



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Little Cannon River Stream Habitat Restoration - Construction Phase
ML 2027 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/24/2026

Proposal Title: Little Cannon River Stream Habitat Restoration - Construction Phase

Funds Requested: \$4,952,200

Confirmed Leverage Funds: \$50,000

Is this proposal Scalable?: Yes

Manager Information

Manager's Name: John Lenczewski

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Location Information

County Location(s): Goodhue.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Southeast Forest

Activity types:

Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

This project will restore a severely degraded 3.3-mile section of the Little Cannon River by re-meandering the channel and creating more than a mile of new stream habitat. Design and permitting were funded through ML 26 by the LSOHC and Legislature. Located on protected, publicly accessible lands near much of Minnesota's population, the project will create up to five miles of high-quality habitat. Minnesota Trout Unlimited will lead stream restoration to support trout and aquatic life, while Great River Greening will restore native upland habitat benefiting birds, wildlife, and four federally threatened species.

Design and Scope of Work

This project will restore habitat in up to five miles of the Little Cannon River and its riparian corridor, creating lasting benefits for fish and wildlife in a region where coldwater streams are scarce and increasingly impaired.

Minnesota Trout Unlimited (MNTU) will lead the in-stream habitat restoration, restoring a natural meandering pattern and creating a mile or more of new stream habitat in the process. By raising the incised channel and reconnecting it to the floodplain, the natural flow pattern is restored which in turn stabilizes the stream. This ensures in-stream habitats remain productive and resilient, even during large floods. Diverse trout habitats for all life stages will be created, including pool habitat, bank cover, riffles and runs for food production and spawning habitat. By stabilizing the riverbanks, we will significantly reduce erosion and subsequent sediment loading. This intervention preserves critical habitat quality both within the five-mile project reach and in downstream ecosystems. Channel restoration will increase available niche habitat for the red-sided dace (a MN Species of Greatest Conservation Need). Furthermore, newly created oxbow habitats will enhance biodiversity by providing spawning, nesting, and foraging grounds for amphibians, reptiles, waterfowl, and mammals.

Great River Greening (GRG) will restore riparian and upland vegetation on adjacent Aquatic Management Area (AMA) lands, as well as on the new conservation easements added upstream and downstream in 2025. Their work will include native plantings that stabilize soil, improve infiltration, and restore nesting habitat for waterfowl, migrating birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

Beyond coordinating project partners, Clean River Partners (CRP) will plan and facilitate community volunteer events that provide hands-on restoration experience. This direct engagement links local stewardship with large-scale watershed initiatives to ensure lasting project success. CRP has secured separate funding to support upstream conservation practices like cover crops and managed grazing, and has pending federal funds to support additional agricultural practices near the project site.

Goodhue SWCD has decades-long relationships with the project area landowners and introduced the concept of habitat restoration and fishing easements in 2021. It has facilitated planning discussions and secured \$30,000 in Watershed-Based Implementation Funding to support permitting and early-stage development. While not seeking OHF funding for this specific phase, the SWCD remains a vital local facilitator. Their ongoing presence ensures that conservation efforts in this high-priority implementation area will continue seamlessly beyond the scope of the stream restoration project. The SWCD is providing \$20,000 in leverage funds to cover personnel costs.

Stream habitat and vegetation plans are being coordinated with the Minnesota DNR to ensure alignment with long-term management goals. All project partners bring specific, complementary strengths and long-standing relationships to ensure that this work is completed efficiently and achieves permanent ecological benefits.

This proposal is for Phase II (the Construction phase), and costs for construction were determined by an estimate provided by the DNR.

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

Rewilding this corridor will create high-quality habitat for trout and other coldwater-dependent species, including the red-sided dace. These ecosystems are increasingly vulnerable to climate-driven stressors—including rising thermal profiles and intensified flooding—as well as the depletion of cold water inputs due to increased groundwater extraction from replenishing aquifers.

Restoration is critical to stabilize eroding banks and mitigate the sedimentation that currently degrades in-stream habitat. The current high erosion rates cause unstable banks that collapse and bury habitat. The turbidity and sedimentation infills deep pools and smothers the gravel and cobble, which are essential for macroinvertebrate production and trout spawning. Elevated turbidity also limits light penetration, suppressing the primary producers—such as plants and phytoplankton—that form the foundation of the broader ecosystem.

