Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program - Phase XIX

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/08/2026

Project Title: Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program - Phase XIX

Funds Recommended: $4,500,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Sabin Adams
Title: MN State Coordinator
Organization: Pheasants Forever
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Location Information

County Location(s): Meeker, Becker, Brown, Kandiyohi and Douglas.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

Metro / Urban

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

In this phase of the Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area program, Pheasants Forever (PF) seeks to permanently protect and restore parcels of land as Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) in the prairie, prairie forest transition, and metro regions of Minnesota. Acquired parcels will be either adjacent to or between existing public lands to create larger complexes or corridors for a variety of wildlife species. These properties will have habitat restored to the greatest extent possible with regard to time and budget constraints.

Design and Scope of Work

Loss and degradation of grasslands and wetlands pose a severe threat to the future of Minnesota's flora and fauna. Over 90% of wetland and 99% of grassland habitats have been converted to other uses, primarily those surrounding agricultural and urban development. This habitat loss significantly reduces wildlife populations abilities to increase or remain stable in the face of multiple stressors including climate change, pressure from invasive species, etc. This proposal works to slow habitat decline by acquiring and restoring previously converted wetland and grassland habitats into WPA's that are open to public recreation. This program continually builds on prior phases and augments current efforts by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and their partners to increase waterfowl populations through the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program (SWAP). By improving wetland quality, quantity, and public access this program provides multiple benefits to Minnesotans.

Potential properties will be identified and evaluated based on landscape level planning tools such as the USFWS Duck Breeding Density Maps, MN DNR natural heritage data, and other state level conservation plans. Once purchased, all wetlands will be restored by either surface ditch "plugs," breaking sub-surface tile lines, or other best practices for wetland restoration. Restoration of grasslands will be completed using site-appropriate native grasses and forbs while following best management practices. Quality grassland restoration results typically take three to five years, allowing for one to two years of post-acquisition farming to allow residual herbicides to leave the soil. This timing allows us to address weed management issues, chemical carryover, and any other site-specific issues that may prevent the site from being restored to its fullest potential. Other restoration activities that may be needed include invasive tree removal, building site clean-up, prescribed fire, etc. as necessary to provide high-quality habitat. All restoration work will be completed to the highest possible standards with considerations towards budgets and grant timelines.

To address concerns related to county tax revenues due to acquiring public land, the UFWS and PF will notify counties prior to the acquisition of lands. Once acquired, the USFWS will make a one-time payment (Trust Fund payment) to the county where the property is located. In addition, the USFWS will make annual refuge revenue sharing payments for all fee lands within their respective counties.

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. Restoration of wetland and grassland complexes will provide habitat for a myriad of species including waterfowl, black terns, bobolinks, meadowlarks, ring-necked pheasants, pollinators, and monarchs. Other species of concern benefiting from this project include the greater prairie chicken, short-eared owl, marsh hawk, and yellow rails.

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. By the time funding for this proposed phase is available 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:

PF and the USFWS partner to identify and evaluate tracts to purchase. Tracts that are directly adjacent to existing complexes or contributing to corridors are ranked higher than stand-alone tracts. This phase will continue to evaluate tracts based on their ability to expand complexes and corridors as in the past, thus preventing future or reducing current habitat fragmentation.

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

Long Range Duck Recovery Plan

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Forest / Prairie Transition

Protect, enhance, and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

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:

Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need ~ *Acquired parcels that increase the functionality of existing habitat will be restored to functioning wetlands with diverse upland prairie to serve as habitat for resident and migratory waterfowl and SGCN. Lands will be transferred to the USFWS as a WPA to provide accelerated wildlife habitat and public access, monitored by the USFWS. Protected and restored acres will be measured against goals outlined in each WMD Comprehensive Plan which rolls up to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

Protected habitats will hold wetlands and shallow lakes open to public recreation and hunting ~ *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 resident and migratory waterfowl. Lands will be transferred to the USFWS as a WPA to provide accelerated wildlife habitat and public access, monitored by the USFWS. Protected and restored acres will be measured against goals outlined in each WMD Comprehensive Plan which rolls up to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.*

Programs in prairie region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species ~ *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 resident and migratory waterfowl. Lands will be transferred to the USFWS as a WPA to provide accelerated wildlife habitat and public access, monitored by the USFWS. Protected and restored acres will be measured against goals outlined in each WMD Comprehensive Plan which rolls up to the North American Waterfowl Management 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 focused on accelerating the protection and restoration of strategically selected parcels.

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

Pheasants Forever will transfer tracts purchased with grant funds to the USFWS to be enrolled into the Waterfowl Production Area program. The USFWS will hold these tracts in perpetuity and will be responsible for maintaining restoration and enhancement work that was completed using grant funds. USFWS have an annual budget and staff that are devoted to implementing management on WPA's and NWR's. Management strategies to maintain healthy grasslands and nesting habitat include prescribed fire (using their internal burn program), biological, mechanical, and chemical treatments to inhibit encroachment of woody species. In addition to the biological benefit of increasing complex size or expanding corridors, selecting acquisitions in areas with existing USFWS ownership reduced management and administrative costs as a function of proximity.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Post Transfer	Federal	Monitoring	Maintenance	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. 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 minimum we will notify local government in writing of the intent to acquire and donate lands to the USFWS 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 small number of parcels may have an existing federal or state easement on a portion of the tract which permanently protect wetlands or grasslands. In cases where parcels with these protections are deemed high-priority to our agency partners we will follow Outdoor Heritage Fund guidelines 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. There are no food plots on WPA acquisitions.

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 acquired lands 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?

Federal

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WPA

National Wildlife Refuge

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

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

The acquired parcels will be restored utilizing funds within 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
Identify priority acquisitions	7/1/2027
Complete restoration	6/30/2032
Close on tracts	1/1/2029
Contract appraisals ordered	4/1/2028
Re-evaluate tract priority	2/15/2028
Purchase agreements	2/1/2028
Contract appraisals ordered	9/1/2027

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.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$278,800	-	-	$278,800
Contracts	$636,000	-	-	$636,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$3,177,100	$1,261,800	PF/State/Federal	$4,438,900
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$1,900	-	-	$1,900
Professional Services	$170,300	-	-	$170,300
Direct Support Services	$92,100	$7,900	PF	$100,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$7,500	-	-	$7,500
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$136,300	-	-	$136,300
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$4,500,000**	**$1,269,700**	**-**	**$5,769,700**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
PF FIELD STAFF	1.85	5.0	$265,000	-	-	$265,000
PF GRANT STAFF	0.1	5.0	$13,800	-	-	$13,800

Amount of Request: $4,500,000
Amount of Leverage: $1,269,700
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 28.22%
DSS + Personnel: $370,900
As a % of the total request: 8.24%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
Every line is exactly prorated EXCEPT the DNR Land Acquisition Costs which are stuck at $7,500/ appraisal review.

