee acquisition. Using MLT's uniquely flexible conservation easement, priority parcels within Minnesota's Wildlife Action Network or that build off prior conservation investments will be targeted. The Land Trust will use its market-based approach to conservation easements that incentivizes landowner contribution of easement value as leverage to funding through the OHF. MLT will collaborate with the DNR and other conservation partners to acquire lands in fee that add to existing habitat complexes. The goal with this program is to add needed capacity to the fee acquisition work already underway.

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

The Minnesota River Watershed Habitat Conservation Program directly benefits SGCN and other important game and non-game species by minimizing the potential threats to their habitat caused by agricultural practices, residential or commercial development, mining, and other land management activities. Habitat complexes targeted through this proposal will include prairies, wetlands, woodlands, and rock outcrops. Priority projects will include high- or outstanding-quality habitat as identified in Minnesota Biological Survey data or otherwise located within priority areas of Minnesota's Wildlife Action Network. We will seek to build off prior conservation investments, prioritizing projects located near other protected lands to create larger habitat complexes for the benefit of SGCN.

The vast majority of this landscape is in private ownership. For that reason, working with private landowners on land protection strategies is key to successful conservation in this region. We will work closely with conservation partners in the region to identify those habitat complexes where private land protection can make a significant contribution to existing conservation investments.

We will work to improve lower-quality habitats on federal, state, and county parcels, to the benefit of SGCN. Some examples:

- While protected, some public lands are in need of cedar or buckthorn control, and lack the diversity of vegetation needed for SGCNs, including skipper butterflies, grasshopper and Henslow's sparrow, western meadowlarks, and more.
- The Swan Lake wildlife management complex will receive invasive tree and shrub removal and understory enhancement of big woods habitat.
- Prairie-wetland specialist species are in rapid decline due to tree encroachment, invasive species, and habitat fragmentation. GRG will remove trees on 274 acres on Wildlife Management Areas in the Prairie Pothole Region.
- Acquisition of one parcel for addition to the Bergo WMA will permanently protect native prairie and add to the matrix of lands available to the public in the Minnesota River Valley.
- Acquisition of a conservation easement adjacent to the Picnic Rock WMA will expand on the public investment along the Blue Earth River by creating a large block of permanent habitat benefiting SGCN.

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

Land prices have skyrocketed in recent years, and along with that an increasing demand for agricultural land, mineral deposits, and housing sites. With natural habitat within the Minnesota River watershed already minimized through historic land uses, these demands are placing an inordinate pressure on those that remain. It is more important than ever to protect what remains of the prairies, wetlands, savannas, and forests in the Minnesota River watershed. A short window of opportunity exists to permanently protect previously unavailable parcels as current land ownership is transitioning from one generation to the next.

Insufficient financial investment into some priority areas for restoration and enhancement is also having an impact. Cedar coverage has increased by 200-300% in just ten years on many rock outcrops and prairies with costs to remove them correlating with the coverage; their expansion continues to reduce habitat quality for SGCNs.

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

This program is focused on procuring conservation easements and restoring prairie, woodland, rock outcrop, and wetland habitats within priority complexes of habitat as guided by Minnesota's State Wildlife Action Plan and Prairie Plan.

The Land Trust's protection work will build upon past conservation investments in the program area, expand the footprint of existing protected areas (WMAs, WPAs, etc.), facilitate the protection of habitat corridors, and reduce the potential for fragmentation of existing habitats by providing landowners with alternatives to land uses that degrade or destroy habitat. Specific parcels available for easement acquisition are evaluated relative to each other, with priorities given to those that are adjacent or in close proximity to existing protected lands (among other factors).

Many of the remaining native prairies, forests, and wetlands of the watershed where Greening will perform restoration and enhancement activities are concentrated around unique landforms and steep slopes in the river valleys such as on rock outcrops and ridges making these habitats priority protection and enhancement areas within an existing corridor. Fragmentation created by invasive and woody species like reed canary grass and red cedar further leads to an urgent need for enhancement and natural disturbance management to restore those corridors. Great River Greening also utilizes the Wildlife Action Network and Minnesota County Biological Survey data and proximity to known populations of SGCN to identify priorities for enhancement and restoration work. Within the watershed are 6 of the 36 Conservation Focus Areas identified by Minnesota's Wildlife Action Network in Minnesota, and 6 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) identified by Audubon. Activities on the prioritized sites will improve and expand high-value habitat.

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

## Outcomes

### Programs in prairie region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species ~ *Parcels are prioritized relative to their benefit to SGCN (among other factors). Success will be determined based on the acreage of lands protected, restored, and enhanced.*

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

This request is not supplanting or substituting for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

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

Land protected through MLT conservation easements will be sustained through state-of-the-art standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship 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. 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. MLT (as easement holder) will work with landowners on an ongoing basis to provide habitat plans and technical expertise to undertake enhancement and ongoing management of these properties.

Lands acquired in fee will be transferred to the DNR and will be maintained as public lands.

For Restoration and Enhancement (R/E) on protected land, site-specific resource management plans will be developed/adopted to guide effective long-term management. All land managers benefiting from R/E must commit to the long-term maintenance of these sites. A principal goal for each site is to elevate its ecological condition so that on-going management is financially feasible after a grant closes.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2031 and in perpetuity | MLT Long-Term Stewardship and Enforcement Fund | Annual monitoring of easements in perpetuity | Enforcement as necessary | - |
| 2031 and in perpetuity | MLT- OHF- DNR | MLT - Transfer to DNR DNR - Initial Development Plan | DNR - Monitoring and maintenance | DNR - Additional habitat restoration as needed |
| 2029 | GRG - OHF | Continue R/E and begin stewardship. Target actions to maintain habitat. | Restorative action to correct damage as needed | Evaluate progress and determine if additional actions are needed |
| 2028 | GRG - OHF | Initiate R/E | Continue R/E depending on appropriate methods and time of year | Continue R/E and begin stewardship as needed using appropriate methods and dependent on time of year |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2027 | GRG-OHF | Perform site evaluation and assessment in collaboration with DNR | Develop R/E plan for property. Begin monitoring | Initiate site preparation from R/E work. Continue monitoring |

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

Protecting, restoring, and enhancing diverse and resilient habitat benefits all Minnesotans. It keeps our air and water cleaner, mitigates the impacts of climate change, and conserves the biological diversity that belongs to everyone. Public land provides an opportunity for recreation and health to those who do not have access to private natural lands, whether that be for hunting, fishing, hiking, or other outdoor pursuits.

Great River Greening involves, engages, and seeks to benefit diverse communities through focused events that leverage Outdoor Heritage Funds in their programs. Our partners actively encourage residents who live near habitat restoration sites and create programs specifically for people from diverse backgrounds opening up opportunities such as GRG's Engaging a Diverse Population Program.

One of the MLT's core public values is a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have been engaged in a multi-year-long process to assess how the conservation community—and the Minnesota Land Trust in particular—can better address these issues. To date, we have demonstrated this commitment, when possible, given the funding parameters and our unique role in working with private landowners, including numerous projects to protect the camps and nature centers that serve a diversity of Minnesota youth and a long-term partnership with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa on wild rice restoration.

Going forward, GRG and MLT intend to build on this engagement using diversity, equity, and inclusion as a lens to seek out new partnerships, listening to those partners, and collaborating on actions that advance the goals of conserving the best of Minnesota's remaining habitats. We are eager to expand this important work in a way that more directly, and authentically, engages diverse communities and partners in an equitable and just manner.

# Activity Details

## Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

**Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought** prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
No

**Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:**
We will follow the county/township board notification processes as directed by current statutory language.

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

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

**Who will manage the easement?**
Minnesota Land Trust

**Who will be the easement holder?**
Minnesota Land Trust

**What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
2-3

**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

Refuge Lands

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. Food plots constitute a very small percent of our total land area protected through conservation easement. 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.

State Wildlife Management Areas are part of the State's Outdoor Recreation System established by State Statute 86A. Subdivision 8 of that statute defines the purpose of use of WMA's as, " -A state wildlife management area shall be established to protect those lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and to develop and manage these lands and waters for the production of wildlife, for public hunting, fishing, and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses."

To fulfill those goals, the DNR may use limited farming on a small percentage of WMA's (<1%) specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife, recreation or reduce crop depredation from neighboring properties in agriculture-dominated landscapes with limited winter food sources. Commonly planted crops include corn, soybeans, small grains and hay that can include alfalfa or a wildlife mix. Crops are chosen based on a particular wildlife or recreational need and follow crop rotations that adhere to soil health principles. Most food plots occupy a small portion of a particular tract and may include up to 5% of a particular parcel. Percentages are much lower considering the entire WMA system.

DNR does not have any plans to plant food plots on the parcels currently listed in this proposal. However, future management needs may change or additional parcels may be added later that may include food plots.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**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:**
No variation from state regulations.

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

State of MN

County

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

WMA

AMA

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
1-2

**Will the eased land be open for public use?**
No

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

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

Initial restoration activities will be conducted by the MN DNR through DNR IDP. The Land Trust will assess the R/E needs of each parcel protected through this appropriation. Should R/E needs exist, funding for those projects will be built into a forthcoming proposal.

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

**Explain how and when the restoration/enhancement work will be completed and identify the source of funding:**
The Land Trust will assess the R/E needs of each parcel protected through this appropriation. Should R/E needs exist, funding for those projects will be built into a forthcoming proposal.

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Restoration and enhancement completed | June 30, 2032 |
| Acquisitions in fee completed | June 30, 2031 |
| Conservation easements completed | June 30, 2031 |
| Finalize restoration and enhancement plans | June 30, 2027 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 10/01/2032

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $340,000 | $12,500 | Private | $352,500 |
| Contracts | $913,000 | - | - | $913,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $500,000 | - | - | $500,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $454,000 | $45,000 | -, Landowners | $499,000 |
| Easement Stewardship | $112,000 | - | - | $112,000 |
| Travel | $27,000 | - | - | $27,000 |
| Professional Services | $88,000 | - | - | $88,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $107,000 | $65,000 | Private | $172,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $15,000 | - | - | $15,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $6,000 | - | - | $6,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $98,000 | - | - | $98,000 |
| DNR IDP | $21,000 | - | - | $21,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$2,681,000** | **$122,500** | **-** | **$2,803,500** |

## Partner: Great River Greening

### *Totals*

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $165,000 | $12,500 | Private | $177,500 |
| Contracts | $899,000 | - | - | $899,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $21,000 | - | - | $21,000 |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | $59,000 | $65,000 | Private | $124,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $5,000 | - | - | $5,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $58,000 | - | - | $58,000 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,207,000** | **$77,500** | **-** | **$1,284,500** |

### *Personnel*

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GRG Personnel | 0.43 | 5.0 | $165,000 | $12,500 | Private | $177,500 |

## Partner: Minnesota Land Trust

### *Totals*

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $175,000 | - | - | $175,000 |
| Contracts | $14,000 | - | - | $14,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $500,000 | - | - | $500,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $454,000 | $45,000 | Landowners | $499,000 |
| Easement Stewardship | $112,000 | - | - | $112,000 |
| Travel | $6,000 | - | - | $6,000 |
| Professional Services | $88,000 | - | - | $88,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $48,000 | - | - | $48,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $15,000 | - | - | $15,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $1,000 | - | - | $1,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $40,000 | - | - | $40,000 |
| DNR IDP | $21,000 | - | - | $21,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,474,000** | **$45,000** | **-** | **$1,519,000** |

### *Personnel*

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MLT Staff, including CEO; Directors of Land Protection, Development & Communications, Finance & Operations, and Stewardship; General Counsel; and various Sr. Managers, Managers, and others | 0.4 | 4.0 | $175,000 | - | - | $175,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $2,681,000
**Amount of Leverage:** $122,500
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 4.57%
**DSS + Personnel:** $447,000
**As a % of the total request:** 16.67%
**Easement Stewardship:** $112,000
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 24.67%

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
MLT and GRG funding and project outputs were reduced by 72%, resulting in 2-3 proposed easement acquisitions

delivering ~ 99 acres and 1-2 fee acquisitions delivering ~ 70 acres. Landowning partners have assisted in identifying 274 acres across 4 parcels of highest priority R/E needs.

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**
MLT encourages landowners to fully or partially donate the value of conservation easements. The leverage amount is a conservative anticipated estimate we expect to see donated by landowners.

Greening has $77,500 of committed leverage. Ongoing discussions with various regional conservation groups is raising awareness and Greening anticipates additional leverage.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Acre scaling will be reduced moderately greater than proportional due to fixed costs and other factors. Activities will be curtailed, but greater than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program success.

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

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
Greening's contract line includes restoration/enhancement contracts by service providers.

MLT - Habitat management plan preparation, landowner outreach, etc.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Other : Phase 2 Environmental Assessments, Mapping, Mineral Reports, etc.

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**
1-2

## Easement Stewardship

**What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?**
2 -3 easements anticipated. $28,000 per easement for stewardship. Land protected through MLT conservation easements will be sustained through state-of-the-art standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship 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. Funding for these easement stewardship activities is included in the project budget.

## 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**
NA

**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?**
Greening - DSS rate has been approved by the DNR in September 2019, GRG's DSS rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget. A portion, not exceeding 50%, of these costs are requested from the grant and the balance is contributed as leverage.

MLT - In a process approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, MLT's DSS rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget. This is similar to the MLT's proposed federal indirect rate. MLT will apply this DNR-approved rate only to personnel expenses.

## Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**
Hand tools, saws, brush cutters, GPS devices, safety gear and other necessary equipment to complete restoration and enhancement activities.