Although management practices have improved on surrounding agricultural acres, erosion and bank instability continue to increase the sediment load within the river channel. After over 70 years of being unable to naturally re-meander, the stream now requires active restoration to stabilize the channel, protect and create critical riffles for spawning and food production, and safeguard vital aquatic habitats from further sediment-driven degradation.

While enhancement and restoration is ongoing at the Little Cannon River AMA, adjacent lands have remained unaddressed. The completed 2025 easements provide a critical opportunity to expand these efforts, allowing a larger contiguous portion of the river to be re-meandered and stabilized. By restoring the riparian corridor to native riparian and mesic prairie vegetation, we will expand nesting habitat for waterfowl, migratory birds, and reptiles. Furthermore, the creation of off-channel oxbows will provide essential habitat for amphibians and breeding fish populations.

There are potentially four federally threatened or endangered species in the area that could benefit from our restoration efforts: Northern Long-eared Bat, Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, Minnesota dwarf trout lily, and prairie bush clover.

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

Some survey and conceptual design has been completed by MN DNR, and this project will be shovel ready by 2027. The DNR has dedicated most of its Trout Stream easement funding for Region 3 to acquiring easements above and below the AMA. Landowners are enthusiastic for this project, transferring easements to facilitate it. Moving forward will encourage other landowners to adopt easements. Large, coordinated projects like this are only possible when landowner interest, LGU capacity, and appreciation of habitat and public use converge. Council support is critical to capitalize on this collaboration and secure landscape-scale benefits.

The presence of high-priority species adds extreme urgency. The red-sided dace is extirpated in Iowa and highly fragmented in Minnesota; the DNR warns that once lost, recolonization is unlikely. The Minnesota dwarf trout lily is the only known vascular plant endemic to Minnesota; its loss would be a permanent extinction of unique genetic heritage.

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

The Little Cannon River project will create up to a five mile long corridor of restored habitat. While the AMA and adjacent 2025 easements anchor this stretch, their current state is too degraded to support a functional habitat corridor or complex. By re-meandering the channel and re-establishing native riparian woodland and mesic prairie, this project will bridge these fragmented habitats into a cohesive landscape. This restored corridor will facilitate species dispersal and movement, providing essential foraging and nesting grounds for waterfowl and migratory birds, while new oxbow features create critical nursery habitat for amphibians and fish.

This project will also enhance the hydrology and associated wildlife habitat of a rare calcareous fen located adjacent to the stream restoration site. These fens—some of the rarest wetland types in Minnesota—are groundwater-dependent and highly sensitive to changes in surface and subsurface hydrology. By increasing floodplain connectivity and water infiltration, the project will help stabilize water levels that sustain this unique plant community and its associated species of conservation concern.

This work complements goals outlined in multiple regional plans, including the Cannon River Watershed Landscape Stewardship Plan and Cannon River Watershed Comprehensive Management Plan, and leverages existing protected lands to expand functional habitat corridors in southeastern Minnesota’s fragmented landscape.

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

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Other : H3 – Improve connectivity and access to recreation – improving protected lands for wildlife watching and hunting

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Southeast Forest

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

Describe how this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife:

This project will deliver lasting habitat, ecological and recreational benefits by restoring a five-mile stretch of the Little Cannon River to a natural stream pattern. The work will stabilize the channel, reducing erosion and preventing both sediment buildup and channel downcutting, so the stream maintains productive in-stream habitat for many decades.

Diverse habitat features, including pools, cover habitat, rock riffles, oxbows, and spawning gravels, will support naturally reproducing fish populations and long-term population health. Native vegetation plantings along the banks will further improve wildlife habitat.

Restored habitat where permanent protection and public fishing easements exist will ensure the public can enjoy a lasting legacy of productive fisheries.

By combining habitat restoration and public access, this project will create a permanent conservation legacy: a healthier river system, stronger fish and wildlife populations, and recreational access for current and future generations.

If this project/program does not have permanent outcomes, describe why it is important to undertake at this time:

NA

Outcomes

Programs in southeast forest region:

Rivers, streams, and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat ~ *Enhancement of in-stream and riparian corridor habitat creates miles of connected habitat. Outcomes in aquatic life are measured through surveys of fish, macro invertebrates and/or exposed substrates. Abundance, size structure and species diversity are considered.*

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

This proposal does not substitute or supplant previous funding that was not from a Legacy fund.