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 that 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

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?
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
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 de minimis 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, supplies and materials 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	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	45	408	-	-	453
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**45**	**408**	**-**	**-**	**453**

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	$450,000	$4,050,000	-	-	$4,500,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$450,000**	**$4,050,000**	**-**	**-**	**$4,500,000**

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	45	136	-	272	-	453
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**45**	**136**	**-**	**272**	**-**	**453**

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	$450,000	$1,350,000	-	$2,700,000	-	$4,500,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$450,000**	**$1,350,000**	**-**	**$2,700,000**	**-**	**$4,500,000**

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	$10,000	$9,926	-	-
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	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$10,000	$9,926	-	$9,926	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Parcels

Parcel Information

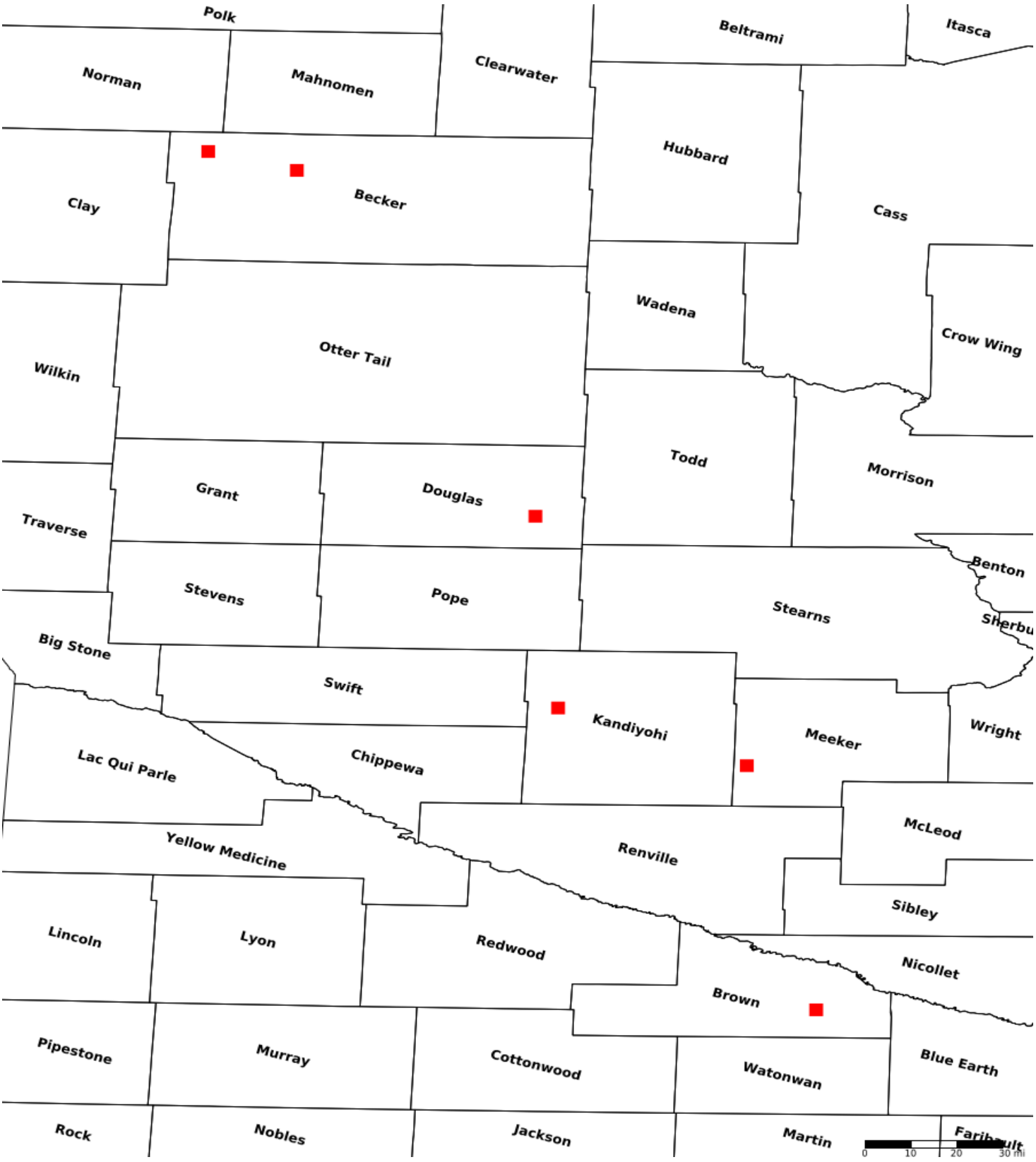
Sign-up Criteria?
No

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 Duck Breeding Density 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
Hellicksen Prairie WPA Addn	Becker	14243226	160	$960,000	No
Kruger WPA Addn	Becker	14141216	80	$350,000	No
Middle Minnesota River WPA Addn	Brown	10931234	114	$912,000	No
Peterson WPA Addn	Douglas	12836230	77	$616,000	No
Swan Lake WPA Addn	Kandiyohi	12036210	80	$640,000	No
Rosendale WPA Addn	Meeker	11832217	152	$1,500,000	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

Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program - Phase XIX

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program - Phase XIX
Organization: Pheasants Forever
Manager: Sabin Adams

Budget

Requested Amount: $14,264,800
Appropriated Amount: $4,500,000
Percentage: 31.55%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$883,800	-	$278,800	-	31.55%	-
Contracts	$2,016,000	-	$636,000	-	31.55%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$10,080,000	$4,000,000	$3,177,100	$1,261,800	31.52%	31.55%
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	$6,000	-	$1,900	-	31.67%	-
Professional Services	$540,000	-	$170,300	-	31.54%	-
Direct Support Services	$292,000	$292,000	$92,100	$7,900	31.54%	2.71%
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$15,000	-	$7,500	-	50.0%	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$432,000	-	$136,300	-	31.55%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$14,264,800**	**$4,292,000**	**$4,500,000**	**$1,269,700**	**31.55%**	**29.58%**

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	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	1,440	453	31.46%
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	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$14,264,800	$4,500,000	31.55%
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	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	1,440	453	31.46%
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	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$14,264,800	$4,500,000	31.55%
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Wetlands - Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/14/2026

Project Title: RIM Wetlands - Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota

Funds Recommended: $1,708,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: John Voz
Title: RIM Easement Program Coordinator
Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources
Address: 1732 North Tower Road
City: Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
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Office Number: 218-850-4283
Mobile Number: 218-850-4283
Fax Number:
Website: www.bwsr.state.mn.us

Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

Metro / Urban

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

RIM Wetlands will protect and restore approximately 113 acres of previously drained wetlands and adjacent native grasslands on approximately 3 easements across the State to restore wetlands and associated uplands for habitat and associated benefits. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will utilize the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCDs) to target, protect and restore high priority habitat. The program will utilize a ranking and selection process and be implemented locally by SWCD staff.