# 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 | 12 | 34 | - | - | 46 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | 70 | 70 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | 99 | 99 |
| Enhance | - | 228 | - | - | 228 |
| **Total** | **12** | **262** | **-** | **169** | **443** |

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

| Type | Native Prairie (acres) |
|---|---|
| Restore | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - |
| Protect in Easement | 20 |
| Enhance | - |
| **Total** | **20** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | $50,000 | $100,000 | - | - | $150,000 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | $675,000 | $675,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | $799,000 | $799,000 |
| Enhance | - | $737,000 | $320,000 | - | $1,057,000 |
| **Total** | **$50,000** | **$837,000** | **$320,000** | **$1,474,000** | **$2,681,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | 46 | - | 46 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | 70 | - | 70 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | 99 | - | 99 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | 228 | - | 228 |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **443** | **-** | **443** |

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

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | $150,000 | - | $150,000 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | $675,000 | - | $675,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | $799,000 | - | $799,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | $1,057,000 | - | $1,057,000 |
| **Total** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **$2,681,000** | **-** | **$2,681,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | $4,166 | $2,941 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | $9,642 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | $8,070 |
| Enhance | - | $3,232 | - | - |

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

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | $3,260 | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | $9,642 | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | $8,070 | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | $4,635 | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

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

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
Great River Greening works with land owning entities (public and protected private) and interested stakeholders to identify parcels where there is a need for restoration or enhancement of lands and water resources. Parcels are selected using the following criteria: permanently protected status (WMA, AMA, SNA, Forestry, County Conservation, etc.), ecological and habitat value and potential (biodiversity, SGCN, size, and location), congruence with existing plans and priority areas, willing and committed landowners (demonstrated through leveraged match), and leveraging opportunities. The following table includes state WMA, county, and easement parcels.

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).

## Restore / Enhance Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GRG - Big Stone NWR | Big Stone | 12145201 | 24 | $320,000 | Yes | Locust removal, Siberian elm removal |
| GRG - Williams Nature Center | Blue Earth | 10827216 | 0 | $0 | Yes | 0 |
| GRG - Rosenau-Lambrecht WMA | Brown | 11031217 | 97 | $295,000 | Yes | prairie and wetland enhancement. woody invasive removal, RX burn and seeding |
| GRG - Vogel WMA | Brown | 10835203 | 56 | $146,000 | Yes | Tree removal on grassland and around wetlands |
| GRG - Lake Washington Regional Park | Le Sueur | 10926212 | 0 | $0 | Yes | - |
| GRG - Ney Nature Center | Le Sueur | 10926201 | 0 | $0 | Yes | 0 |
| GRG - Swan Lake WMA Complex | Nicollet | 10928228 | 97 | $446,000 | Yes | Tree, shrub, and invasives removal across 97 acres of forest/oak savanna including cedar and Siberian elm removal |
| GRG - Delhi WMA | Redwood | 11336225 | 0 | $0 | Yes | - |
| GRG - Two Rivers WMA | Redwood | 10938202 | 0 | $0 | Yes | - |

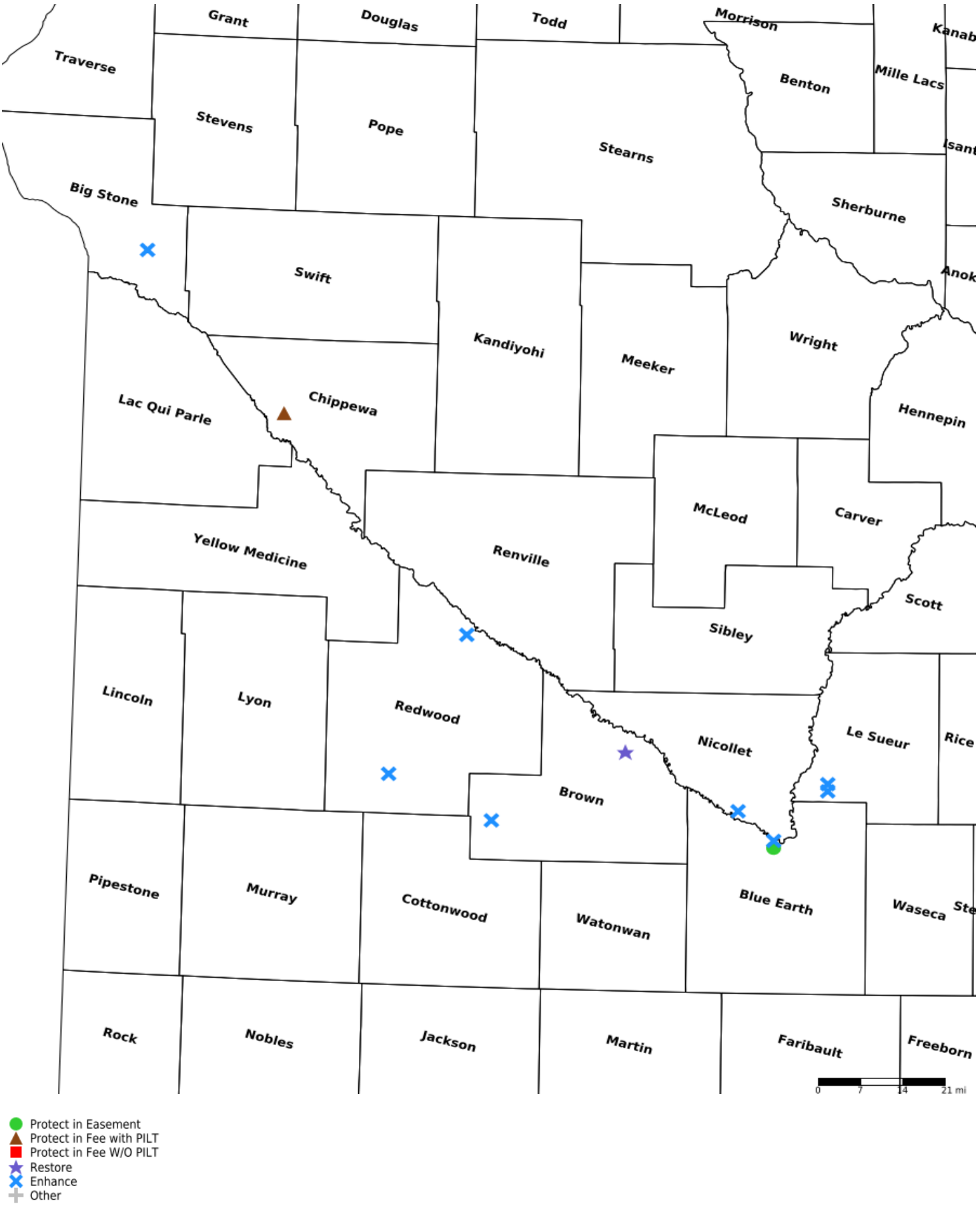
## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MLT - Bergo WMA | Chippewa | 11841226 | 58 | $200,000 | No |

## Easement Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MLT - Blue Earth River - Picnic Rock | Blue Earth | 10827221 | 155 | $1,300,000 | No |

## Parcel Map


Grant
Douglas
Todd
Morrison
Traverse
Stevens
Pope
Stearns
Benton
Mille Lacs
Big Stone
Swift
Kandiyohi
Meeker
Sherburne
Wright
Lac Qui Parle
Chippewa
Hennepin
McLeod
Carver
Yellow Medicine
Renville
Sibley
Scott
Lincoln
Lyon
Redwood
Nicollet
Le Sueur
Rice
Brown
Pipestone
Murray
Cottonwood
Watonwan
Blue Earth
Waseca
Rock
Nobles
Jackson
Martin
Faribault
Freeborn
0
7
14
21 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Minnesota River Watershed Habitat Conservation Program Phase 2

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - Minnesota River Watershed Habitat Conservation Program Phase 2
**Organization:** Great River Greening
**Manager:** Todd Rexine

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $9,680,000
**Appropriated Amount:** $2,681,000
**Percentage:** 27.7%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $879,000 | $12,500 | $340,000 | $12,500 | 38.68% | 100.0% |
| Contracts | $3,493,000 | - | $913,000 | - | 26.14% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $1,500,000 | - | $500,000 | - | 33.33% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $2,500,000 | $250,000 | $454,000 | $45,000 | 18.16% | 18.0% |
| Easement Stewardship | $224,000 | - | $112,000 | - | 50.0% | - |
| Travel | $84,000 | - | $27,000 | - | 32.14% | - |
| Professional Services | $366,000 | - | $88,000 | - | 24.04% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $275,000 | $170,000 | $107,000 | $65,000 | 38.91% | 38.24% |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $45,000 | - | $15,000 | - | 33.33% | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $16,000 | - | $6,000 | - | 37.5% | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $277,000 | - | $98,000 | - | 35.38% | - |
| DNR IDP | $21,000 | - | $21,000 | - | 100.0% | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$9,680,000** | **$432,500** | **$2,681,000** | **$122,500** | **27.7%** | **28.32%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Acre scaling will be reduced moderately greater than proportional due to fixed costs and other factors. Activities will be curtailed, but greater than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program success.

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

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Acre scaling will be moderately greater than proportional due to fixed costs and other factors. Activities will be curtailed, but greater than proportional, as some activities are fixed and necessary for program success.

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

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 60 | 46 | 76.67% |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 120 | 70 | 58.33% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 550 | 99 | 18.0% |
| Enhance | 1,031 | 228 | 22.11% |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | $256,000 | $150,000 | 58.59% |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $1,766,000 | $675,000 | 38.22% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $3,519,000 | $799,000 | 22.71% |
| Enhance | $4,139,000 | $1,057,000 | 25.54% |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 60 | 46 | 76.67% |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 120 | 70 | 58.33% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 550 | 99 | 18.0% |
| Enhance | 1,031 | 228 | 22.11% |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
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| Restore | $256,000 | $150,000 | 58.59% |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $1,766,000 | $675,000 | 38.22% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $3,519,000 | $799,000 | 22.71% |
| Enhance | $4,139,000 | $1,057,000 | 25.54% |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MN Prairie Recovery Program

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/19/2026

**Project Title:** MN Prairie Recovery Program

**Funds Recommended:** $3,791,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Liz Beery
**Title:** Associate Director of Grasslands - MN
**Organization:** The Nature Conservancy
**Address:** 1101 W River Parkway Suite 200
**City:** Minneapolis, MN 55415
**Email:** elizabeth.beery@tnc.org
**Office Number:**
**Mobile Number:** 551-497-3373
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** nature.org

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Jackson, Yellow Medicine, Wilkin, Traverse, Swift, Stevens, Stearns, Roseau, Rock, Red Lake, Pope, Polk, Pipestone, Pennington, Otter Tail, Norman, Nobles, Murray, Marshall, Mahnomen, Lyon, Lincoln, Lac qui Parle, Kittson, Kandiyohi, Grant, Douglas, Cottonwood, Clay, Chippewa, Big Stone and Becker.

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

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Protect in Fee

Restore

Enhance

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Wetlands

Prairie

# Narrative

## Abstract

The Nature Conservancy continues to advance the protection, restoration, and enhancement goals for increasingly rare prairie, grassland, and wetland habitats as described in the 2018 MN Prairie Conservation Plan and builds on the highly successful model established by prior MN Prairie Recovery Program Phases. In Phase 16, we will protect a total of 160 acres in Fee to be held by The Nature Conservancy or MNDNR, enhance 7,000 acres of permanently protected grasslands, and restore 75 acres of prairie and wetland habitat. Projects will contribute toward state climate goals by sequestering 75,000 metric tons CO2 equivalent.

## Design and Scope of Work

Protect - An estimated 160 acres of prairie, wetlands, grasslands, and savanna will be permanently protected through fee-title acquisition from willing sellers in priority prairie core/corridor landscapes as identified in the 2018 MN Prairie Conservation Plan. Acquired lands will be prioritized using LSOHC approved criteria that include: native prairie percentage on the parcel, proximity to permanently protected areas, habitat quality, species diversity, and public recreation suitability. Protected acres without PILT will be held by The Nature Conservancy subject to a recorded notice of funding restrictions. Protected acres with PILT will be transferred to MNDNR. Recent costs to acquire properties in fee-title are averaging around $5,000 per acre as land prices have been increasing over the past years.

Enhance - An estimated 7,000 acres of grassland/wetland complex will be enhanced on permanently protected lands, including lands purchased with OHF funds and held by the Nature Conservancy; MN DNR Management Units including Wildlife Management Areas, Scientific & Natural Areas, and Native Prairie Bank easements; and USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas, Refuges, and select habitat easements. The primary objectives of these enhancement activities are increasing native species diversity and improving critical wildlife habitat. A variety of techniques will be implemented to accomplish these objectives: prescribed fire; tree and woody species removal; invasive species control including mechanical, biological, and chemical control; over-seeding degraded grasslands with native seed; and conservation grazing, mowing, or haying. The work will be conducted through contracts with local vendors, Conservation Corps of MN & IA, Student Conservation Association crews, and Nature Conservancy permanent and seasonal staff. Prairie Recovery Biologists, stationed in five landscapes within the Prairie region, are responsible for the entire life cycle of enhancement/restoration projects including: identifying, prioritizing, and designing projects in collaboration with agency land managers; managing bidding, vendor selection, due diligence, and overseeing contracted work; and directing TNC seasonal staff & CCMI crews. Biologists also participate in and leading Prairie Plan Local Technical Teams to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of grassland conservation program delivery by multiple partners at the landscape level.

Restore - Approximately 75 acres of cropland and low diversity grassland will be restored to diverse local-ecotype grassland/wetland complexes. The majority of these prairie restorations include a combination of vendor purchased and locally harvested seed.