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

MNTU’s aquatic habitat restoration projects are designed for long-term ecological and hydraulic stability. Construction contracts include three-year maintenance/warranty provisions to ensure habitat work is well established. After this period major maintenance is not typically required to sustain the habitat outcomes for decades. Reconnected floodplains quickly dissipate flood energy. Floods typically flatten streamside vegetation temporarily and do not damage the in-stream structures. Long-term monitoring will be done by MNDNR staff as part of routine inspections and biological monitoring, and not require OHF funding. If modest maintenance is needed, MNDNR’s in-house habitat crew can perform repairs. Other funding sources include AMA maintenance funding and other grants.

We anticipate that long-term monitoring of the integrity of the improvements will be done in conjunction with routine inspections and biological monitoring conducted by MNDNR researchers and other MNDNR staff. This monitoring will not require OHF or other constitutional funding. In the event that there are modest maintenance costs, potential sources of funding include MNDNR AMA maintenance funding, WMA funding, and other grant funds.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2032	MNTU Staff/volunteers	Inspect structural elements and vegetation	If needed, alert DNR and develop action plan	Conduct maintenance with volunteers and/or contractors if DNR does not
Every 3 years thereafter	MNTU Staff/volunteers	Inspect structural elements and vegetation	If needed, develop action plan with DNR	Perform or assist DNR with maintenance if needed

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

This project significantly increases equitable access to Minnesota’s outdoor heritage by restoring up to five miles of the Little Cannon River where permanent public angling access is being established. The restored reach will have gently sloped streambanks which not only allow access of water to the floodplain during flood events, but also are much easier and safer for anglers and other users to access the stream. There are no restrictions on angling equipment, which lowers the barriers to entry for beginners and for those from low- and moderate-income households.

Located in a part of the state without natural lakes, the Little Cannon River provides one of the few local stream fishing opportunities for area residents. This project will serve a rural population and make it easier for all Minnesotans—regardless of income, background, or ability—to experience the cultural tradition of stream fishing close to home. Based on past experience with nearby restoration projects, we anticipate that this work will draw more local visitors and increase community awareness of and connection to the river.

Currently, most anglers at this site are visitors from the south metro on weekends, with local users more common during the week. We believe that restoring the river’s habitat and improving access will encourage more year-round, local use and create a welcoming destination for diverse communities in the Cannon River region and beyond.

Activity Details

Requirements

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?

Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?

Yes

Where does the activity take place?

AMA

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

Land Use

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

No

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

No

Previous OHF Appropriations

Have you received OHF dollars through LSOHC for this program or project in the past?

Yes

Are there any of these past appropriations still OPEN?

Yes

If needed, please include any explanation of unspent funds.

These funds have not been made available to spend yet.

Open OHF Appropriations - Data from Most Recent Status Update

Project	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
ML 2026 - Little Cannon River Stream Habitat Restoration	\$500,000	-	\$500,000	0.0%
Totals	\$500,000	-	\$500,000	0.0%

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Begin planning, design and implementation of habitat enhancements	July 2027
Complete implementation of habitat enhancements, including native vegetation work.	June 2032

Budget

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$290,300	\$85,000	Local SWCD, Federal	\$375,300
Contracts	\$4,456,000	\$35,000	-, Federal	\$4,491,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$7,000	-	-	\$7,000
Professional Services	-	\$30,000	-, WBIF	\$30,000
Direct Support Services	\$60,900	\$60,000	-, Private	\$120,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Supplies/Materials	\$133,000	-	-	\$133,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$4,952,200	\$210,000	-	\$5,162,200

Partner: Clean River Partners

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$29,300	\$65,000	Federal	\$94,300
Contracts	-	\$35,000	Federal	\$35,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$7,900	-	-	\$7,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$37,200	\$100,000	-	\$137,200

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
CRP Staff	0.12	3.0	\$29,300	\$65,000	Federal	\$94,300

Partner: Great River Greening

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$41,000	-	-	\$41,000
Contracts	\$100,000	-	-	\$100,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$5,000	-	-	\$5,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$20,000	\$60,000	Private	\$80,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$3,000	-	-	\$3,000
Supplies/Materials	\$131,000	-	-	\$131,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$300,000	\$60,000	-	\$360,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
RE Staff	0.13	5.0	\$41,000	-	-	\$41,000

Partner: MN Trout Unlimited

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$220,000	\$20,000	Local SWCD	\$240,000
Contracts	\$4,356,000	-	-	\$4,356,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
Professional Services	-	\$30,000	WBIF	\$30,000
Direct Support Services	\$33,000	-	-	\$33,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
Supplies/Materials	\$2,000	-	-	\$2,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$4,615,000	\$50,000	-	\$4,665,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MNTU Staff	0.44	5.0	\$220,000	\$20,000	Local SWCD	\$240,000