Design and Scope of Work

Wetlands are among the world's most productive environments with high biodiversity. Wetlands are home to many species of migratory and resident birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, and plants. They also benefit society by storing floodwaters, filtering pollutants, serving as a carbon sink, and providing recreation sites. Minnesota has lost an estimated 42% of its original 16 million acres of wetlands to drainage or fill activities. The loss of wetlands is most severe in the prairie regions of the state (approximately 90% loss). Nearly 75 percent of all wetlands are privately owned.

Up to one-half of North American bird species nest or feed in wetlands and at least one third of all threatened and endangered species are found in wetlands. According to the North American Bird Conservation Initiatives "State of the Birds 2025," grassland birds are seeing the sharpest decline (down 43% since 1970) and are under serious pressure as federal support declines. "Birds strengthen American communities, and more than 100 million Americans who watch birds contribute $279 billion to the nations economy every year." Moreover, wetlands are important nutrient sinks, store runoff that reduces flooding, sequester carbon, and provide other environmental and socioeconomic values.

The typical sites this program prioritizes and targets are privately drained and farmed wetlands and associated uplands that offer little habitat or ecological benefits in their current state. Through a combination of eligibility screening and a scoring and ranking process, the program evaluates and selects applications that provide the greatest habitat and environmental benefit after restoration and protection under a RIM easement.

RIM Wetlands is a local-state partnership delivered by SWCDs and BWSR. BWSR staff provide program oversight and manage the easement acquisition process and restoration design. Local staff promote RIM easements, assist with easement processing and provide technical assistance and project management services. RIM Wetlands will utilize funds to the greatest extent possible by leveraging federal funding through the Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP) when possible. 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 Minnesota. Landowners enroll in the federally funded CRP for 14-15 years as well as a state-funded perpetual conservation easement through RIM.

RIM Wetlands will also secure conservation easements on lands not eligible for MN CREP and/or during periods when MN CREP enrollment is paused.

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

Tomorrow's Habitat for the Rare and Wild (MN DNR) states "A statewide look at the species-habitat relationships show that prairies, rivers, and wetlands are the three habitats used by the most Species of Greatest Conservation Need." This proposal targets wetlands and prairies, two of the three most important habitats used by the Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). An expansion of wetland and prairie habitat through this program will alleviate pressure on those species that are most sensitive to habitat changes occurring on the landscape.

SGCN in the proposal areas include the Five-lined Skink, 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 Blanding's Turtle, Dakota Skipper, Poweshiek Skipperling, and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.

Prairie wetlands are particularly important for migratory waterfowl. Although the North American prairie pothole region contains only about 10% of the waterfowl nesting habitat on the continent, it produces 70% of all North American waterfowl. The extensive loss of Minnesota’s prairie and wetland habitat has led to the decline of many wildlife and plant species. The RIM Wetlands program continues to restore this habitat and protect it through perpetual easements.

Diverse vegetation, access to water, and protection from pesticides are important to Minnesota's native pollinator species. BWSR's native vegetation guidelines and pollinator initiative demonstrate a commitment to protecting native pollinators. Complexes and corridors targeted through RIM Wetlands provide natural passageways and habitat for pollinators. Targeted pollinator species include the Monarch Butterfly and several solitary bee species.

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

In 2026, 2027 & 2028, throughout Minnesota, 240,606 acres of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will expire in Minnesota. RIM Wetlands program scoring and ranking criteria prioritizes expiring CRP land as well as restoration and protection of wetlands in comprehensive water plans, including One Watershed One Plans. "We must, collectively, bend the curve of bird population declines by working together across the western hemisphere.” - National Audubon Society.

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

Science-based considerations historically used by the RIM Wetlands program will continue to be used. Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, the RIM Wetlands program evaluates each application on its potential to restore wetland/upland functions and values to optimize wildlife habitat and provide other benefits, including water quality. Each site is evaluated on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, ability to build upon existing corridors and complexes, and site-specific features that highlight the benefits of selection for permanent protection and habitat and associated environmental benefits.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to determine a site's importance as a corridor or as an extension to existing habitat complexes. Other examples of the science-based targeting used include proximity to threatened and endangered species, contributing watershed area, proximity to DNR Protected Waters, and the USFWS Habitat and Population Evaluation Team's (HAPET)

Wildlife Habitat Potential Model. The HAPET model is a consolidation of models representing an array of migratory birds that use the Minnesota Prairie Pothole Region for breeding or migration.

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, 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:

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. An increase in habitat acres is expected to increase the carrying capacity of both game and non-game wildlife species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as the areas are protected and/or restored. On-site inspections are performed every three years to ensure outcomes are maintained.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

Core areas protected with highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities, including native prairie, Big Woods, and oak savanna ~ *A summary of wetland acres and associated native grasslands 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 outcomes are maintained. An increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as complexes are restored.*

Programs in prairie region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *A summary of wetland acres and associated native grasslands 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 outcomes are maintained. An*

increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as complexes 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 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 includes costs of SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight and any enforcement necessary.

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	Inspection every year for the first 5 years; then every 3rd year	Corrective actions on any violations	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General 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 program also requires 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 Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources through the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) program

Who will be the easement holder?
The state of Minnesota through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
RIM Wetlands will protect and restore approximately 113 acres of previously drained wetlands and adjacent native grasslands on approximately 3 easements across the State to restore wetlands and associated uplands for habitat and associated benefits. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will utilize the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCDs) to target, protect and restore high priority habitat. The program will utilize a ranking and selection process and be implemented locally by SWCD staff.

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 to the public; however, this question is also evaluated on public benefit and RIM easements do provide a significant public benefit; often expand 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 all 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 the public. 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. Additionally, easement lands allow for an interim step before public ownership, likely making public purchase more affordable in the future.

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

Each parcel will be evaluated for restoration and/or enhancement potential. Opportunities to improve habitat quality will be pursued.

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 2 - Restorations complete, and final report submitted	June 30, 2035
Activity 1 - Easements recorded	June 30, 2031

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	$113,400	-	-	$113,400
Contracts	$12,600	-	-	$12,600
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$1,503,900	-	-	$1,503,900
Easement Stewardship	$30,000	-	-	$30,000
Travel	$3,000	-	-	$3,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$39,500	-	-	$39,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$4,300	-	-	$4,300
Supplies/Materials	$1,300	-	-	$1,300
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,708,000**	**-**	**-**	**$1,708,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Engineering	0.04	4.0	$27,500	-	-	$27,500
Easements	0.15	4.0	$85,900	-	-	$85,900

Amount of Request: $1,708,000
Amount of Leverage: -
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%
DSS + Personnel: $152,900
As a % of the total request: 8.95%
Easement Stewardship: $30,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 1.99%

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
A reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

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?
3 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 easement boundaries.