Results to Date - Through previous Phases of the MN Prairie Recovery Program, we protected 8,982 acres of prairies, wetlands, grasslands, and savannas, enhanced over 220,000 acres of permanently protected grasslands and restored 2,765 acres with diverse local ecotype native seed. All parcels protected contributed to the functional integrity of existing habitat complexes. Our enhancement projects have accelerated the implementation of prescribed fire, woody vegetation removal, conservation grazing infrastructure development, and treatment of invasive species. Recent costs for enhancement and restoration have averaged around $200 per acre. Contract costs have increased due to inflation and MN Prevailing Wage requirements.

Collectively these projects have captured approximately 1.8 million metric tons CO2 equivalent and will continue to hold that carbon in prairie soils.

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

Temperate grasslands are the most endangered and least protected habitat type on earth, and Minnesota's prairies are no exception. Activities identified in this proposal directly reflect implementation strategies identified in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan. Properties targeted for acquisition are identified and prioritized using MN Biological Survey Rare Element Occurrences and Biodiversity Significance. The geographies we work within, in addition to being Prairie Plan Core areas, reflect areas with the highest density and highest quality remaining prairie systems left in the state. By focusing our work in these particular landscapes we increase the functionality of the prairie/grassland/wetland complexes, including increasing water retention and surface water quality, improving breeding and nesting habitat and augmenting migratory corridors. Land protection and restoration efforts produce watershed benefits such as eliminating nutrient loads after rainfall, preventing pesticide runoff, and improving fisheries. While our work focuses on expanding and maintaining habitat functionality, a number of individual species and suites of SGCN will directly benefit from this program including:

Insects - Federally-endangered rusty patched bumble bees and Poweshiek skipperlings, federally-threatened Dakota skipper butterflies and declining regal fritillary butterflies. Hundreds of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators rely on prairie habitat and scientists have observed declines in these populations due to habitat fragmentation, habitat degradation, land use, pesticide drift, and many other anthropogenic factors.

Birds - Grassland dependent birds have experienced precipitous population decline across Minnesota and the northern Great Plains, largely due to habitat loss of breeding grounds. This program will provide permanently protected and enhanced habitat for a suite of grassland and wetland nesting birds, most notably the Meadowlark, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Grasshopper sparrow, Henslow's sparrow, Upland sandpiper, Black tern, Northern pintail, Greater Prairie-chicken, Sharp-tail grouse, and many others.

Reptiles - Hognose snake (primarily Lac qui Parle, Big Stone, Yellow Medicine Counties), 5-lined skink (Upper MN River Valley rock outcroppings).

Mammals - American badger (an indicator species requiring intact blocks of quality habitat), elk (for herd management in NW MN).

The expansion of habitat protection, prescribed fire, conservation grazing, invasive species control, woody removal, and high diversity prairie restorations are key strategies for supporting prairie species.

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

Approximately 1% of Minnesota's native prairies remain and of these only about half are currently protected. The rest remain at risk for conversion to other uses including row-crop production, gravel mining, alternative energy development, and urban development. It is imperative that we permanently protect remaining native prairie and grassland buffers to improve prairie connectivity and resilience. The MN Prairie Conservation Plan sets an ambitious goal of protecting all of our remaining native prairies and annually enhancing significant acres of grassland habitat over the next 15 years. This program represents one tool designed to help the conservation community meet these goals. This program greatly accelerates habitat improvement on public lands and TNC OHF tracts by bringing additional resources to bear: completing prairie restorations to support wildlife, enabling the treatment of rapidly expanding invasive species and woody encroachment, and developing infrastructure that facilitates future management using either conservation grazing or prescribed fire.

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

The program focuses activities on prairie cores, corridors, and complexes as described in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan. The Prairie Plan was developed using the best available information for identifying the highest quality/highest density remaining prairie and grassland complexes in the state and is periodically revisited for accuracy and relevance by a core team of State, Federal and NGO prairie biologists.
Individual parcels are prioritized using the attached criteria. Important considerations include % of native prairie on tract; adjacency to other native prairie; proximity to other protected lands; and uniqueness and diversity of species present. MN Biological Survey data and biodiversity rankings are key tools used to measure these criteria.

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

# Outcomes

## Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands ~ *Protection results will be measured against Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan goals for protected acres of native prairie and associated grassland for each geography.*
*Enhancement results will be measured using protocols developed for the multi-agency Grassland Monitoring Network.*

## Programs in prairie region:

Remnant native prairies and wetlands are perpetually protected and adequately buffered ~ *Protection results will be measured against Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan goals for protected acres of native prairie and associated grassland for each geography.*
*Enhancement results will be measured using protocols developed for the multi-agency Grassland Monitoring Network.*

## 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.

All protection, enhancement, and restoration work utilizing OHF allocations is supplemental to core work historically done by the Conservancy. OHF dollars allow us to increase the pace and scale of protection, restoration, and enhancement of native prairies and critical grasslands identified as priorities in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan.

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

Protection, restoration, and enhancement are all critical tools for the long-term viability of Minnesota's prairie/wetland systems. The prairie pothole landscape can only be sustained through the regular application of disturbance, including fire, grazing, and haying. A primary purpose of this proposal is to continue a highly successful collaborative and coordinated partnership that accelerates the use of these practices across multiple landscapes. In many cases, requested funds will develop infrastructure and enable completion of one-time large expenses such as woody species removal and fence installation for conservation grazing. Once the initial activities are completed we expect long-term maintenance costs to moderate. The Nature Conservancy will continue to seek mechanisms that derive revenue from grazing, haying, and seed production consistent with our conservation goals. All resulting income will be placed in a dedicated account for future property tax payments and management of properties acquired with Outdoor Heritage Funds. Our past efforts show that revenue generation is insufficient to pay for all associated expenses, therefore we plan to seek future funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund along with private contributions for long-term stewardship needs.

## Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annually | OHF/TNC private funds | Invasive search/treatment | - | - |
| As appropriate | OHF/TNC private funds, lease payments | Conservation grazing | - | - |
| Once every 4-5 years | OHF, TNC private funds | Prescribed Fire | - | - |

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

The MN Prairie Recovery landscapes are located near a number of cities with diverse communities (St. Cloud, Willmar, Fargo/Moorhead) in addition to many small rural communities with low and moderate income households. Diverse, low-moderate income communities often experience disproportionate access to nature on private lands. Open and accessible public lands and publicly accessible TNC lands are crucial resources for inspiring people from all backgrounds to become the next generation of hunters, anglers, nature photographers, writers, artists, nature enthusiasts, and biologists. Work proposed through the MN Prairie Recovery Program will add to the quantity and quality of public lands available to all Minnesotans.

In addition to the on-the-ground conservation benefits, the MN Prairie Recovery Program serves as a vehicle for training the next generation of conservation professionals through a robust seasonal employee hiring program. Our seasonal staff is largely comprised of young and aspiring conservationists looking to gain practical hands-on experience, either through short-term summer, or longer-term "1st job in the field" employment. Our recruitment practices are rooted in our Mission and guided by our Values, which includes a Commitment to Diversity and Respect for People, Communities, and Cultures. We know we will only achieve our Mission by hiring and engaging a diverse workforce that reflects the communities in which we work. Hiring Teams must follow TNC's inclusive hiring practices for all positions. Through these efforts, we have seen more diverse candidate pools resulting in a subsequent diversification of our workforce.

## Activity Details

### Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

**Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought** prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
No

**Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:**
We will follow the county/township board notification processes as directed by current statutory language.

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

**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

WPA

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

Refuge Lands

Other : TNC owned lands purchased with OHF dollars.

SNA

AMA

State Recreation Areas

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:**
Short-term use of agricultural crops is an accepted Best Management Practice for preparing sites for prairie restoration. For example: short-term use of soybeans or other commercial crops can be used for restorations in order to control weed seedbeds prior to prairie planting. In some cases this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seed bank. Neonicotinoid and/or fungicide treated seed will not be used. We do not expect agricultural crop use to exceed 3 years on any given OHF-acquired property. We do not anticipate establishing any food plots on parcels protected through this program. We continue to explore the viability of alternative restoration techniques to minimize the need to farm restoration sites.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**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:**
All tracts kept in TNC ownership and all WMA lands acquired will be open for hunting and fishing with no variations from State of Minnesota regulations.

SNAs acquired with this funding would be open to the most appropriate types of hunting for the particular parcels. Priority will be given to acquiring lands to be open to all hunting, trapping, and fishing.

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

NGO

State of MN

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

WMA

SNA

Other : Other: Addition to TNC Natural Areas Preserve Network

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**

We anticipate closing on 1-2 acquisitions with this appropriation. Final number of transactions will vary depending on size of individual acquisitions, physical location within the state, and corresponding land costs.

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**
Yes

> Yes, to the best of our ability. Additional restoration and enhancement costs may occur in future phases of the program (if allocated) to provide the best outcomes for wildlife habitat and effectively use available funds without holding appropriations open for extended periods of time.

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

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| 75 acres restored to native prairie/wetland | June 2032 |
| 2,500 acres enhanced | June 2032 |
| 2,500 acres enhanced | June 2031 |
| 2,000 acres enhanced | June 2030 |
| 40 acres protected in Fee w/ PILT | June 2031 |
| 40 acres protected in Fee w/out PILT | June 2031 |
| 40 acres protected in Fee w/ PILT | June 2030 |
| 40 acres protected in Fee w/out PILT | June 2030 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 10/01/2032

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Totals

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $794,000 | - | - | $794,000 |
| Contracts | $1,565,000 | - | - | $1,565,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $405,000 | - | - | $405,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $405,000 | $81,000 | TNC Private Funds | $486,000 |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $185,200 | - | - | $185,200 |
| Professional Services | $39,600 | - | - | $39,600 |
| Direct Support Services | $207,900 | $460,000 | TNC Private Funds | $667,900 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $15,000 | - | - | $15,000 |
| Capital Equipment | $22,000 | - | - | $22,000 |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $91,200 | - | - | $91,200 |
| Supplies/Materials | $47,100 | - | - | $47,100 |
| DNR IDP | $14,000 | - | - | $14,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$3,791,000** | **$541,000** | **-** | **$4,332,000** |

## Personnel

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contract Specialist | 0.25 | 1.0 | $16,900 | - | - | $16,900 |
| Program Management | 0.65 | 1.0 | $43,300 | - | - | $43,300 |
| Protection Specialist | 1.0 | 1.0 | $72,000 | - | - | $72,000 |
| Science Staff | 0.05 | 1.0 | $4,100 | - | - | $4,100 |
| Prairie Recovery Biologists | 4.0 | 1.0 | $309,900 | - | - | $309,900 |
| Habitat Crews | 5.0 | 1.0 | $347,800 | - | - | $347,800 |

## Capital Equipment

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| UTV | $22,000 | - | - | $22,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $3,791,000
**Amount of Leverage:** $541,000
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 14.27%
**DSS + Personnel:** $1,001,900
**As a % of the total request:** 26.43%
**Easement Stewardship:** -
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
We will deliver proportionally fewer acres across the Protection, Enhancement, and Restoration categories respectively.

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**
For Fee w/o PILT acquisitions, leverage represents private contributions equal to 20% of acquisition costs; the funds exist in an endowment to ensure long-term management and property tax obligations are met.
For DSS, leverage represents private contributions necessary to support program costs beyond OHF's 7.5% reimburseable rate.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
We would anticipate delivering proportionally fewer acres across the Protection, Enhancement, and Restoration categories respectively.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The Personnel and DSS budgets would be reduced proportionally.

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
The contracts line item is dedicated to enhancement and restoration work. Typical contractors include private vendors and Conservation Corps of MN/IA. This Accomplishment Plan includes adjustments to account for Prevailing Wage requirements which result in a higher cost/acre.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**
We anticipate 1-2 fee title acquisition transactions. Final number of transactions will vary depending on size of individual acquisition parcels, physical location within the state, and corresponding land costs.

## 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**
Traditional travel costs are approximately 20% of the travel line item.
The travel line item also includes long-term truck lease costs for the Prairie Recovery Biologists; short term vehicle lease/rental costs, primarily for Habitat Crews seasonally and for Project Coordinator on an infrequent basis; and long-term leases and utilities for Habitat Crew housing.
Includes travel to in-state trainings and meetings necessary to the implementation of the stated restoration and enhancement goals including prescribed fire training, R/E methods trainings, field tours to learn best management practices, and partnership coordination meetings such as Local Technical Team meetings.

**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?**
DSS is based on The Nature Conservancy's Federal Negotiated Rate (FNR) as proposed and approved by the US Dept. of Agriculture 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 40% 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, grant specialists, and information technology support, all of which contribute directly to the implementation of the program. The FNR is not applied to capital equipment over $50,000 or land acquisition. The remaining cost for DSS that is not reimbursable through OHF is listed as leverage in the budget table.

## Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**
Equipment and tools run the gamut of necessary field supplies for restoration and enhancement project implementation. Examples include small machines, chainsaws, brushsaws, herbicide application equipment, personal protective equipment for fire and other activities, fire tools and pumps, atvs, trailers, and fencing/watering materials for conservation grazing. The equipment line item also includes replacement parts and service for existing equipment to reduce the need to fully replace supplies, equipment, and tools purchased in earlier Prairie Recovery Program phases.