Amount of Request: \$4,952,200

Amount of Leverage: \$210,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 4.24%

DSS + Personnel: \$351,200

As a % of the total request: 7.09%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

Leverage Funding Table

	Leverage Amount Committed	Leverage Amount Confirmed (of Committed Funds)	Leverage Amount Anticipated	Total Leverage
Amount:	\$110,000	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$210,000
% of Total Leverage:	52.38%	23.81%	47.62%	

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:

TU's \$20,000 local personnel leverage is funding from Goodhue SWCD's general fund for staff time. The SWCD is also contributing \$30,000 from their Watershed Based Implementation Funding. Clean River Partners is anticipating federal funds for personnel and contract leverage.

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?

Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

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

Because we would design and permit the entire project site and install as much as the reduced construction funding allows, the acre amount completed might be less than strictly proportional.

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

MNTU & GRGs personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted downward but not strictly proportionally. Design and permitting would be frontloaded and personnel and DSS costs would track those efforts and project oversight will remain consistent. CRP's administration is consistent to manage the program and maintain partner and community relationships.

If the project received 30% of the requested funding

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

Because we would design and permit the entire project site and install as much as the reduced construction funding allows, the acre amount completed might be less than strictly proportional.

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

MNTU & GRGs personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted downward but not strictly proportionally. Design and permitting would be frontloaded and personnel and DSS costs would track those efforts and project oversight will remain consistent. CRP's administration is consistent to manage the program and maintain partner and community relationships.

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

Clean Water Fund

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?

Yes

Please explain the overlap of past and future staffing and position levels previously received and how that is coordinated over multiple years?

Funding for personnel was requested in ML26, but has not been made available yet. The previous personnel funding will go towards pre-construction work, and this round of personnel funding will fund staff during the construction phase of the project.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

MNTU's includes earthwork contracts by service providers for contracted services to construct the project on the ground, and includes heavy equipment use (with operators), other labor, and materials that the contractor must incorporate into the project features. GRG's contract line includes restoration/enhancement contracts by service providers.

Travel

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

Yes

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

NA

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

Yes

Direct Support Services

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

MNTU's Direct Support Services parallels Trout Unlimited's federal rate, which is approved every two years. It is based only upon the amount of personnel time, travel, and professional services actually expended on the habitat project.

GRG's DSS rate approved by the DNR in 2024, GRG's DSS rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget. A portion not exceeding 50% of these costs are requested from the grant and the balance is contributed as leverage.

CRP's DSS rate was approved by the DNR in 2024.

Other Equipment/Tools

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

Primarily hand tools and safety gear for cutting trees and brush, raking and seeding areas. Also saws, brush cutters, personal protective equipment, burn equipment, seed collection equipment, repairs and other necessary equipment to complete restoration and enhancement activities.

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?

7/1/2026; Clean River Partners received a Fishers & Farmers Partnership grant and the funds are pending.

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	140	140
Total	0	0	0	140	140

Restoration/Enhancement Acres Breakdown of Existing Protected Lands (Table 1a.2)

	RESTORE: Lands acquired with OHF	RESTORE: Lands NOT acquired with OHF	ENHANCE: Lands acquired with OHF	ENHANCE: Lands NOT acquired with OHF
DNR Lands (WMA, State Forests, etc.)	-	-	84	-
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	-	-	-
Easements	-	-	35	21
Total	-	-	119	21

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	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	\$4,952,200	\$4,952,200
Total	-	-	-	\$4,952,200	\$4,952,200

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	140	0	0	140
Total	0	0	140	0	0	140

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	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$4,952,200	-	-	\$4,952,200
Total	-	-	\$4,952,200	-	-	\$4,952,200

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	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	\$35,372

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	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$35,372	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