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?

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	28	85	-	-	113
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**28**	**85**	**-**	**-**	**113**

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	$427,000	$1,281,000	-	-	$1,708,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$427,000**	**$1,281,000**	**-**	**-**	**$1,708,000**

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	6	22	-	85	-	113
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**6**	**22**	**-**	**85**	**-**	**113**

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	$64,800	$362,200	-	$1,281,000	-	$1,708,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$64,800**	**$362,200**	**-**	**$1,281,000**	**-**	**$1,708,000**

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	$15,250	$15,070	-	-
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	$10,800	$16,463	-	$15,070	-
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:
Through a combination of targeted outreach and eligibility screening followed by a scoring and ranking process, the RIM Wetlands program evaluates each application on the potential to restore wetland/upland 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, ability to build upon existing public lands, corridors and complexes, and site-specific features that highlight the benefits of permanent protection and 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 extension to an existing habitat complex. Other examples of the science-based targeting used include proximity to threatened and endangered species, contributing watershed area, proximity to DNR Protected Waters, and use of the USFWS Habitat and Population Evaluation Team's (HAPET) Wildlife Habitat Potential Model for environmental evaluation.

BWSR will continue to utilize similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM Wetlands program. The current scoring and ranking criteria for wetland practices is attached as an example of the score sheet and criteria that is used.

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Wetlands - Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - RIM Wetlands - Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota
Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources
Manager: John Voz

Budget

Requested Amount: $7,500,000
Appropriated Amount: $1,708,000
Percentage: 22.77%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$540,300	-	$113,400	-	20.99%	-
Contracts	$55,000	-	$12,600	-	22.91%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$6,626,100	-	$1,503,900	-	22.7%	-
Easement Stewardship	$110,000	-	$30,000	-	27.27%	-
Travel	$13,100	-	$3,000	-	22.9%	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$131,100	-	$39,500	-	30.13%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$18,800	-	$4,300	-	22.87%	-
Supplies/Materials	$5,600	-	$1,300	-	23.21%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$7,500,000**	**-**	**$1,708,000**	**-**	**22.77%**	**-**

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	495	113	22.83%
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	$7,500,000	$1,708,000	22.77%
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	495	113	22.83%
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	$7,500,000	$1,708,000	22.77%
Enhance	-	-	-

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection & Restoration Program

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/19/2026

Project Title: Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection & Restoration Program

Funds Recommended: $6,316,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Jon Schneider
Title: Senior Manager of Conservation Programs - Minnesota
Organization: Ducks Unlimited
Address: 311 EAST LAKE GENEVA ROAD NE
City: Alexandria, MN 56308
Email: jschneider@ducks.org
Office Number: 3207629916
Mobile Number: 3208150327
Fax Number:
Website: www.ducks.org

Location Information

County Location(s): Freeborn, Jackson, Murray, Stevens, Rice, Big Stone, Nicollet, Yellow Medicine, Sibley, Redwood and Pope.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Prairie

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

This request supports Ducks Unlimited's ongoing prairie wetland and grassland acquisition/restoration program. DU proposes to acquire and restore 452 acres of land containing drained wetlands and land bordering shallow lakes in Minnesota's Prairie Pothole Region for inclusion in MNDNR state WMAs and USFWS federal WPAs/NWRs. This public land acquisition/restoration program focuses on restoring cropland with drained wetlands near existing WMAs and WPAs/NWRs to help enlarge prairie wetland habitat complexes for breeding ducks, other wildlife, and people. DU biologists and engineers will survey, design, and hire private sector contractors to restore drained wetlands and grasslands.

Design and Scope of Work

This is Phase 16 of Ducks Unlimited's ongoing program to Acquire and Restore prairie pothole wetlands and grasslands adjacent to State Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and federal Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) or National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs). DU works with willing seller private landowners with drained wetlands and converted prairie uplands, and land along shallow lakes in need of protection. DU purchases and temporarily holds land title through our Wetlands America Trust (WAT), DU's supporting land-holding organization, of which DU is the sole corporate member.

Because 90% of Minnesota's prairie wetlands have been drained and 99% of native prairie lost in Minnesota, acquisition and restoration of small wetlands and grasslands is critical – especially for breeding ducks in the Prairie Pothole Region of SW Minnesota where DU focuses our efforts. Furthermore, most remaining undrained wetlands here are in poor ecological condition due to massive landscape prairie conversion to cropland and wetland drainage that degrades both wetland condition and habitat function for prairie wildlife.

Our goal is to help restore functioning prairie-wetland habitat complexes and complement other conservation efforts to protect intact native prairie. Our work addresses the habitat goals in Minnesota's Long-range Duck Recovery Plan, Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. This work is time-sensitive because farmland adjacent to public lands is rarely offered for sale for conservation, and tracts are only available for a short time. DU works quickly and has spent much of our past OHF appropriations for land acquisition.

Ducks Unlimited works closely with Minnesota DNR Section of Wildlife and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to find land parcels for sale, and partners with other NGOs, and local sportsmen clubs to restore lands acquired. Although approval is not requested from county boards for DU land acquisitions, DU communicates frequently with county and township officials to ensure local official awareness of our conservation work and often attends county and township board meetings to discuss projects. The acquisitions and restorations proposed represents the amount of work DU can accomplish over 4-8 years, is scalable, and benefits game and non-game wildlife species alike - from mallards to monarch butterflies.

Although many of our remaining prairie wetlands and shallow lakes are contained within state WMAs or federal WPAs, these small public land patches rarely provide optimal wildlife habitat due to their disconnected, fragmented shape and small size. Similarly, most prairie shallow lakes are surrounded by a thin ribbon of uplands that fail to adequately buffer them from surrounding agricultural land runoff. Therefore, acquisition and restoration of drained wetlands and cultivated cropland in close proximity to our public lands will improve and buffer our public shallow lakes and remaining wetlands and help create functioning prairie-wetland habitat complexes for breeding ducks and other prairie wildlife.

DU professional engineers and biologists work closely with MNDNR and USFWS biologists to plan and implement robust prairie pothole wetland and grassland restorations, including diverse native forb/grass seed plantings and complex wetland restorations that often involve extensive tile and ditch drainage systems.

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

Habitat loss is usually the most limiting factor for fish, game, and wildlife - including threatened and endangered species. In Minnesota, we've lost 90% of our prairie pothole wetlands and 99% of our native prairie grasslands. This directly limits populations of waterfowl and other wildlife that rely on prairie wetlands and grasslands for breeding habitat.