# 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 | 5 | 70 | - | - | 75 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 10 | 70 | - | - | 80 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 10 | 70 | - | - | 80 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | 500 | 6,500 | - | - | 7,000 |
| **Total** | **525** | **6,710** | **-** | **-** | **7,235** |

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

| Type | Native Prairie (acres) |
|---|---|
| Restore | 0 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 30 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 30 |
| Protect in Easement | - |
| Enhance | 2,500 |
| **Total** | **2,560** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | $20,000 | $120,000 | - | - | $140,000 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $50,000 | $425,000 | - | - | $475,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $50,000 | $425,000 | - | - | $475,000 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | $240,000 | $2,461,000 | - | - | $2,701,000 |
| **Total** | **$360,000** | **$3,431,000** | **-** | **-** | **$3,791,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | 35 | - | 40 | - | 75 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | 40 | - | 40 | - | 80 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | 40 | - | 40 | - | 80 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | 3,300 | - | 3,700 | - | 7,000 |
| **Total** | **-** | **3,415** | **-** | **3,820** | **-** | **7,235** |

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

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | $70,000 | - | $70,000 | - | $140,000 |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $235,000 | - | $240,000 | - | $475,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | $235,000 | - | $240,000 | - | $475,000 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | $1,260,000 | - | $1,441,000 | - | $2,701,000 |
| **Total** | **-** | **$1,800,000** | **-** | **$1,991,000** | **-** | **$3,791,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | $4,000 | $1,714 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $5,000 | $6,071 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $5,000 | $6,071 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | $480 | $378 | - | - |

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

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | $2,000 | - | $1,750 | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $5,875 | - | $6,000 | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | $5,875 | - | $6,000 | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | $381 | - | $389 | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

**Sign-up Criteria?**
No

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
Parcel selection for Protection projects with and without PILT obligations are prioritized according to the goals within the MN Prairie Conservation Plan and specifically using the attached criteria. Parcels that The Nature Conservancy will own and manage are located within core portfolio sites. Protection parcels are not exactly specified because we want to be able to act swiftly when opportunities with willing landowners in key landscapes arise. Maintaining anonymity of parcels is an important consideration for the organization in order to protect landowner privacy rights and to maintain the integrity of good faith negotiations. Specific protection parcels will be submitted to LSOHC for approval prior to pursuing acquisition through an Accomplishment Plan amendment change request.

Enhancement and Restoration parcels consist of permanently protected grasslands primarily on USFWS WPAs and Refuges; TNC OHF tracts; and MN DNR WMAs and SNAs. Project sites are selected for funding in close consultation with the partner responsible for ultimate management. This parcel list is illustrative of the areas in which our work will be conducted and the types of projects that we will implement. Specific restoration and enhancement parcels will be submitted to LSOHC for approval prior to implementation through an Accomplishment Plan amendment change request.

## Restore / Enhance Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NA | Becker | 13942227 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Becker | 13942227 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Becker | 14043225 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Becker | 13942227 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Big Stone | 12447210 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Big Stone | 12447210 | 150 | $75,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Big Stone | 12246224 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Big Stone | 12447210 | 650 | $50,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Chippewa | 11939228 | 650 | $50,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Chippewa | 11939228 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Chippewa | 11939228 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Chippewa | 11739213 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Clay | 14245204 | 150 | $75,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Clay | 14245204 | 550 | $40,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Clay | 14245204 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Clay | 14145208 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Cottonwood | 10535215 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Cottonwood | 10737220 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Douglas | 12739218 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Douglas | 13039212 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Grant | 13044218 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Grant | 13041204 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Jackson | 10137227 | 195 | $20,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Jackson | 10436206 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Kandiyohi | 12035210 | 150 | $75,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Kandiyohi | 12035210 | 500 | $30,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NA | Kandiyohi | 12035210 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Kandiyohi | 12233215 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Kittson | 16045206 | 375 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Kittson | 16246224 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Kittson | 16045206 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Kittson | 16045206 | 1,100 | $75,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Lac qui Parle | 11746224 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Lac qui Parle | 12044236 | 650 | $50,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Lac qui Parle | 12044236 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Lac qui Parle | 12044236 | 375 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Lincoln | 11345217 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Lincoln | 11244228 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Lincoln | 11345217 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Lincoln | 11345217 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Lyon | 10942211 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Lyon | 10942211 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Lyon | 10942211 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Lyon | 11243218 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Mahnomen | 14642215 | 375 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Mahnomen | 14642215 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Mahnomen | 14642215 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Mahnomen | 14641230 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Marshall | 14642208 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Marshall | 14642208 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Marshall | 14642208 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Marshall | 15746214 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Murray | 10740232 | 375 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Murray | 10740232 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Murray | 10740232 | 325 | $190,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Murray | 10841225 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Nobles | 10439225 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Nobles | 10442215 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Nobles | 10439225 | 325 | $175,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Nobles | 10439225 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Norman | 14644220 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Norman | 14644220 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Norman | 14645203 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Norman | 14644220 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Otter Tail | 13244210 | 400 | $20,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Otter Tail | 13244216 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Pennington | 15345230 | 400 | $20,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Pennington | 15445232 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Pipestone | 10744222 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Pipestone | 10744222 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Pipestone | 10744222 | 325 | $175,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Pipestone | 10846219 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Polk | 14844201 | 650 | $50,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Polk | 14844201 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Polk | 14844201 | 355 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Polk | 15244215 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Pope | 12336214 | 800 | $65,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Pope | 12336214 | 150 | $75,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Pope | 12336214 | 375 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |

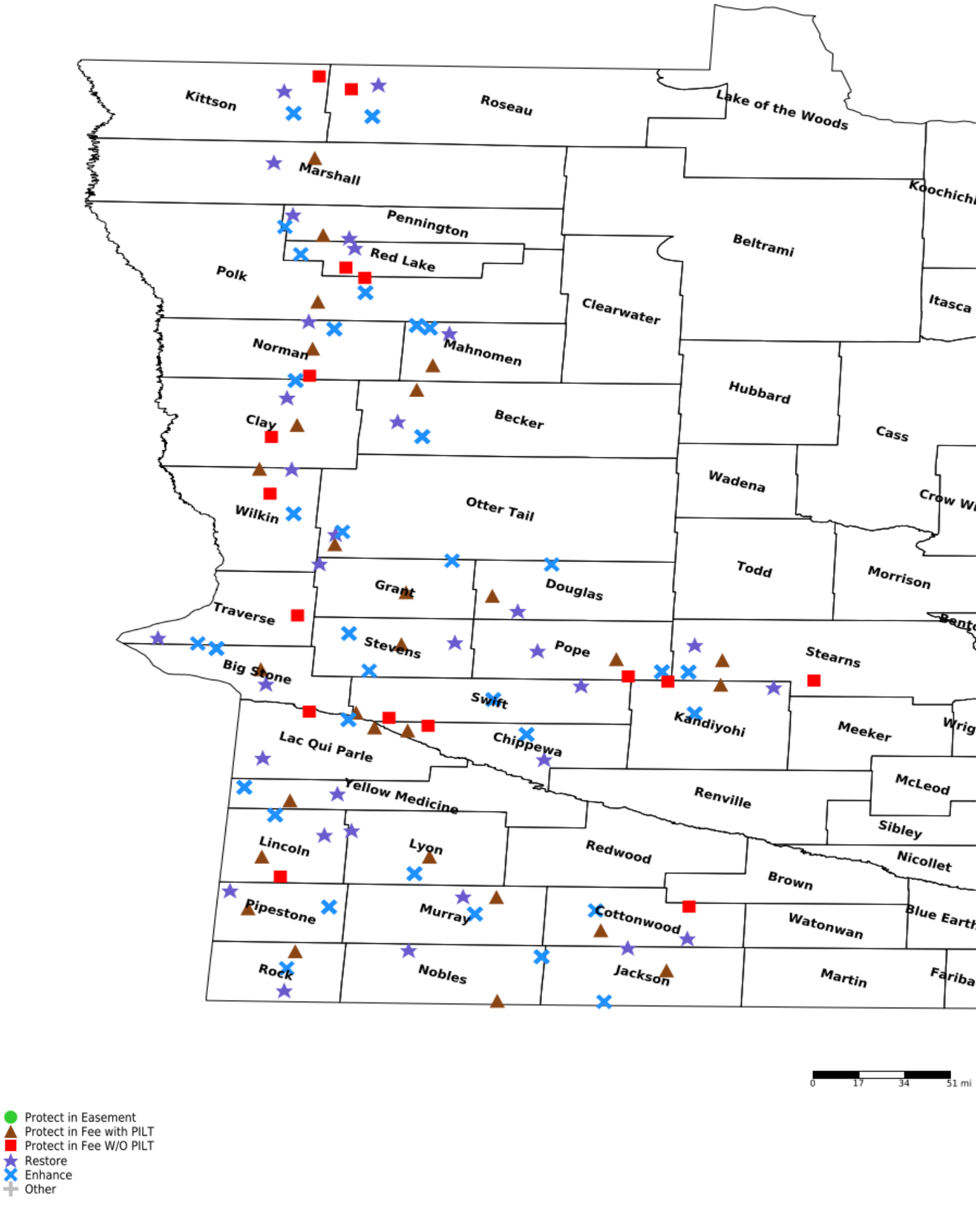
| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NA | Pope | 12439203 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Red Lake | 15144202 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Red Lake | 15145221 | 375 | $20,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Rock | 10345227 | 400 | $20,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Rock | 10145210 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Roseau | 16043207 | 1,100 | $75,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Roseau | 16043207 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Roseau | 16043207 | 375 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Roseau | 16243205 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Stearns | 12335216 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Stearns | 12335216 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Stearns | 12335216 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Stearns | 12535222 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Stevens | 12343221 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Stevens | 12544201 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Stevens | 12544201 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Stevens | 12541222 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Swift | 12140215 | 400 | $30,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Swift | 12140215 | 150 | $70,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Swift | 12140215 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Swift | 12238214 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Traverse | 12547232 | 400 | $20,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Traverse | 12548220 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Wilkin | 13345204 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Wilkin | 13345204 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Wilkin | 13345204 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Wilkin | 13645205 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |
| NA | Yellow Medicine | 11546221 | 400 | $25,000 | Yes | Prescribed Fire |
| NA | Yellow Medicine | 11546221 | 150 | $65,000 | Yes | Invasive Control |
| NA | Yellow Medicine | 11546221 | 325 | $195,000 | Yes | Woody Removal |
| NA | Yellow Medicine | 11544235 | 10 | $25,000 | Yes | Prairie Restoration |

## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TBD WMA Addition | Becker | 14242221 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Big Stone | 12346223 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Chippewa Prairie Addition | Chippewa | 11942212 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Lac qui Parle WMA Addition | Chippewa | 11942221 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Bluestem Prairie Addition | Clay | 13946235 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Clay | 13945204 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Red Rock Prairie Addition | Cottonwood | 10735210 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Cottonwood | 10637233 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Douglas | 12840216 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Grant | 12842208 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Jackson | 10335219 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Leif Mountains Addition | Kandiyohi | 12236201 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Kandiyohi | 12234208 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Wallace C Dayton Addition | Kittson | 16345223 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Lac qui Parle WMA Addition | Lac qui Parle | 11943215 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Plover Prairie Addition | Lac qui Parle | 12045213 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Hole in the Mountain Addition | Lincoln | 10945221 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Lincoln | 11046212 | 15 | $90,000 | No |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TBD WMA Addition | Lyon | 11041206 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Mahnomen | 14442235 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Marshall | 15745202 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Murray | 10840226 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Nobles | 10140225 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Norman | 14545235 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Twin Valley Prairie Addition | Norman | 14345226 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Otter Tail | 13144204 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Pennington | 15245212 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Pipestone | 10746227 | 15 | $90,000 | Yes |
| Mentor Prairie Addition | Polk | 14943206 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Polk | 14845226 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Ordway Prairie Addition | Pope | 12337225 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Pope | 12437222 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Marcoux Prairie Addition | Red Lake | 15044215 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Rock | 10445223 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Wallace C Dayton Addition | Roseau | 16244215 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Roscoe Prairie Addition | Stearns | 12332234 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Stearns | 12434220 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Stevens | 12542229 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Chippewa Prairie Addition | Swift | 12043225 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Lac qui Parle WMA Addition | Swift | 12043218 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Miller Prairie Addition | Traverse | 12745234 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Wilkin | 13646204 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| Western Prairie Addition | Wilkin | 13546226 | 15 | $90,000 | No |
| TBD WMA Addition | Yellow Medicine | 11445215 | 15 | $90,000 | No |

# Parcel Map


Kittson
Roseau
Lake of the Woods
Marshall
Koochichi
Pennington
Red Lake
Beltrami
Polk
Clearwater
Itasca
Norman
Mahnomen
Hubbard
Becker
Clay
Cass
Wadena
Wilkin
Otter Tail
Crow Wi
Todd
Morrison
Grant
Douglas
Traverse
Stevens
Pope
Stearns
Big Stone
Swift
Kandiyohi
Meeker
Wrig
Lac Qui Parle
Chippewa
McLeod
Yellow Medicine
Renville
Sibley
Lincoln
Lyon
Redwood
Nicollet
Brown
Pipestone
Murray
Cottonwood
Watonwan
Blue Earth
Rock
Nobles
Jackson
Martin
Fariba
0
17
34
51 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MN Prairie Recovery Program

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - MN Prairie Recovery Program
**Organization:** The Nature Conservancy
**Manager:** Liz Beery

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $14,040,000
**Appropriated Amount:** $3,791,000
**Percentage:** 27.0%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $2,935,300 | - | $794,000 | - | 27.05% | - |
| Contracts | $5,800,000 | - | $1,565,000 | - | 26.98% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $1,500,000 | - | $405,000 | - | 27.0% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $1,500,000 | $300,000 | $405,000 | $81,000 | 27.0% | 27.0% |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $237,000 | - | $185,200 | - | 78.14% | - |
| Professional Services | $147,400 | - | $39,600 | - | 26.87% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $770,200 | $1,150,000 | $207,900 | $460,000 | 26.99% | 40.0% |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $60,000 | - | $15,000 | - | 25.0% | - |
| Capital Equipment | $80,000 | - | $22,000 | - | 27.5% | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $698,400 | - | $91,200 | - | 13.06% | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $259,200 | - | $47,100 | - | 18.17% | - |
| DNR IDP | $52,500 | - | $14,000 | - | 26.67% | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$14,040,000** | **$1,450,000** | **$3,791,000** | **$541,000** | **27.0%** | **37.31%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
We would anticipate delivering proportionally fewer acres across the Protection, Enhancement, and Restoration categories respectively.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The Personnel and DSS budgets would be reduced proportionally.