5 miles

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

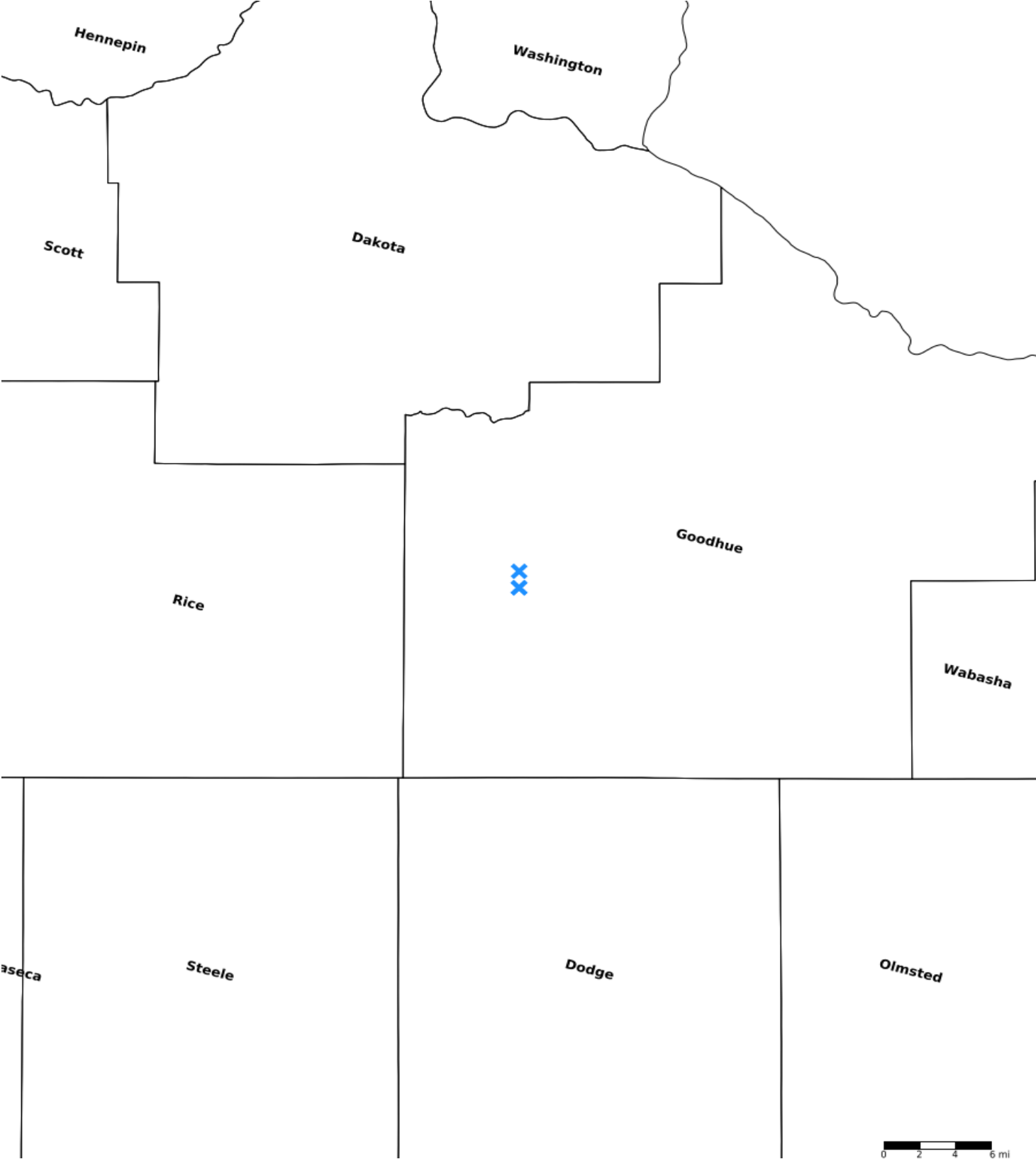
Great River Greening works with land owning entities (public and protected private) and interested stakeholders to identify parcels where there is a need for restoration or enhancement of lands and water resources. Parcels are selected using the following criteria: permanently protected status (WMA,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

MNTU focuses habitat enhancement and restoration efforts on those watersheds likely to continue to support viable, fishable populations of naturally reproducing trout fifty years and more from now. Work is done only where degraded habitat is a limiting factor for a quality, sustainable fishery. Priority locations are determined through consultations with MNDNR professionals, MNDNR management plans and surveys, other habitat and conservation planning efforts, MNTU members' knowledge of watersheds, and science-based criteria.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Little Cannon River 1 (S.)	Goodhue	11018201	25	\$1,578,134	Yes	Restore habitat in re-meandered channel totaling up to 5.0 miles at completion
Little Cannon River 2 (N.)	Goodhue	11118236	31	\$1,578,133	Yes	Restore habitat in re-meandered channel totaling up to 5.0 miles at completion
Little Cannon River AMA	Goodhue	11018201	84	\$1,578,133	Yes	Restore habitat in re-meandered channel totaling up to 5.0 miles at completion

Parcel Map



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

Little Cannon River Stream Habitat Restoration

Construction Phase

Program Overview

In a region where healthy coldwater streams are increasingly rare, this project will restore up to 5 miles of the Little Cannon River and its surrounding riparian corridor—delivering enduring habitat benefits for fish, wildlife, and people. Located in a high-priority conservation area, this work is tailored to stabilize the river, reduce erosion, and reconnect land and water.