This proposal protects and restores wetlands and prairie lands, including native prairie grasslands and small pothole emergent wetlands, both of which are identified as critical habitats for many "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" listed in Minnesota's "Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild & Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife." Specific species listed in the Action Plan as requiring prairie (page 255) include seven species of butterflies and three bird species that are native prairie specialists: chestnut-collared longspur, Sprague's pipit, and Baird's sparrow. The Prairie Parkland has 139 species listed on the SGCN with 13 of these species being unique to the section.

In addition to these specific wildlife species listed as SGCN examples in the Action Plan, restored prairie in the Prairie Parkland will also provide habitat of significant value for other species listed in Appendix B of the Action Plan. Restored and protected prairie will provide habitat of significant value for other SGCN including bird species: upland sandpiper, bobolink, burrowing owl, Le Conte's sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, eastern meadowlark, swamp sparrow, sharp-tailed grouse, short-eared owl, northern harrier, dickcissel, Henslow's sparrow, and Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow. Upland nesting waterfowl will also benefit including waterfowl listed as SGCN; northern pintail and lesser scaup, which have both seen declines in continental populations. Wetland associated birds such as trumpeter swan, black tern, American bittern, Wilson's phalarope, and marbled godwit will benefit from wetlands either restored or buffered in the prairie landscape. Mammals such as northern grasshopper mouse and Richardson's ground squirrels, reptiles such as lined snake and Blanding's turtle, and amphibians such as northern cricket frog and common mudpuppy are listed as SGCN for the Prairie Parkland.

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

Most wetlands and nearly all native prairie uplands have been drained and converted for agricultural use in southern Minnesota. Most public prairie wildlife lands are small and fragmented, and do not provide viable productive patches of functioning habitat that support prairie wildlife populations. Thus, acquisition of prairie lands for sale is a key component of our overall Minnesota Prairie Plan conservation efforts to enlarge, restore and protect wildlife habitat. This work is time-sensitive because private land near or adjacent to state WMAs and federal WPA boundaries only rarely becomes available for sale to conservation interests, and thus it is critical to respond quickly to these land acquisition and restoration opportunities when they arise. Most private landowners will wait and work with conservation NGO land buyers for a short time, but won't wait indefinitely for conservation funding, and a generation may pass before these key parcels become available for purchase again.

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

Ducks Unlimited uses science to strategically focus acquisition of lands adjacent to existing state WMAs with restorable wetlands to build prairie-wetland complexes for breeding ducks or buffer managed shallow lakes. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's "Thunderstorm Map" and "Restorable Wetlands Inventory" help determine importance to breeding waterfowl. We prioritize lands with restorable wetlands and prairie in areas of relatively high biological diversity and significance based on the Minnesota DNR County Biological Survey (MCBS) to improve the ecological functionality of existing public WMAs for ducks. Three potential land acquisition examples include:

Minneota WMA Tract 8 in Jackson County is 136 acres adjacent to an existing WMA and WPA totaling 400 contiguous acres of wetland-grassland habitat. This area is a MCBS Site of Moderate Biodiversity due to abundant native prairie. This parcel would also protect five acres of native prairie and part of a 45-acre wetland of Moderate Biological Significance. It supports 10-25 breeding duck pairs per square mile (PPSM) and falls within a Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (MNPCP) Strategic Habitat Complex. There are restorable uplands and numerous restorable wetlands on this property that will increase habitat for breeding waterfowl and other grassland birds.

North Pomme de Terre River WPA is 157 acres in Stevens County to create a new WPA adjoining existing 731-acre Haseman WPA in Grant County to enlarge a natural prairie habitat corridor along the Pomme de Terre River in a landscape supporting 10-25 breeding duck PPSM.

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

Long Range Duck Recovery 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:

Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *Land bordering shallow lakes and land containing drained wetlands will be acquired and restored back to native grasslands with prairie pothole wetlands. These restored grasslands with wildflowers surrounding pothole wetlands will provide functioning habitat for pollinators, migratory birds, and resident wildlife. Lands transferred to state and federal wildlife agencies will provide additional habitat for migratory species and public use, both of which will be monitored by MNDNR/USFWS. Lands acquired/restored will be monitored by MNDNR/USFWS wildlife field staff and managed to optimize prairie wildlife habitat conditions. Prairie uplands will be managed to minimize trees and encourage native plants.*

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 does not supplant or substitute previous funding. This request is for new land acquisition funding to supplement traditional DU conservation activities and allow DU to expand our conservation program to buy/restore land, and will not supplant or substitute traditional private sources of funding for DU conservation programs.

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

All lands acquired will be transferred to the Minnesota DNR for inclusion in the state's Wildlife Management Area system or to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge system (which includes Waterfowl Production Areas). Minnesota DNR and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service land managers will sustain and maintain the prairie and wetlands acquired and restored by Ducks Unlimited in perpetuity, and manage them to provide optimal wildlife habitat and for public use. Both agencies routinely use prescribed fire and water level management techniques to maintain ecological productivity of prairie grasslands and wetlands for wildlife habitat. Both state WMAs and federal WPAs are open for wildlife habitat compatible public uses, and both agencies maintain public accesses for visitors.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2033	DNR G&F Fund and USFWS Wetland Mgt District Budgets	Mow restored prairie for weed control and monitor wetland restorations for restoration response and invasive or woody species	Periodically burn native prairie and small wetlands and/or use managed conservation grazing of livestock every 5 years as needed to maintain prairie and wetland vegetation	Assess and manage water levels in larger restored wetlands as vegetation and ecological conditions warrant management actions and improvement every 5+ years

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

Ducks Unlimited conserves wetlands for waterfowl and people alike. Our habitat projects restore natural infrastructure, which helps to alleviate society's climate impacts and provide clean water for culturally diverse communities and low/moderate income households who are disproportionately impacted by the effects of wetland loss and climate change. This program acquires and restores new public lands for our state Wildlife Management Areas and federal Waterfowl Production Areas that are open and available to all Minnesotans including diverse and low-income people.

Wetlands recharge groundwater in aquifers that provide clean, dependable water supplies while removing pollutants and reducing downstream flooding. Generational wealth in some cultures and communities is compromised by a lack of natural infrastructure such as wetlands. Community resiliency is enhanced by the function of wetlands and adjacent grassland habitats that clean water and help absorb impacts from severe weather events.

Restoring wetlands in the Mississippi River watershed benefits communities who draw their water from the river such as Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Cloud. Minneapolis alone draws 21 billion gallons of water a year from the Mississippi River to produce 57 million gallons of drinking water each day.

Public lands and waters also provide numerous opportunities for fishing, hunting, canoeing, kayaking, birding, and outdoor education for diverse and lower-income communities that may not otherwise have access to natural open spaces. Indigenous communities benefit from DU wetland enhancements and restorations that create suitable conditions for wild rice to proliferate. Wetlands deliver a return on investment that support the health, resiliency, and well-being of culturally diverse and lower-income communities.