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
We would anticipate delivering proportionally fewer acres across the Protection, Enhancement, and Restoration categories respectively.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
The Personnel and DSS budgets would be reduced proportionally.

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 300 | 75 | 25.0% |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 300 | 80 | 26.67% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 300 | 80 | 26.67% |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 26,250 | 7,000 | 26.67% |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | $500,000 | $140,000 | 28.0% |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $1,800,000 | $475,000 | 26.39% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $1,800,000 | $475,000 | 26.39% |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | $9,940,000 | $2,701,000 | 27.17% |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 300 | 75 | 25.0% |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 300 | 80 | 26.67% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 300 | 80 | 26.67% |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 26,250 | 7,000 | 26.67% |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | $500,000 | $140,000 | 28.0% |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $1,800,000 | $475,000 | 26.39% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $1,800,000 | $475,000 | 26.39% |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | $9,940,000 | $2,701,000 | 27.17% |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley - Phase XIII

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/08/2026

**Project Title:** Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley - Phase XIII

**Funds Recommended:** $3,100,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Sabin Adams
**Title:** MN State Coordinator
**Organization:** Pheasants Forever
**Address:** 1783 Buerkle Circle
**City:** St. Paul, MN 55110
**Email:** sadams@pheasantsforever.org
**Office Number:** 320-250-6317
**Mobile Number:** 3202506317
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** www.pheasantsforever.org

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Norman, Wilkin and Becker.

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

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

# Narrative

## Abstract

The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society in partnership with Pheasants Forever seek to protect and restore parcels within the Minnesota prairie chicken range. Focus will be on parcels that will specifically benefit prairie chickens, a species of special concern. Acquisitions will be located in the prairie or prairie/forest planning regions with an emphasis in the primary prairie chicken range. Parcels will be transferred to either the MN DNR as WMA's or the USFWS as WPA's and will be open to the public.

## Design and Scope of Work

Greater prairie chickens are a grassland dependent species found largely in the beach ridges of Glacial Lake Agassiz in western Minnesota. Grassland complexes composed of various successional stages (i.e. age of habitat resulting in changing plant community), and at least 320 acres in size are required by this species. Loss of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres and conversion from grassland to row crop agriculture are the two major factors reducing quality or the habitat available to prairie chickens. As a charismatic upland gamebird, prairie chickens serve as flagship or ambassador for other grassland dependent species. Protection and restoration of habitat for the benefit of prairie chickens will, in turn, positively benefit other species such as the chestnut-collared longspur and Dakota Skipper (both species listed by the MN DNR as endangered).

The focus of this partnership is to permanently protect native and restored prairies and associated wetland habitats to both increase and stabilize prairie chicken populations in western Minnesota. This is done by focusing on remnant prairies within core and corridor areas of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (MNPCP). Proposed tracts, with willing sellers who value wildlife habitat, are ranked based on the following criteria: 1) distance to the nearest prairie chicken lek, 2) location in or outside of a core area from the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (MPCP), 3) distance to the nearest public hunting land (WPA or WMA), 4) tract size, 5) current grassland type (native prairie, restored prairie, brome, or row crop), and 6) wetland density and predicted waterfowl breeding pairs (wetlands can provide important habitat for prairie chickens over their annual life cycle). Purchased tracts will be restored and/or enhanced to their fullest potential using grant funds. When appropriate, tracts will be transferred to the MN DNR as Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) or to the USFWS as Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) and will be responsible for future management.

This proposal delivers numerous stateside conservation plan goals by protecting, restoring, and enhancing grasslands and wetlands in strategic areas. The MPCP specifically states that an ecosystem measure of success is stable or growing prairie chicken populations in Minnesota. The MPCP is ideally suited for greater prairie chicken management with core areas containing large contiguous blocks of grassland and smaller grassland patches serving as corridors allowing birds to maintain populations outside the core areas as well as move across the landscape. Additional benefits of this work is protection and restoration of the extensive wetland systems encompassed by these tracts. Water storage sequestering and storing carbon, water quality, diversity of flora and fauna, and reducing erosion are among the many benefits of fully functional wetland systems.

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

PF actively engages in conservation priority discussions with state and government agencies, to determine what areas are the highest priority for adding permanently protected lands in the prairie, prairie/forest transition, and metro planning areas. High priority is given to parcels whose restoration and protection benefit rare, threatened, & endangered species. Often the only locations where many threatened and endangered species are found is on

existing habitat complexes. This proposal builds upon those complexes allowing for expansion and increased populations of those species.

When selecting projects for this proposal, PF uses the latest GIS data and works with DNR and USFWS staff to identify locations that benefit species of greatest conservation need. Additionally, species of greatest conservation need are considered and can influence restoration plans after the land is permanently protected. By increasing the amount, functionality, and productivity of grassland landscapes for these species, we aim to slow population decline.

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

Prairie chickens exhibit high sight fidelity, returning to the same leks (booming grounds) in the spring to perform courtship displays and nesting in the same areas on an annual basis. This characteristic makes prairie chickens extremely sensitive to habitat loss. The ability to purchase critical tracts as they become available is imperative to the success of this species as it is more difficult to establish breeding areas than it is to maintain them.

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

As this proposal is fully integrated into the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (MPCP), its focus is on acquisition and restoration in and around core habitat and corridors. Selection of tracts include proximity to known prairie chicken habitat, leks, and presence of other rare features identified by the MN County Biological Survey. Presence of prairie chickens are highly correlated with large expanses of grassland, which are most often large complexes made up of WMA's and WPA's. For this reason, many of the tracts selected build on these large complexes. In protecting and restoring large portions of habitat, we reduce both habitat fragmentation and reduce the cost of future management.

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

Grassland Conservation Plan for Prairie Grouse

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

## 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 ~ *Strategic parcels that increase the functionality of existing habitat will be acquired and restored to functioning wetlands with diverse upland prairie to serve as habitat for pollinators, resident and*

*migratory game and non game species. Lands will be protected to provide accelerated wildlife habitat and public access, monitored by Minnesota DNR of United States FWS. Protected and restored acres will be measured against goals outlined in the "Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years" and "Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan".*

### Programs in prairie region:

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Strategic parcels that increase the functionality of existing habitat will be acquired and restored to functioning wetlands with diverse upland prairie to serve as habitat for pollinators, resident and migratory game and non game species. Lands will be protected to provide accelerated wildlife habitat and public access, monitored by Minnesota DNR of United States FWS. Protected and restored acres will be measured against goals outlined in the "Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years" and "Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan".*

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

This proposal supplements past investments and is aimed at accelerating the protection and restoration of strategic parcels.

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

All lands will be enrolled into the WMA or WPA system and will be managed in perpetuity by the MNDNR or USFWS, respectively. All acquisitions will be restored and/or enhanced to as high quality as practicable, with the knowledge that quality and comprehensive restorations utilizing native species result in lower management costs. In addition, local PF chapter members and volunteers maintain significant interest in seeing the habitat and productivity of acquired parcels are high. MPCS, PF, MNDNR and USFWS will develop an ecological restoration and management plan for each parcel. Grant and partner dollars will be used for the initial site development and restoration/enhancement work.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post Transfer | State of MN/Federal | Monitoring | Maintainance | Habitat Management |

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

The goal of this program is to protect and restore wildlife habitat and make these areas accessible to all Minnesotans, regardless of cultural background or fiscal standing. Properties acquired under this program will be free and open to access by all. These properties can be recreated on by all levels of income from free hiking/wildlife watching to expensive hunting practices. Some acquisitions will be nearby areas with diverse or low-income communities. This program engages with everyone who wants to participate in public lands and the outdoors.

## Activity Details

### Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

**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:**
At minimum, we will notify local government in writing of the intent to acquire and donate lands to the state and follow up with questions prior to the acquisition. In cases where there is interest, we will also indicate our willingness to attend or ask to attend county or township meetings to communicate our interest in the projects and seek support.

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?**
No

**Describe the permanent protection and justification for additional protection:**
Because we are working within priority habitat areas, it is possible that parcels could have perpetual easements on a portion of them. If a parcel has a perpetual easement and is deemed a high priority by the partners, we will follow guidance established by the Outdoor Heritage Fund to proceed, or use non-state funding to acquire the protected portion of the property.

## 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:**
This proposal may include initial development plans or restoration plans to utilize farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is a standard practice across the Midwest to prepare the seedbed for native seed planting. In these restorations, PF's policy is to use non neonicotinoid treated seed and no herbicides other than glyphosate. On a small percentage of WMAs (less than 2.5%), DNR uses farming to provide a winter food source for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources. There are no immediate plans to use farming for winter food on any of the parcels in this proposal.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**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:**
No variation from State of MN regulations for WMA acquisitions. All WPA acquisitions will be open to the public taking of fish and game during the open season according to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, United States Code, title 16, section 668dd, et seq.

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

State of MN

Federal

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

WMA

WPA

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
2

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**
Yes

All acquired parcels will be restored with the contract and materials lines of the budget.

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

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Restoration complete | 6/30/2035 |
| Close | 1/1/2030 |
| Purchase agreements | 9/1/2029 |
| Contract appraisals ordered | 4/1/2029 |
| Re-evaluate tract priorities | 2/15/2029 |
| Purchase agreements | 2/1/2029 |
| Contract appraisals ordered | 9/1/2028 |
| Identify priority acquisitions | 7/1/2027 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 06/30/2035

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Totals

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $187,900 | - | - | $187,900 |
| Contracts | $493,000 | - | - | $493,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $1,053,200 | - | - | $1,053,200 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $1,056,400 | - | - | $1,056,400 |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $1,000 | - | - | $1,000 |
| Professional Services | $70,400 | - | - | $70,400 |
| Direct Support Services | $66,700 | - | - | $66,700 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $35,000 | - | - | $35,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $105,600 | - | - | $105,600 |
| DNR IDP | $30,800 | - | - | $30,800 |
| **Grand Total** | **$3,100,000** | **-** | **-** | **$3,100,000** |

## Personnel

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PF FIELD STAFF | 1.08 | 6.0 | $172,500 | - | - | $172,500 |
| PF GRANT STAFF | 0.1 | 6.0 | $15,400 | - | - | $15,400 |

**Amount of Request:** $3,100,000
**Amount of Leverage:** -
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 0.0%
**DSS + Personnel:** $254,600
**As a % of the total request:** 8.21%
**Easement Stewardship:** -
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
All line items were prorated down proportionally EXCEPT DNR land acquisition costs which were increase due to the cost of SRAs

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
If this project is reduced by 50% we would scale down all acres/activities and dollar amounts proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS will be scaled down proportionately.

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
We anticipate that all of the contract funding will be used for restoration, enhancement, and initial development of the protected acres and $42,000 for adjacent protected lands. This could include but is not limited to wetland/grassland restoration, tree removal, prescribed fire, building removal, posts, signs, and other development

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Other : Acquisition Contractors hired by PF to obtain necessary documentation.

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**
With the proposed budget, we anticipate approximately 2 fee title acquisition transactions

## Travel

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?**
No

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

**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?**

PF utilizes the Total Modified Direct Cost method. This methodology is annually approved by the U.S. Department of Interior's National Business Center as the basis for the organization's Indirect Cost Rate agreement. PF's allowable direct support services cost is 15%. In this proposal, PF has discounted its rate to 7.5% of the sum of personnel, contracts, professional services, and
travel. We are donating the difference in-kind.