Photo (right): Aerial view of the Little Cannon River Aquatic Management Area



Key Habitat Benefits

Coldwater Fish Habitat

- Over a mile of new stream channel created through a meandering design
- Deepened pools, riffles, and undercut banks improve habitat for brook and brown trout at all life stages
- Spawning beds and food-producing riffles increase reproductive success and fish abundance

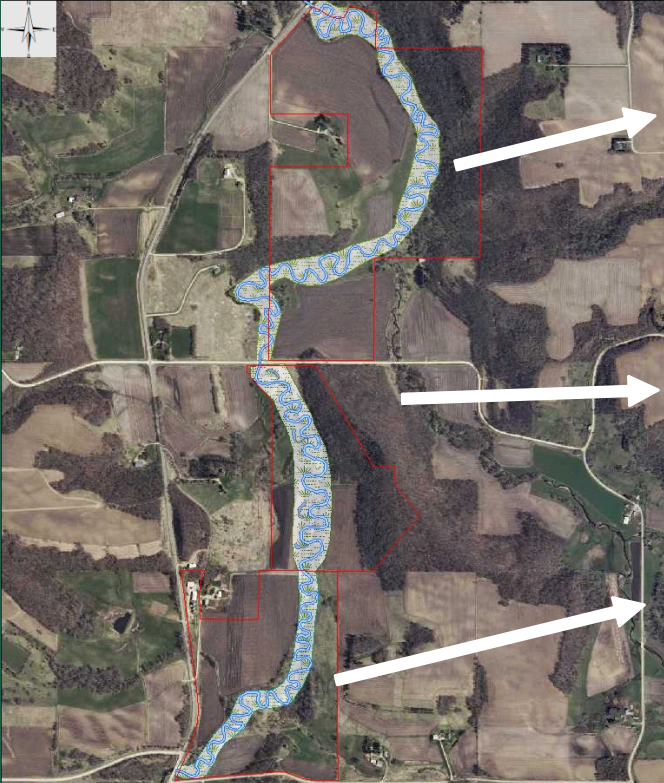
Wildlife and Rare Species Protection

- Restoration supports habitat for the red-sided dace, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- New oxbow and floodplain features benefit amphibians, reptiles, waterfowl, and mammals
- Native plantings boost pollinator and bird habitat

Photo (left): Angler with a brook trout caught in the Little Cannon.

This project delivers permanent, one-time restoration benefits and strengthens ecological resilience in southeast Minnesota.

All work is coordinated with the Minnesota DNR and grounded in long-term stewardship.



The map displays the Little Cannon River with various restoration concepts overlaid. A legend at the bottom identifies the following elements:

- Channel Restoration Concept (light blue wavy pattern)
- Floodplain (Active) Concept (yellow wavy pattern)
- Off Channel Habitat (dark blue wavy pattern)
- Properties Boundaries (red outline)

Three white arrows point to specific areas on the map:

- The top arrow points to a section of the river labeled "Downstream easements secured in 2025 to expand public access and improve habitat."
- The middle arrow points to a central parcel labeled "The central parcel on this map, the Little Cannon Aquatic Management Area, was previously acquired with OHF funds."
- The bottom arrow points to an upstream section labeled "Upstream easement secured in 2025 to expand public access and improve habitat."

The map includes a scale bar (0 to 0.3 miles) and a north arrow in the top left corner.

Map of the Little Cannon River

Downstream easements secured in 2025 to expand public access and improve habitat.

The central parcel on this map, the Little Cannon Aquatic Management Area, was previously acquired with OHF funds.

Upstream easement secured in 2025 to expand public access and improve habitat.



Our Partnership

Minnesota Trout Unlimited is leading in-stream restoration and stream channel reconstruction.

Great River Greening is restoring native upland and riparian vegetation.

Clean River Partners is connecting this work to watershed-wide conservation initiatives and farmer-led practices as well as project coordination.

Goodhue SWCD is supporting with funding, landowner relationships, and long-term planning.