In this program, Ducks Unlimited works closely with the Minnesota DNR and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to strategically purchase lands with drained wetlands and lands bordering shallow lakes that are important to waterfowl, other wildlife, and people too. Ducks Unlimited restores drained pothole wetlands and adjacent uplands back to native prairie grasslands for both wildlife habitat and the public using competitively-selected contractors following state procurement guidelines. These new public lands are open to all for outdoor recreation, community programs, environmental education, including for diverse and lower income people to access nature.

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:
DU notifies and strives to discuss land acquisition plans with counties and townships prior to land acquisition closings. Discussions with local county and other government officials will be held in conjunction with acquiring lands only if and after private land negotiations result in a legal purchase agreement. Initial notification will include initial phone contact to individual board members representing the location of the land to be acquired. Official written notification to township and county boards will be made at least 30 days before closing. Because private land acquisitions are very personal and sensitive matters, especially between private landowners and private non-profit conservation organizations, disclosing details publicly in advance of purchase agreements can jeopardize land deals with private landowners. Because requesting formal local approval involves elected officials publicly voting on private land deals, which invites local politics and makes private landowner intentions public, DU does not seek local government approval of our land acquisitions. Instead, DU contacts and meets with county and township boards in person to inform and discuss pending plans to ensure local government awareness of the public benefits of our land acquisition and restoration work, and changes in future tax payments. DU pays taxes in full at the county assessed rate during our hold time, and because state PILT amounts are typically higher than previous assessed county tax rates for cultivated land acquired by DU in the Prairie Section of SW Minnesota that results in more tax revenue, county boards have usually been pleased with DU land acquisitions for the Minnesota DNR.

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:
Portions of some land tracts may contain some acres under state RIM easement, but the value of those acres will be separated in appraisal valuation and OHF grant funds will not be used to pay for those acres. Some tracts may have federal USFWS Wetland Easements that protect intact wetland basins imbedded

within agricultural lands, which prohibits wetland drainage, burning, and filling, but otherwise allowing farming when dry, so the impact on value of most agricultural lands is minimal and the value of these areas will be determined and discussed in the appraisal report.

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:
DU purchases land in Minnesota to protect and restore prairie, wetlands, and shallow lake shoreland for ducks and other prairie and wetland-dependent wildlife. Lands acquired will be transferred to the Minnesota DNR and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for incorporation into state WMAs and federal WPAs for long-term wildlife habitat management and public use. Initial Development and Restoration Plans are developed in partnership with Minnesota DNR and USFWS land manager approval according to agency management plan goals. The primary purposes of WMAs and WPAs are to provide habitat for the production of wildlife and provide opportunities for compatible outdoor recreation. To fulfill those goals, DNR may use limited farming specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for resident wildlife, and both DNR and USFWS use farming to prepare land for native prairie grassland restoration.

Lands proposed to be acquired for prairie restoration as WMAs and WPAs may utilize limited farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is the standard prairie restoration practice across the Midwest. 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. DU works closely with DNR through our cooperative acquisition and restoration planning process to minimize purchasing land tracts where DNR requires placement of food plots and instead defers those to DNR to acquire directly, as restoration of prairie and wetlands for waterfowl is our strategic focus and mission. However, some lands may be acquired with some acres where DNR determines food plots are required.

Most lands to be acquired and restored through this program will be farmland with cropped fields, which DU will restore to prairie and wetland habitat. Very limited short-duration row-cropping of soybeans or use of oats as a cover crop, or other farming activity may be required immediately after acquisition prior to restoration via native prairie grass and forb seeding to rid the soil of residual herbicides that limit native plant growth and excess nutrients that promote weeds. Increasingly, farmers are using herbicides with an 18-month carryover residual effect, that requires an additional year of farming with other compatible herbicides before native plants can be seeded. DU strives to minimize this circumstance by working with private landowners to guide their final year of cropping prior to selling, but arranging such is not always possible and use of cover crops or an additional year of "safe" row cropping in soybeans is sometimes required. DU will strive to use non-GMO treated seed if planting of crops is required before land restoration.

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 lands to be acquired are in rural areas and will be included in state Wildlife Management Areas or federal USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas or National Wildlife Refuge, and open to public use as per Minnesota DNR and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service rules. Whereas all lands acquired for inclusion in federal Waterfowl Production Areas will be open for public hunting as per federal requirements, some lands acquired for National Wildlife Refuges may have limited hunting restrictions, depending on the Refuge.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

Federal

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA

National Wildlife Refuge

WPA

AMA

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
A total of 4-6 parcels are anticipated to be acquired through this appropriation, depending on the size of each parcel.

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, DU strives to restore and enhance all lands acquired with restoration needs through the appropriation used to purchase them and/or this same Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection OHF program.

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 wetland and prairie grassland restorations.	June 2035
Complete appraisals, landowner negotiations, and acquisitions of land parcels in fee-title.	June 2031
Complete land transfers to Minnesota DNR and USFWS.	June 2032

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	$370,000	$100,000	DU Private and Federal NAWCA, DU Private	$470,000
Contracts	$1,400,000	$360,000	DU Private and Federal NAWCA	$1,760,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$2,500,000	-	-	$2,500,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$1,600,000	-	-	$1,600,000
Easement Acquisition	-	$500,000	Federal Migratory Bird Conservation (aka Duck Stamp) Funds	$500,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$25,000	$300	DU Private for meals (DU does not invoice OHF grants for meals, only mileage/lodging)	$25,300
Professional Services	$130,000	-	-	$130,000
Direct Support Services	$29,000	-	-	$29,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$82,500	-	-	$82,500
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$29,100	-	-	$29,100
Supplies/Materials	$100,000	-	-	$100,000
DNR IDP	$50,400	-	-	$50,400
Grand Total	**$6,316,000**	**$960,300**	**-**	**$7,276,300**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
DU Professional Wildlife Biologists and Engineers - survey, design, and restore wetlands and prairie grasslands on new public lands acquired	0.6	5.0	$300,000	$75,000	DU Private and Federal NAWCA	$375,000

DU Conservation Program Manager to coordinate land acquisitions and administer the grant, DU Realty Manager to help acquire lands, and DU Legal staff to guide acquisitions.	0.14	5.0	$70,000	$25,000	DU Private	$95,000

Amount of Request: $6,316,000
Amount of Leverage: $960,300
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 15.2%
DSS + Personnel: $399,000
As a % of the total request: 6.32%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
The budget and outputs in this accomplishment plan are scaled proportionately to the funding recommended.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
DU will work diligently to use OHF grant funds to leverage additional sources of private support from individuals, foundations, and corporations and via federal NAWCA grants for specific projects, especially by using OHF grant land acquisition expense to leverage federal NAWCA grants to restore wetlands on lands acquired.