## Federal Funds

**Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**

Yes

**Are the funds confirmed?**

No

**What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds?**

7/1/2028

# Output Tables

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | 176 | - | - | 176 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | 176 | - | - | 176 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **352** | **-** | **-** | **352** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $1,550,000 | - | - | $1,550,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | $1,550,000 | - | - | $1,550,000 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **$3,100,000** | **-** | **-** | **$3,100,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | 70 | - | 106 | - | 176 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | 70 | - | 106 | - | 176 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **140** | **-** | **212** | **-** | **352** |

## 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 | - | $620,000 | - | $930,000 | - | $1,550,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | $620,000 | - | $930,000 | - | $1,550,000 |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **$1,240,000** | **-** | **$1,860,000** | **-** | **$3,100,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $8,806 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | $8,806 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - |
| 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 | - | $8,857 | - | $8,773 | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | $8,857 | - | $8,773 | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

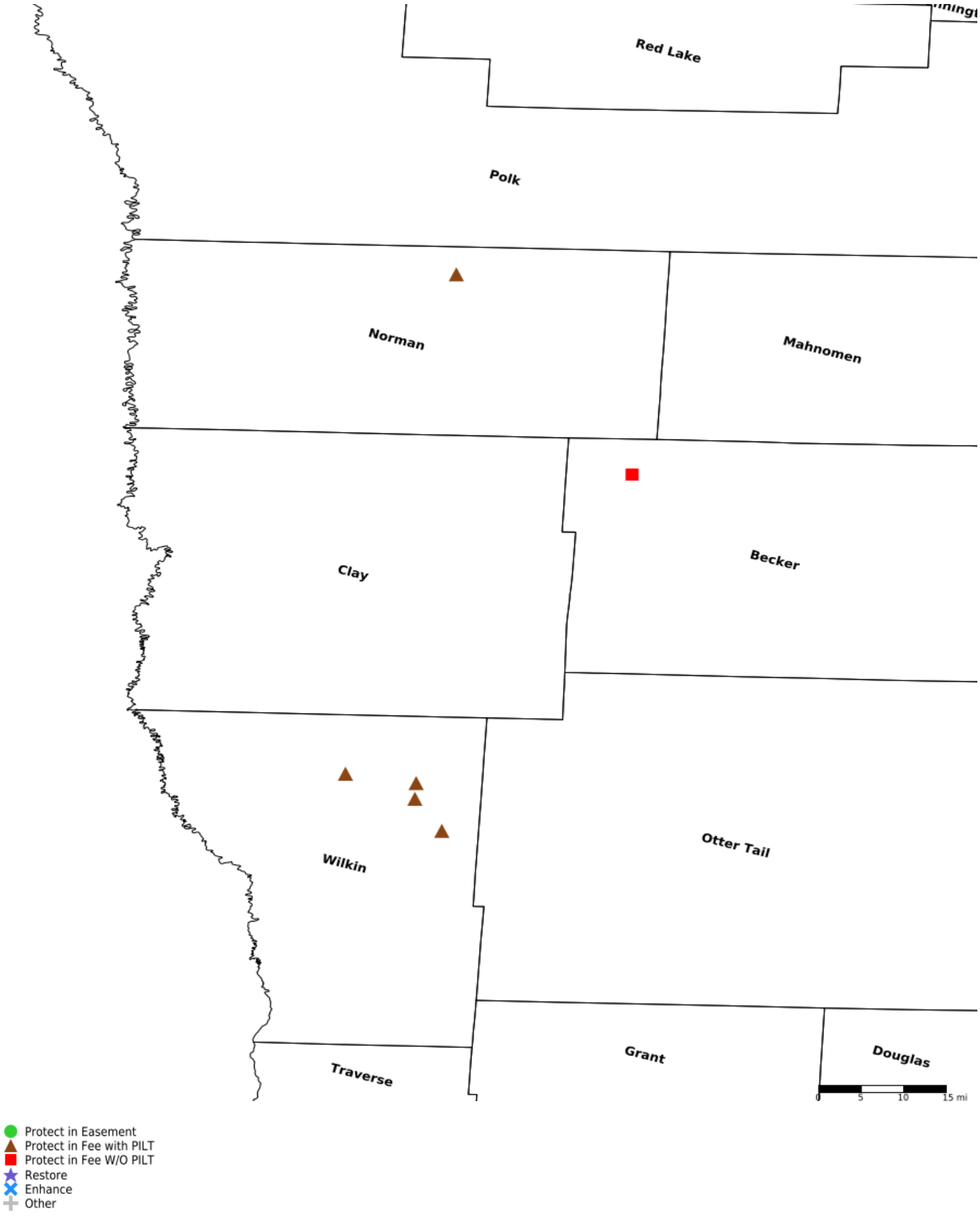
**Sign-up Criteria?**
No

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
Parcels are identified and strategically prioritized using the best science and decision support tools (e.g. Prairie Conservation Plan Maps) available. Preference is given to project sites that both help deliver the goals of other recognized conservation initiatives and that build habitat in critical prairie chicken areas. Data layers (i.e. MN Biological Survey, Natural Heritage Database, MN Wildlife Action Plan, Wellhead Protection Areas, Pheasant Action Plan, existing protected land, etc.) are used to help justify projects and focus areas as well as to inform decisions on top priorities for protection and restoration efforts.

## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hellicksen Prairie WPA Addn | Becker | 14243226 | 160 | $1,040,000 | No |
| Agassiz Olson WMA Addn | Norman | 14645222 | 160 | $1,040,000 | No |
| Akron WMA ADDN | Wilkin | 13445215 | 40 | $260,000 | No |
| Rothsay WMA Addn | Wilkin | 13546209 | 530 | $3,445,000 | No |
| Rothsay WMA Addn | Wilkin | 13545229 | 322 | $2,093,000 | No |
| Rothsay WMA Addn | Wilkin | 13545217 | 404 | $1,400,000 | No |

## Parcel Map


Red Lake
Polk
Norman
Mahnomen
Clay
Becker
Wilkin
Otter Tail
Traverse
Grant
Douglas
0
5
10
15 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley - Phase XIII

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley - Phase XIII
**Organization:** Pheasants Forever
**Manager:** Sabin Adams

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $10,564,400
**Appropriated Amount:** $3,100,000
**Percentage:** 29.34%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $640,500 | - | $187,900 | - | 29.34% | - |
| Contracts | $1,680,000 | - | $493,000 | - | 29.35% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $3,600,000 | - | $1,053,200 | - | 29.26% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | $3,600,000 | $750,000 | $1,056,400 | - | 29.34% | 0.0% |
| Easement Acquisition | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Stewardship | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Travel | $3,500 | - | $1,000 | - | 28.57% | - |
| Professional Services | $240,000 | - | $70,400 | - | 29.33% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $227,400 | $227,400 | $66,700 | - | 29.33% | 0.0% |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $108,000 | - | $35,000 | - | 32.41% | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $360,000 | - | $105,600 | - | 29.33% | - |
| DNR IDP | $105,000 | - | $30,800 | - | 29.33% | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$10,564,400** | **$977,400** | **$3,100,000** | **-** | **29.34%** | **0.0%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
If this project is reduced by 50% we would scale down all acres/activities and dollar amounts proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS will be scaled down proportionately.

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
If this project is reduced by 70% we would scale down all acres/activities and dollar amounts proportionately.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Personnel and DSS will be scaled down proportionately.

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 600 | 176 | 29.33% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 600 | 176 | 29.33% |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $5,282,200 | $1,550,000 | 29.34% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $5,282,200 | $1,550,000 | 29.34% |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 600 | 176 | 29.33% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 600 | 176 | 29.33% |
| Protect in Easement | 0 | - | - |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $5,282,200 | $1,550,000 | 29.34% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | $5,282,200 | $1,550,000 | 29.34% |
| Protect in Easement | - | - | - |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase XIII

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/19/2026

**Project Title:** RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase XIII

**Funds Recommended:** $1,458,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Dusty Van Thuyne
**Title:** Easement Programs Coordinator
**Organization:** Board of Water and Soil Resources
**Address:** 520 Lafayette Road North
**City:** St. Paul, MN 55155
**Email:** dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us
**Office Number:** 651-539-2573
**Mobile Number:**
**Fax Number:**
**Website:** www.bwsr.state.mn.us

### Location Information

**County Location(s):**

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

Forest / Prairie Transition

Southeast Forest

Prairie

Metro / Urban

Northern Forest

**Activity types:**

Protect in Easement

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

Wetlands

# Narrative

## Abstract

The Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Buffers program will restore and protect riparian and floodplain areas across the state to improve and enhance water quality and wildlife habitat, permanently protecting approximately 105 acres on 2 easements. The focus of this funding will be land with crop history within a mapped floodplain or a riparian area. Hydrology will be restored to the extent possible. This program will continue utilizing a science-based ranking and selection process and be implemented locally, working with Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff in targeted areas in the state.

## Design and Scope of Work

Riparian corridors containing healthy buffer and floodplain areas contribute to clean water and provide critical wildlife habitat and travel corridors. By focusing on the floodplain scale, we can create significantly better wildlife habitat while achieving multiple benefits, such as accommodating flooding issues. This partnership program between Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), Clean Water Fund (CWF), and potentially the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), would establish permanent riparian areas that provide both critical water quality improvements and improved habitat.

Criteria used to evaluate and prioritize parcels funded under this program include frequency of inundation or crop loss, proximity to lands open to public access, existing CRP contracts, proximity to other permanently protected habitat, prioritization of One Watershed, One Plans or other comprehensive water plans, type of water resource being buffered, proximity to threatened and endangered species, and overall size. A competitive application process for landowners will be used. The goal for this project will be funding from both OHF and CWF as well as United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), when possible, under existing or new CRP enrollment. Wider riparian areas provide long-term water quality treatment and increased habitat. Buffers that are established in proximity to other grasslands also function at a higher level within the landscape for grassland nesting birds and other wildlife.

The RIM Buffers program delivery will be supported by SWCDs and administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

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

Buffers are commonly viewed as simply a water quality practice, but buffers have positive impacts on wildlife due to their unique upland and riverine habitat interaction. This is especially true for expanded width buffers enrolled through this program. Not only are grasslands protected or restored, detrimental impacts to stream-reliant biota are reduced. Many species of amphibians, such as the Northern Cricket Frog (endangered) rely on aquatic habitat during the breeding season and then spend most of their lives in upland habitat. In southeastern MN, reptiles such

as the Blanding's Turtle (threatened) rely on meandering streams, rivers, and adjacent lands.

The Sedge Wren, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) most commonly associated with grassland habitat, is encountered in buffer areas. Bird use is influenced by buffer width with greater widths experiencing greater abundance and diversity of birds and grassland species. However, bird use is negatively associated by the amount of edge exposure. In an effort to limit edge exposure, sites that may serve as corridors or expand current complexes receive higher weight using this program's scoring and ranking process.

Diverse vegetation, access to a water resource, and protection from pesticides are important to Minnesota's native pollinator species. BWSR's native vegetation guidelines and pollinator initiative have outlined the RIM program's commitment to protecting native pollinators. Complexes and corridors targeted through RIM Buffers provide areas that are safe from pesticides and are natural passageways for pollinators. Targeted pollinator species include the Monarch Butterfly and solitary bee species including Leafcutter Bees, Mason Bees, and Yellow-faced Bees.

SGCN in the RIM Buffers area include the Common Five-lined Skink (state status = species of special concern), Two-spotted Skipper, Northern Pintail, American Black Duck, Grasshopper Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Dickcissel, and Western Grebe. In addition to the SGCN, the threatened or endangered species targeted in this proposal include the Dakota Skipper (state status = endangered; federal status = threatened), Poweshiek Skipper (state and federal status = endangered), and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee (federal status = endangered).

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

Minnesota continues to see a loss of grasslands and CRP acres each year. This exodus is being driven by high land prices and increased pressure for alternative uses. CRP contracts continue to expire (275,672 acres with a contract expiring in Minnesota during federal fiscal years 2027 - 2030) and farming pressure leads to more habitat fragmentation and agricultural fields within the floodplain. It is critical to retain as many acres of habitat in the most important locations. A combination of permanent protection with RIM and re-enrollment of CRP, when possible, will reduce this impact from habitat loss. Additionally, CRP is nearing the national acreage cap within the federal farm bill, which may limit CRP enrollment opportunities for landowners interested in restoring marginal agricultural lands. RIM Buffers provides another opportunity for landowners interested in restoring and permanently protecting these riparian acres should CRP enrollment become limited.

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

Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, each site is considered on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, as well as the site-specific features.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to evaluate a site's importance as a corridor or extension to an existing habitat complex. Applications are awarded points based on the adjacency of permanently protected land, including publicly accessible land, or another RIM easement; with the highest number of points being awarded to an application that has permanently protected land, including publicly accessible land, or another RIM easement on both ends of the land offered in an application. Zero points are awarded if permanently protected land, including publicly accessible land, or another RIM easement is not within a half mile on the same watercourse/water body as the land offered in an application.

As we implement this project, we will utilize similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM Buffers program.

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

Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

**Metro / Urban**

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

**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

**Prairie**

Protect expiring CRP lands

**Southeast Forest**

Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in area in recent decades

# Outcomes

## Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced aspen parklands and riparian areas ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

## Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

### Programs in the northern forest region:

Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

### Programs in prairie region:

Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

### Programs in southeast forest region:

Rivers, streams, and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these areas are restored.*

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

This funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

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

BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of RIM easements. BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry out oversight, monitoring and inspection of conservation easements. Easements are inspected every year for the first five years beginning the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs document findings and report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time, travel costs, and other costs for easement monitoring, encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations, and legal enforcement.

## Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2027-Ongoing | Landowner Responsibility | Maintain compliance with easement terms. | - | - |
| 2027-Ongoing | Stewardship Account | Inspections every year for the first five years; then every third year. | Corrective actions of any violations. | Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General's office. |

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

Generally, RIM priority areas are focused on rural communities across the state due to the nature of the program and payment rates. Review of the Environmental Justice map produced by the MPCA shows RIM easement programs overlap with many identified environmental justice areas across the state, particularly those areas that are identified by lower than state median incomes. Lower annual income areas of the state benefit from RIM in several ways, including financial benefits for landowners through easement payments. The individual program may also require seeding and wetland restoration work by local contractors. The work by SWCD staff also includes outreach, monitoring and maintenance which helps maintain and grow rural jobs and economies.

# Activity Details

## Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

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

**Who will manage the easement?**
The State of Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will be the responsible party for monitoring and enforcing easements with assistance from the appropriate SWCD for monitoring.

**Who will be the easement holder?**
The State of Minnesota through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

**What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
2; the actual number will depend on the cost of easements.

## 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:**
In certain circumstances, wildlife food plots are an allowable use on RIM easements as part of an approved Conservation Plan. Annual or perennial food plots may be allowed at the owner's expense. Food plots must be maintained annually. If a food plot is discontinued, it must be immediately replanted to appropriate high-quality, permanent native vegetative cover and the associated establishment cost is the responsibility

of the landowner(s). Food plot size and the number of food plots allowed are based on the size of the easement. Food plots will not exceed more than 10% of the easement area or will not exceed a maximum acreage depending on the size of the easement.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

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

**Describe the expected public use:**
RIM easements do not require that private land is open for public use; however, this question is also evaluated on public benefit and RIM easements do provide a significant public benefit; often expanding wildlife habitat near public lands; and do not limit the potential for the land to be open to the public through other programs. SWCD and other partner staff who work with landowners on RIM easements are also usually the staff who enroll landowners into the DNR Walk-In Access (WIA) program. The WIA program is available in 54 counties, all of which are eligible for RIM. Conversations about WIA between the SWCDs and interested landowners occur at the time the landowner submits an easement application. BWSR's Conservation Easement Application includes a question for a landowner to indicate if they are interested in enrolling in WIA if eligible.

RIM's statutory language requires restriction of building and agricultural activities on an easement. If RIM also required public access, the landowner would be retaining almost no private rights to the land and still paying property taxes. RIM easement land is still in private ownership and the landowner still pays property taxes and is still consistent with the statutory goals of the Outdoor Heritage Fund of protection and restoration of habitat. Minnesota Statute 97A.056 states ". . . the fund must be expended to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife." and "The council shall make recommendations . . . that directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and that prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie."

Criteria in RIM program scoresheets used to evaluate and prioritize parcels funded include proximity of the easement land to lands that are in public ownership and/or open to public hunting. Parcels immediately adjacent to public land or that would connect or expand larger existing habitat areas receive additional points in the scoring and ranking process than a parcel that does not provide that benefit. Wildlife do not follow property lines; therefore protected private lands adjacent to and near public lands create complexes of public and private land that provide high quality habitat supporting wildlife, including recreationally hunted species, allowing them to thrive on and off public lands. Protected private lands also add visual and noise buffers that allow users of public land to better enjoy their experiences.

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
Yes

**Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:**
Though uncommon, new trails may be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g., fire breaks, berm maintenance, forest stewardship) and are noted on the conservation

plan. Narrow mowed trails for personal use are allowed for landowner access on RIM easements. Unauthorized trails are a violation of the easement.

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**
Under the terms of the easement, a conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement and the conservation plan. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implements a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms and the conservation plan.

**Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?**
Yes

Vegetative restoration is planned to occur and these restoration costs are included in the Easement Acquisition line of the budget table.

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

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Activity 1 – easements recorded | June 30, 2031 |
| Activity 2 – restorations completed, and final report submitted | June 30, 2035 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 10/01/2035

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Totals

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $95,100 | - | - | $95,100 |
| Contracts | $7,500 | - | - | $7,500 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $1,301,600 | - | - | $1,301,600 |
| Easement Stewardship | $20,000 | - | - | $20,000 |
| Travel | $2,600 | - | - | $2,600 |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | $26,500 | - | - | $26,500 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $3,600 | - | - | $3,600 |
| Supplies/Materials | $1,100 | - | - | $1,100 |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$1,458,000** | **-** | **-** | **$1,458,000** |

## Personnel

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Engineering | 0.04 | 4.0 | $23,000 | - | - | $23,000 |
| Easements | 0.13 | 4.0 | $72,100 | - | - | $72,100 |

**Amount of Request:** $1,458,000
**Amount of Leverage:** -
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 0.0%
**DSS + Personnel:** $121,600
**As a % of the total request:** 8.34%
**Easement Stewardship:** $20,000
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 1.54%

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
A reduction in funding reduced outputs (acres/activities) almost proportionately.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
The contracts line is used for payments to SWCD staff for easement acquisition and technical assistance, as appropriate. Estimated restoration costs are included in the easement acquisition line.

## Easement Stewardship

**What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?**
2 easements at $10,000 per easement. The total stewardship amount will ultimately be dependent on the cost of easements and if the proposed easement number is reached. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

## Travel

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?**
No

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging**
The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

**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?**
BWSR annually reviews and updates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done and the program staff time involved.

## Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**
Steel posts and signs to mark the easement boundaries.

## 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 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 26 | 79 | - | - | 105 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **26** | **79** | **-** | **-** | **105** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $361,000 | $1,097,000 | - | - | $1,458,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$361,000** | **$1,097,000** | **-** | **-** | **$1,458,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 5 | 5 | 11 | 79 | 5 | 105 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **5** | **5** | **11** | **79** | **5** | **105** |

## 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 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $69,400 | $69,400 | $152,800 | $1,097,000 | $69,400 | $1,458,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$69,400** | **$69,400** | **$152,800** | **$1,097,000** | **$69,400** | **$1,458,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $13,884 | $13,886 | - | - |
| 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 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $13,880 | $13,880 | $13,890 | $13,886 | $13,880 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

1,539 feet

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

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

**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**
Through a combination of eligibility screening followed by a scoring and ranking process, the RIM Buffers program evaluates each application on the potential to restore ecological functions and values; optimizing wildlife habitat benefits and providing other benefits including water quality. Each site is evaluated on its benefits to the surrounding landscape and any site-specific features that are important for permanent protection of habitat.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to indicate a site's usefulness as a corridor or as an extension of an existing habitat complex.

BWSR will continue to utilize similar science-based considerations as have been historically used by the RIM Buffers Program.

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase XIII

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase XIII
**Organization:** Board of Water and Soil Resources
**Manager:** Dusty Van Thuyne

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $5,000,000
**Appropriated Amount:** $1,458,000
**Percentage:** 29.16%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $329,200 | - | $95,100 | - | 28.89% | - |
| Contracts | $22,500 | - | $7,500 | - | 33.33% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $4,477,300 | - | $1,301,600 | - | 29.07% | - |
| Easement Stewardship | $60,000 | - | $20,000 | - | 33.33% | - |
| Travel | $8,800 | - | $2,600 | - | 29.55% | - |
| Professional Services | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Direct Support Services | $85,900 | - | $26,500 | - | 30.85% | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $12,500 | - | $3,600 | - | 28.8% | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $3,800 | - | $1,100 | - | 28.95% | - |
| DNR IDP | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$5,000,000** | **-** | **$1,458,000** | **-** | **29.16%** | **-** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A 30% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 360 | 105 | 29.17% |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $5,000,000 | $1,458,000 | 29.16% |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 360 | 105 | 29.17% |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $5,000,000 | $1,458,000 | 29.16% |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Western Minnesota Prairie and Wetland Protection Program

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

## General Information

**Date:** 10/19/2026

**Project Title:** Western Minnesota Prairie and Wetland Protection Program

**Funds Recommended:** $2,591,000

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Wayne Ostlie
**Title:** Director of Land Protection
**Organization:** Minnesota Land Trust
**Address:** 2356 University Ave W Suite 240
**City:** Saint 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):** Lac qui Parle and Chippewa.

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

Prairie

Forest / Prairie Transition

Northern Forest

**Activity types:**

Protect in Easement

Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

Wetlands

Habitat

Forest

# Narrative

## Abstract

The Western Minnesota Prairie and Wetland Habitat Protection program focuses on advancing conservation of high priority prairie and wetland complexes within Minnesota's Prairie Pothole Region to benefit waterfowl and Species in Greatest Conservation Need. This program will consolidate the Land Trust's protection work under its prior Wetlands and Southwest Minnesota programs under a single program, bringing efficiency and flexibility in meeting landowner demand for permanent conservation in this region. This program will permanently protect 411 acres of high-quality habitat, 371 through conservation easements and 40 through fee acquisition, targeting lands in fee within scientifically prioritized habitat complexes.

## Design and Scope of Work

The plight of prairies and wetlands in western Minnesota is well-documented; less than 2% of native prairies remain, and in southwest Minnesota, 90% of wetlands have been lost. Habitat loss and degradation threaten wildlife populations and contribute to the decline of Species in Greatest Conservation Need that utilize the wetlands, shallow lakes, and prairies across the region. Since the inception of Minnesota's Prairie Plan in 2010, targeted land protection by a large number of conservation organizations and agencies has resulted in significant conservation gains across western Minnesota.

To better align our work in western Minnesota, the Accelerating Habitat Conservation in Southwest Minnesota and Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program have been consolidated in this single grant proposal. In close collaboration with partners across the region, this new proposal will focus solely on land protection, both in easement and in fee. This new proposal allows the Land Trust to respond to the level of demand throughout the region, ensuring that resources are available where and when they are needed. Through all previous phases of protection activity in this program area, the Land Trust has procured 55 conservation easements protecting 7,508 acres of habitat and 78 miles of shoreline.

The Land Trust will build on past success in protecting native prairie, Topeka shiner prairie streams, and building prairie complexes across western Minnesota with this Western Minnesota Prairie and Wetland Habitat Protection program, extending along the vast glacial moraine system in western Minnesota that form the eastern prairie pothole region. This prairie pothole country is the core of Minnesota's "duck factory" and is central to one of North America's most important flyways for migratory birds. Protecting prairie and wetland complexes will be the target across the program area but more specifically, north of the Minnesota River the focus will lie heavily on protecting wetland and shallow lake complexes, while south of the Minnesota River, protecting prairie waterways and remaining unprotected rock outcrops will be the targets.

Wetlands, shallow lakes, and their corresponding upland prairie habitat provide the essential backbone for the survival of waterfowl and other important wildlife species. In fact, more than 50% of Minnesota's Species in

Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) use wetlands during their life cycle. The Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, Minnesota's State Wildlife Action Plan, and other data sets/plans guide our land protection work, identifying important wetland and prairie complexes based on the nexus of high-quality habitat, existing protected areas, and restorable agricultural lands.

The Land Trust will employ its criteria-based ranking system and market-based approach to the acquisition of conservation easements. This strategic approach targets projects that help fill gaps in existing public ownership, are of the highest ecological value, and provide the greatest leverage to the state's funding investment. The Land Trust will seek donated easements whenever possible but may also fully purchase easements that help complete key complexes as necessary. Fee acquisitions will be undertaken in direct collaboration with DNR land acquisition staff

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

This program addresses LSOHC priorities by protecting shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, prairie streams, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for Minnesota's wildlife, especially its migratory waterfowl and associated species. Minnesota's wetlands are essential to our wildlife health and diversity. This program directly benefits SGCN and other important game and non-game wildlife species by minimizing the potential threats to their habitat caused by habitat conversion and detrimental land use practices.

Wetland and prairie habitat complexes will be targeted through the ranking system will include a mosaic of wetlands, grasslands and woodlands.

Priority projects will include high or outstanding habitat as identified in Minnesota Biological Survey data or that provide habitat for state- and federally listed species, like the Topeka shiner. Projects will also be located near other protected lands to help build larger habitat complexes comprised of both public and private lands. The vast majority of this landscape is in private ownership. For that reason, working with private owners on land protection strategies is key to successful conservation in this region. Finally, we will work closely with partners in the region to identify those habitat complexes where private land protection can make a significant contribution to existing conservation investments.

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

Although much conservation activity has taken place in this landscape for more than 10 years, we now have a unique opportunity to fill a conservation gap and increase landscape-level impacts to protect important wetland and grassland complexes. With an aging landowner population, high land prices placing pressure from conversion on remaining habitat, organizational momentum, and strong local partnerships, the time to amplify this important conservation niche across the region is now. To focus our work, we have completed an analysis to identify important wetland/grassland complexes in this landscape based on the nexus of high-quality habitat, existing protected areas and restorable agricultural lands. These complexes include a mosaic of wetland, prairie/grassland, and forest habitats, as well as agricultural land.

This proposal aims to capitalize on strong landowner interest we have secured from years of successful land protection activities and outreach, now at a point where landowner interest outweighs funding.

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

This program is focused on procuring conservation easements and acquiring lands in fee within priority complexes of wetlands and associated upland habitats, as guided by the State Wildlife Action Plan, Duck Plan and Prairie Plan. Specific parcels available for easement acquisition are evaluated relative to each other to identify priorities among the pool of applicants. This relative ranking is based on three primary ecological factors [1) amount of habitat on the parcel (size) and abundance of SGCN; 2) the quality or condition of habitat; and 3) the parcel's context relative to other natural habitats and protected areas] in addition to cost. The program serves to build upon past conservation investments in the program area, expand the footprint of existing protected areas (WMAs, WPAs, etc.), facilitate the protection of habitat corridors and reduce the potential for fragmentation of existing habitats.

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

**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

**Prairie**

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

# 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 190 acres of wetland and upland habitat complexes, and prairie in the forest-prairie transition region. Measure: Acres protected.*

## Programs in the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *This program will permanently protect 71 acres of wetland and upland habitat complexes in the northern forest region. Measure: Acres protected.*

## Programs in prairie region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *Remnant native prairies and wetlands are perpetually protected and adequately buffered ~ This program will permanently protect 150 acres of wetland and upland habitat complexes in the prairie region. Measure: Acres protected.*

### 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 procured by MLT through 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?

Land protected through conservation easements will be sustained through state-of-the-art standards and practices for conservation easement stewardship. Minnesota Land Trust 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. MLT (as easement holder) and USFWS (as easement holder and fee owner of respective properties) will work with landowners in an ongoing basis to provide habitat restoration plans, resources and technical expertise to undertake restoration, enhancement and ongoing management of these properties.

All fee-title lands will be transferred to the MN-DNR and enrolled into the WMA system to be managed perpetually by the MNDNR. All acquisitions will be restored and enhanced by the DNR as high quality as practicable, with knowledge that quality and comprehensive restorations utilizing native species result in lower management costs.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

| Year | Source of Funds | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2031 and in perpetuity | Outdoor Heritage Fund - LSOHC | MLT Long-Term Stewardship and Enforcement Fund | Annual monitoring of easements in perpetuity | Enforcement as necessary |

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

One of the MLT's core public values is a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have been engaged in a multi-year-long process to assess how the conservation community—and the Minnesota Land Trust in particular—can better address these issues. To date, we have demonstrated this commitment, when possible, given the funding parameters and our unique role in working with private landowners, including numerous projects to protect the camps and nature centers that serve a diversity of Minnesota youth and a long-term partnership with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa on wild rice restoration.