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 budget in this request will be scaled proportionately to the funding recommended.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This budget for personnel and DSS in this request will be scaled proportionately to the funding recommended.

Personnel

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

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
Contracts include private contractor charges to restore/enhance wetlands (earthmoving) and grasslands (tree removal, grass seeding, fencing) on lands acquired. Wetland restoration in southern Minnesota is very expensive and requires engineering due to intensive 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 : Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments, archeological review/clearance, land acquisition closing costs beyond title and legal fees (such as warranty deed tax), and county or watershed district fees associated with permitting to restore wetlands on legal/judicial public ditches and in watersheds, including county consultant engineering review, fees, etc.

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?
We anticipate purchasing approximately 4-5 land tracts in total, including about three (3) land tracts for Minnesota DNR with OHF grant funds via Fee-title Land Acquisition with PILT (WMAs) and one or two (1-2) land tracts for USFWS as WPAs with OHF grant funds for land in Fee-title Land Acquisition without PILT. This, of course, depends on size, location, and appraised value of lands available for sale from future willing sellers 1-5 years in the future. This also assumes the average price is about $9,000/acre and the average land tract size acquired is about 100 acres. This also assumes that purchase offers for 25-40% of the lands appraised and surveyed are declined by willing sellers or attempts to purchase land at auction fail, as has been our recent past experience.

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
None - DU travel costs consist of in-state mileage and lodging for land manager, biologists, and engineering field staff. DU generally does not request OHF grant reimbursement for food expense.

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?

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. DU breaks out and invoices for Direct Support Service expenses approved by DNR for reimbursement separately from Personnel expenses. In accordance with 2 CFR 200, DU uses the direct allocation method of allocating costs to programs and final cost objectives. This process of allocating costs is accomplished through the use of hourly rates. The direct cost of activities, including direct support expenses, is included in these hourly rates. The rates are comprised of costs for salaries, benefits, office space, general insurance, support staff, office supplies, and other various direct expenses incurred at the regional offices and conservation department at the home office. All costs are assigned to conservation projects (net of applicable personnel and other costs that are non-conservation related.) Hourly charges represent the amount that DU charges conservation projects per hour for each staff member working on the project. These costs represent expenses that directly support the labor cost necessary for the development of a specific water/wetlands conservation project.

Other Equipment/Tools

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

GPS survey equipment for performing engineering wetland restoration topographical survey work and engineering surveys of drained wetlands on land acquired, including GPS survey equipment lease charges for larger main components instead of actual outright equipment purchases to avoid buying expensive technical equipment that becomes obsolete due to upgrades and technological advancements. Other equipment may include equipment trailers and ATVs under $10,000, laptop and/or tablet computers, printers/plotters, and other office equipment for biologists or engineers may be needed, along with 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?

Yes

Is Confirmation Document attached?

Yes, on file

Cash : $500,000

In Kind : $100,000

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	72	216	-	-	288
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	41	123	-	-	164
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**113**	**339**	**-**	**-**	**452**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$1,006,100	$3,018,300	-	-	$4,024,400
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$572,900	$1,718,700	-	-	$2,291,600
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$1,579,000**	**$4,737,000**	**-**	**-**	**$6,316,000**

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	-	-	-	288	-	288
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	164	-	164
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**452**	**-**	**452**

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	-	-	-	$4,024,400	-	$4,024,400
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$2,291,600	-	$2,291,600
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$6,316,000**	**-**	**$6,316,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$13,973	$13,973	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$13,973	$13,973	-	-
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	-	-	-	$13,973	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$13,973	-
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:
Ducks Unlimited prioritizes purchase of prairie farmland with restorable wetlands adjacent to existing public lands, and land adjacent to shallow lakes managed by DNR for inclusion in the Minnesota DNR's state Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system and federal Wildlife Refuge System, including Waterfowl Production Areas. DU focuses on acquiring and restoring converted/cultivated prairie with drained wetlands adjacent to existing WMAs to enlarge existing WMAs to create functioning prairie-wetland habitat complexes that benefit ducks and other prairie wildlife. This work also complements other conservation efforts to protect intact native prairie.

DU works in close partnership with the Minnesota DNR Section of Wildlife and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service regarding land acquisition opportunities, and coordinates with other national and state NGO partners including Pheasants Forever, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy to periodically review parcels for sale that DNR desires for WMAs. DU pursues priority parcels in the Prairie Pothole Region in southern and western Minnesota that are highly regionally ranked by DNR/USFWS that add a good mix of prairie and wetland restorations to existing public lands.

DU strategically prioritizes tracts of land with restorable wetlands that DU wetland engineers can survey, design, and restore, especially those adjoining existing patches of prairie and wetland habitat that are not functioning as viable prairie-wetland complexes due to their small size and fragmented shape. DU also prioritizes land bordering shallow lakes managed by DNR in order to buffer those shallow, ecologically-sensitive wildlife lakes and help expand existing prairie-wetland complexes.