## Activity Details

### Requirements

**If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**
Yes

**Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought** prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
No

**Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:**
We will follow the county/township board notification processes as directed by current statutory language.

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

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

**Who will manage the easement?**

**Who will be the easement holder?**
Minnesota Land Trust

**What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
The Minnesota Land Trust anticipates accomplishing 5 to 7 easements with this appropriation.

## 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 Minnesota Land Trust's conservation easements is to protect and restore/enhance 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 target agricultural lands for restoration purposes.

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. In conservation easements MLT has completed since 2020, food plot acres account for less than 1% of the total acres 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.

State Wildlife Management Areas are part of the State's Outdoor Recreation System established by State Statute 86A. Subdivision 8 of that statute defines the purpose of use of WMA's as, "A state wildlife management area shall be established to protect those lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and to develop and manage these lands and waters for the production of wildlife, for public hunting, fishing, and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses."

To fulfill those goals, the DNR may use limited farming on a small percentage of WMA's (<1%) specifically

to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife, recreation or reduce crop depredation from neighboring properties in agriculture-dominated landscapes with limited winter food sources. Commonly planted crops include corn, soybeans, small grains and hay that can include alfalfa or a wildlife mix. Crops are chosen based on a particular wildlife or recreational need and follow crop rotations that adhere to soil health principles. Most food plots occupy a small portion of a particular tract and may include up to 5% of a particular parcel. Percentages are much lower considering the entire WMA system.

The DNR does not have any plans to plant food plots on the parcels currently listed in this proposal. However, future management needs may change or additional parcels may be added later that may include food plots.

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**
No

**Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?**
No

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

**Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:**
None.

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

State of MN

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

WMA

**What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?**
The Land Trust anticipates accomplishing 5 to 7 easements and 1 to 2 fee acquisitions with this appropriation (a total of 6 to 9 closed acquisitions).

**Will the eased land be open for public use?**
No

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?**
No

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

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

**Explain how and when the restoration/enhancement work will be completed and identify the source of funding:**

The Land Trust will assess the R/E needs of each parcel protected through this appropriation. Should R/E needs exist, funding for those projects will be built into a forthcoming proposal. Restoration/enhancement work on lands acquired in fee through this proposal will be undertaken by the DNR.

## Timeline

| Activity Name | Estimated Completion Date |
|---|---|
| Fee acquisitions completed | June 30, 2031 |
| Conservation easements completed | June 30, 2031 |

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 10/01/2031

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation

(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.

(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:

(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;

(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;

(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;

(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and

(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

# Budget

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

## Totals

| Item | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $250,000 | - | - | $250,000 |
| Contracts | $39,000 | - | - | $39,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $400,000 | - | - | $400,000 |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $1,356,000 | $134,000 | Landowner donation | $1,490,000 |
| Easement Stewardship | $196,000 | - | - | $196,000 |
| Travel | $15,000 | - | - | $15,000 |
| Professional Services | $223,000 | - | - | $223,000 |
| Direct Support Services | $68,000 | - | - | $68,000 |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $15,000 | - | - | $15,000 |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $2,000 | - | - | $2,000 |
| Supplies/Materials | $6,000 | - | - | $6,000 |
| DNR IDP | $21,000 | - | - | $21,000 |
| **Grand Total** | **$2,591,000** | **$134,000** | **-** | **$2,725,000** |

## Personnel

| Position | Annual FTE | Years Working | Funding Request | Leverage | Leverage Source | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff | 0.56 | 4.0 | $250,000 | - | - | $250,000 |

**Amount of Request:** $2,591,000
**Amount of Leverage:** $134,000
**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 5.17%
**DSS + Personnel:** $318,000
**As a % of the total request:** 12.27%
**Easement Stewardship:** $196,000
**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** 14.45%

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**
MLT funding and project outputs were reduced by 69%, resulting in 5 to 7 proposed easement acquisitions and 1 to 2 fee acquisitions. This should enable us to deliver ~ 371 easement acres and ~ 40 fee acres.

**Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:**
Anticipated leverage is from landowner donation of easement value.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**
Yes

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Acres and activities will be curtailed modestly (reduced 55-65%) from proportional reductions due to fixed costs and other factors.

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

## Personnel

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

## Contracts

**What is included in the contracts line?**
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 contractors, and through direct mailing, landowner events, social media, development of landowner databases, etc.

## Professional Services

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

Appraisals

Other : Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments, Mapping, Mineral Reports, etc.

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**
Up to 2 transactions.

## Easement Stewardship

**What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?**
Minnesota Land Trust's budget is based on the closing of 5 to 7 conservation easements, depending on project cost and size. The average cost per easement to fund the Minnesota Land Trust's perpetual monitoring and enforcement obligations is $28,000, although under extraordinary circumstances additional funds may be warranted. This figure is derived from MLT's detailed stewardship funding "cost analysis" which is consistent with Land Trust Accreditation standards. MLT shares periodic updates to this cost analysis with LSOHC staff.

## Travel

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

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging**
Land Trust staff occasionally rent vehicles for grant-related purposes, which 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?**
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.

## Other Equipment/Tools

**Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?**
Safety gear, GPS units, 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 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | 40 | - | - | 40 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 150 | 150 | 71 | - | 371 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **150** | **190** | **71** | **-** | **411** |

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

| Type | Native Prairie (acres) |
|---|---|
| Restore | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 20 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - |
| Protect in Easement | 20 |
| Enhance | - |
| **Total** | **40** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat | Total Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $581,000 | - | - | $581,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $812,000 | $813,000 | $385,000 | - | $2,010,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **$812,000** | **$1,394,000** | **$385,000** | **-** | **$2,591,000** |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Metro/Urban | Forest/Prairie | SE Forest | Prairie | N. Forest | Total Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | 40 | - | - | - | 40 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | 150 | - | 150 | 71 | 371 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **190** | **-** | **150** | **71** | **411** |

## 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 | - | $581,000 | - | - | - | $581,000 |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | $812,000 | - | $813,000 | $385,000 | $2,010,000 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **-** | **$1,393,000** | **-** | **$813,000** | **$385,000** | **$2,591,000** |

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

| Type | Wetland | Prairie | Forest | Habitat |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | - | $14,525 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $5,413 | $5,420 | $5,422 | - |
| 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 | - | $14,525 | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | - | $5,413 | - | $5,420 | $5,422 |
| Enhance | - | - | - | - | - |

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

# Parcels

## Parcel Information

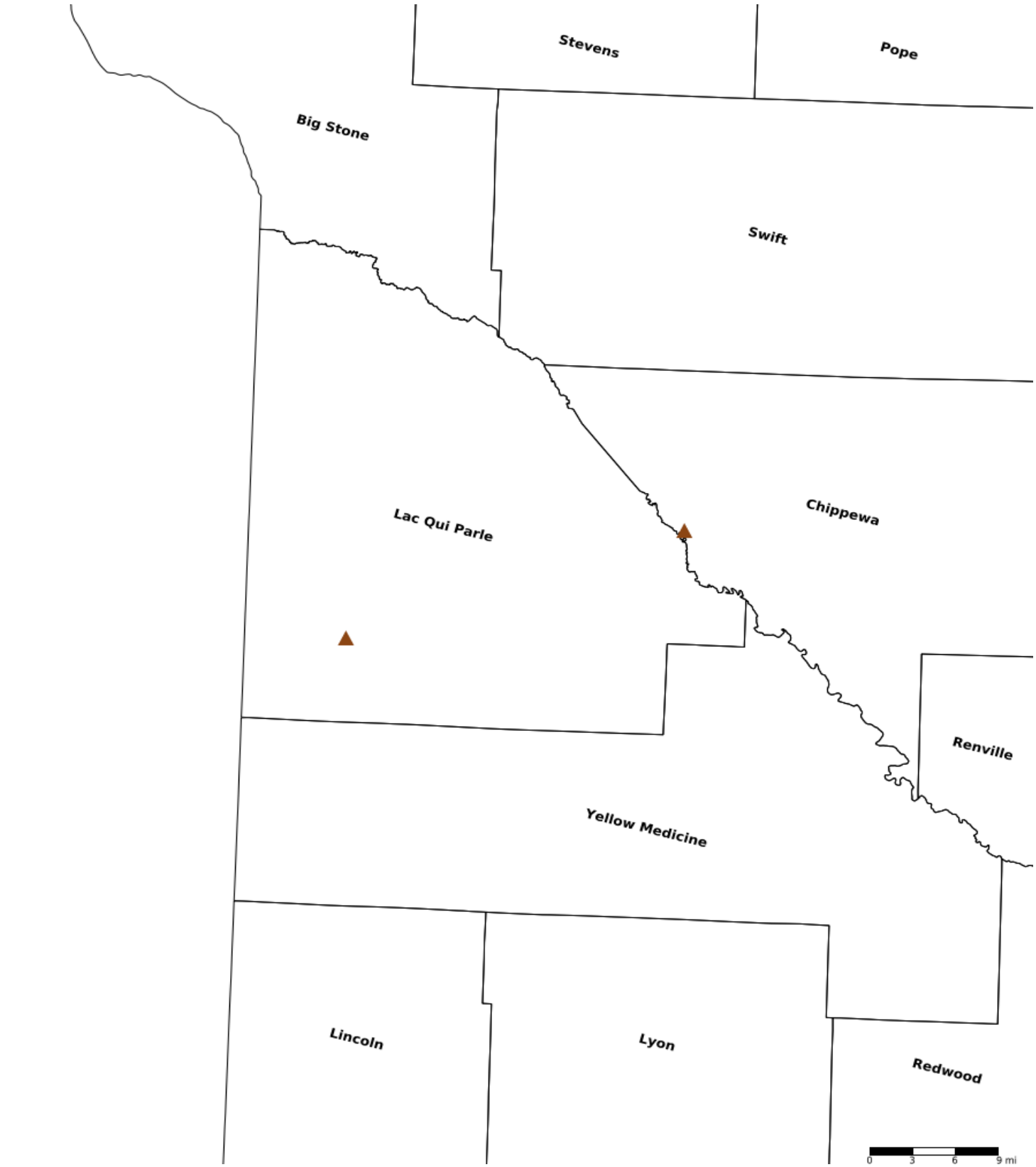
**Sign-up Criteria?**
Yes - Sign up criteria is attached

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

## Fee Parcels

| Name | County | TRDS | Acres | Est Cost | Existing Protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Minnesota River Bottom | Chippewa | 11841229 | 40 | $200,000 | No |
| Florida Creek WMA | Lac qui Parle | 11645205 | 40 | $200,000 | No |

## Parcel Map




Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Western Minnesota Prairie and Wetland Protection Program

Comparison Report

**Program Title:** ML 2027 - Western Minnesota Prairie and Wetland Protection Program
**Organization:** Minnesota Land Trust
**Manager:** Wayne Ostlie

## Budget

**Requested Amount:** $8,340,000
**Appropriated Amount:** $2,591,000
**Percentage:** 31.07%

| Item | Requested Proposal | Leverage Proposal | Appropriated AP | Leverage AP | Percent of Request | Percent of Leverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $450,000 | - | $250,000 | - | 55.56% | - |
| Contracts | $146,000 | - | $39,000 | - | 26.71% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/ PILT | $1,500,000 | - | $400,000 | - | 26.67% | - |
| Fee Acquisition w/o PILT | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easement Acquisition | $5,000,000 | $500,000 | $1,356,000 | $134,000 | 27.12% | 26.8% |
| Easement Stewardship | $448,000 | - | $196,000 | - | 43.75% | - |
| Travel | $23,000 | - | $15,000 | - | 65.22% | - |
| Professional Services | $572,000 | - | $223,000 | - | 38.99% | - |
| Direct Support Services | $122,000 | - | $68,000 | - | 55.74% | - |
| DNR Land Acquisition Costs | $45,000 | - | $15,000 | - | 33.33% | - |
| Capital Equipment | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Equipment/Tools | $2,000 | - | $2,000 | - | 100.0% | - |
| Supplies/Materials | $11,000 | - | $6,000 | - | 54.55% | - |
| DNR IDP | $21,000 | - | $21,000 | - | 100.0% | - |
| **Grand Total** | **$8,340,000** | **$500,000** | **$2,591,000** | **$134,000** | **31.07%** | **26.8%** |

## If the project received 70% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Acres and activities will be curtailed modestly (reduced 55-65%) from proportional reductions due to fixed costs and other factors.

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

## If the project received 50% of the requested funding

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**
Acres and activities will be curtailed modestly (reduced ~75-80%) from proportional reductions due to fixed costs and other factors.

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

# Output

## Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 120 | 40 | 33.33% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 1,400 | 371 | 26.5% |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $1,778,000 | $581,000 | 32.68% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $6,562,000 | $2,010,000 | 30.63% |
| Enhance | - | - | - |

## Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | 120 | 40 | 33.33% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | 0 | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | 1,400 | 371 | 26.5% |
| Enhance | 0 | - | - |

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

| Type | Total Proposed | Total in AP | Percentage of Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Restore | - | - | - |
| Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability | $1,778,000 | $581,000 | 32.68% |
| Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability | - | - | - |
| Protect in Easement | $6,562,000 | $2,010,000 | 30.63% |
| Enhance | - | - | - |