Fee Parcels

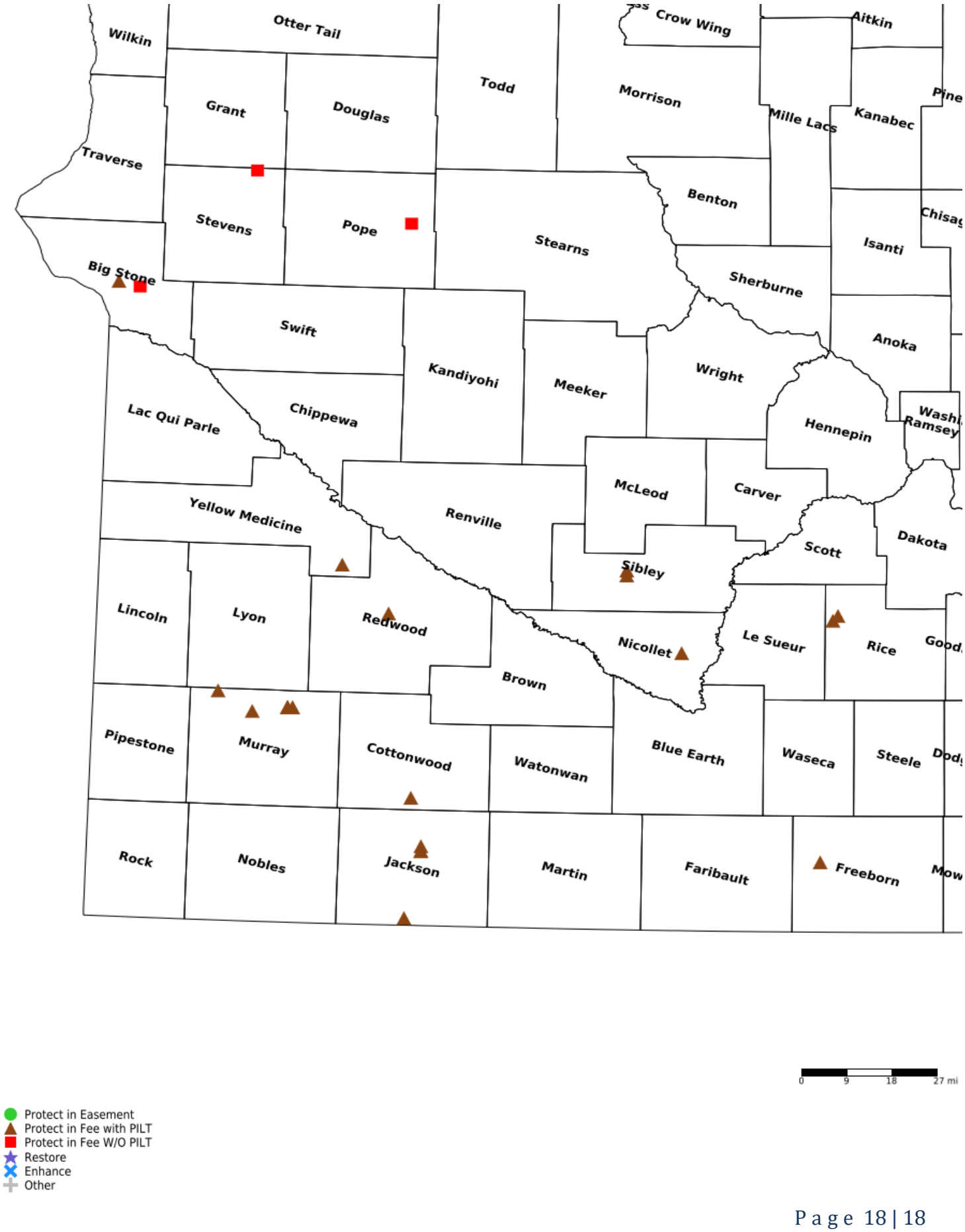
Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Bentson Lake WPA - Westman Group LLC East Parcel	Big Stone	12245208	140	$1,176,000	No
Freeborn Lake WMA	Freeborn	10323224	113	$500,000	No
Minneota WMA - Tract 8	Jackson	10136229	136	$820,000	No
String Lakes WMA - Tract 8	Jackson	10536221	104	$800,000	No
Two Sheds WMA - Bretzman Trust	Jackson	10336211	195	$1,500,000	No
Two Sheds WMA - Tract 21 Klassen	Jackson	10336214	160	$1,600,000	No
Two Sheds WMA - Tract 3 Gordon	Jackson	10336214	80	$700,000	No
Shetek WMA - Tract 2 Ackerman	Murray	10840221	103	$1,030,000	No
Shetek WMA - Tract 2a Ackerman	Murray	10840221	83	$500,000	No
Shetek WMA - Tract 9 Ackerman	Murray	10840220	50	$500,000	No
Shetek WMA - Tract 9a Ackerman	Murray	10840220	110	$1,100,000	No
Shetek WMA - Tract 9b	Murray	10840220	82	$820,000	No
Skandia WMA - Tract 33	Murray	10841230	80	$500,000	No
Swan Lake WMA - SLAWA Tract	Nicollet	11027217	140	$2,100,000	No
Grove Lake WPA - Lent	Pope	12536229	48	$240,000	No
Daubs Lake WMA - Tract 2/2a Merlin Goudy Estate	Redwood	11137210	161	$1,500,000	Yes
Phelps Lake WMA - Duffney South Tract	Rice	11122208	39	$400,000	No
Phelps Lake WMA Tract 21B	Rice	11122204	80	$700,000	No
Indian Lake WMA - Tract 10	Sibley	11329228	67	$500,000	No

Indian Lake WMA - Tract 9a	Sibley	11329221	50	$500,000	No
North Pomme de Terre River WPA	Stevens	12641206	157	$600,000	No
Posen WMA - Tract 7a	Yellow Medicine	11338219	18	$150,000	No

Fee Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
Thielke Lake WMA - Tract 4	Big Stone	12246203	130	$900,000	No	1	$50,000
Nelson WMA - Tract 10 VAL Trust	Murray	10843201	198	$1,700,000	No	4	$5,000

Parcel Map


Wilkin
Otter Tail
Crow Wing
Aitkin
Todd
Morrison
Grant
Douglas
Mille Lacs
Kanabec
Pine
Traverse
Benton
Stevens
Pope
Stearns
Chisag
Isanti
Big Stone
Sherburne
Swift
Anoka
Kandiyohi
Meeker
Wright
Lac Qui Parle
Chippewa
Hennepin
Washi
Ramsey
McLeod
Carver
Yellow Medicine
Renville
Dakota
Scott
Sibley
Lincoln
Lyon
Redwood
Nicollet
Le Sueur
Rice
Good
Brown
Pipestone
Murray
Cottonwood
Watonwan
Blue Earth
Waseca
Steele
Dodg
Rock
Nobles
Jackson
Martin
Faribault
Freeborn
Mow
0
9
18
27 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection & Restoration Program

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection & Restoration Program
Organization: Ducks Unlimited
Manager: Jon Schneider

Budget

Requested Amount: $16,995,000
Appropriated Amount: $6,316,000
Percentage: 37.16%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$880,000	$210,000	$370,000	$100,000	42.05%	47.62%
Contracts	$3,900,000	$990,000	$1,400,000	$360,000	35.9%	36.36%
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$7,000,000	-	$2,500,000	-	35.71%	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$4,000,000	-	$1,600,000	-	40.0%	-
Easement Acquisition	-	$500,000	-	$500,000	-	100.0%
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	$72,900	$900	$25,000	$300	34.29%	33.33%
Professional Services	$370,000	-	$130,000	-	35.14%	-
Direct Support Services	$70,000	-	$29,000	-	41.43%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$240,000	-	$82,500	-	34.38%	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$60,000	-	$29,100	-	48.5%	-
Supplies/Materials	$266,000	-	$100,000	-	37.59%	-
DNR IDP	$136,100	-	$50,400	-	37.03%	-
Grand Total	**$16,995,000**	**$1,700,900**	**$6,316,000**	**$960,300**	**37.16%**	**56.46%**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The budget in this request will be scaled proportionately to the funding recommended.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The budget for personnel and DSS in this request will be scaled proportionately to the funding recommended.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The budget in this request will be scaled proportionately to the funding recommended.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This budget for personnel and DSS in this request will be scaled proportionately to the funding recommended.

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	777	288	37.07%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	445	164	36.85%
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	$10,806,100	$4,024,400	37.24%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$6,188,900	$2,291,600	37.03%
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	777	288	37.07%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	445	164	36.85%
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	$10,806,100	$4,024,400	37.24%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$6,188,900	$2,291,600	37.03%
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-