



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Lower Sioux Prairie and Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Project  
ML 2027 Request for Funding

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### General Information

**Date:** 06/24/2026

**Proposal Title:** Lower Sioux Prairie and Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Project

**Funds Requested:** \$5,000,000

**Confirmed Leverage Funds:** \$1,000,000

**Is this proposal Scalable?:** Yes

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Joseph Goodthunder

**Title:** Agricultural Coordinator

**Organization:** Lower Sioux Indian Community

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### Location Information

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

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

Prairie

**Activity types:**

Protect in Fee

Restore

Enhance

Other : conservation grazing infrastructure and habitat-management planning

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Prairie

Wetlands

**Narrative****Abstract**

LSIC requests \$5,000,000 from the OHFas part of a \$6,000,000 project to acquire, restore, enhance, and protect prairie, wetland, and associated wildlife habitat in Redwood County, Minnesota. The project will pursue voluntary acquisition of up to 385.68 acres near existing Tribal lands and bison feasibility-study areas. Acquired land will be owned by LSIC and managed for habitat conservation through prairie restoration, wetland protection, invasive-species control, habitat monitoring, and rotational bison conservation grazing. A confirmed \$1,000,000 MPCA food sovereignty set-aside will support complementary bison-related implementation and infrastructure while LSIC funds operations and stewardship costs.

**Design and Scope of Work**

The Lower Sioux Prairie and Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Project will acquire, restore, enhance, and permanently protect prairie, wetland, and associated wildlife habitat in Redwood County, Minnesota, on or near the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation. The project is designed as a scalable fee-title acquisition and habitat restoration initiative. LSIC has identified a preliminary acquisition pool of up to approximately 385.68 acres across five agricultural parcels in Sherman and Paxton Townships. The working implementation target is approximately 250 to 300 acres so the project can preserve adequate funding for acquisition, restoration, enhancement, fencing, water infrastructure, planning, monitoring, and long-term stewardship.

LSIC will pursue voluntary acquisition from willing sellers. Seller outreach is currently in progress and will be led by LSIC buffalo project leaders. Parcels closest to existing LSIC lands and the current bison feasibility-study area will be prioritized because they provide the strongest opportunity to expand a contiguous prairie-wetland habitat complex, reduce fragmentation, and support efficient long-term habitat management. Final acquisition decisions will be based on seller willingness, appraisal-supported value, due diligence, ecological value, restoration feasibility, proximity to existing Tribal lands, and ability to deliver measurable habitat outcomes within the available budget.

Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars will support fee-title acquisition by LSIC and direct conservation project costs, including appraisals, surveys, title work, legal and closing services, ecological assessment, wetland review, habitat restoration planning, grazing-management planning, native prairie seed, site preparation, restoration labor, invasive-species control, wetland protection measures, bison-compatible fencing, water infrastructure, habitat monitoring, and project-specific professional services. Acquisition is budgeted at up to \$15,000 per acre for planning purposes; final purchase prices will be determined through appraisal, negotiation, due diligence, and applicable grant requirements.

Following acquisition, LSIC will complete parcel-level habitat assessment before restoration and enhancement begins. Current land cover will be estimated using National Wetlands Inventory data, USDA Cropland Data Layer information, Redwood County Beacon aerial review, and LSIC Office of the Environment review. Previously tilled or cropped acres will be prioritized for native prairie restoration. CRP, grassland, wetland, and wetland-adjacent areas will be evaluated for enhancement, protection, buffers, exclusion fencing, seasonal restrictions, water placement, and monitoring as appropriate.

Restoration and enhancement on non-OHF acquired lands will occur on existing LSIC Tribal lands associated with the bison feasibility-study area. Work may include prairie enhancement, invasive-species control, wetland protection, fencing, water infrastructure, conservation-grazing infrastructure, habitat monitoring, and adaptive management. These activities will complement, not duplicate, OHF-funded acquisition and restoration work.

Bison will be used as a conservation grazing tool, not as a commercial livestock enterprise. The project will use rotational grazing supported by 10-foot double exterior fencing, interior rotational fencing, and one water system per major pasture. The LSIC Office of the Environment will lead habitat restoration and ecological monitoring. Ongoing bison operations and long-term stewardship will be funded by LSIC, not OHF.

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

This proposal will protect, restore, and enhance prairie, wetland, CRP/grassland, and associated wildlife habitat in Redwood County by acquiring agricultural land, restoring non-CRP agricultural uplands to native prairie where appropriate, protecting wetlands, and managing the resulting habitat through adaptive conservation practices.

The working implementation target of approximately 250-300 acres is intentionally lower than the full preliminary acquisition pool so that LSIC can preserve adequate funding for native prairie restoration, wetland protection, conservation fencing, water infrastructure, habitat planning, and monitoring. If final acquisition costs are lower than budgeted or additional leverage becomes available, LSIC may acquire additional acres from the identified acquisition pool.

The LSIC Office of the Environment will serve as the habitat restoration and ecological monitoring lead. Its role will include reviewing wetland resources, advising on restoration prescriptions, identifying invasive-species concerns, supporting habitat monitoring, and coordinating with the bison project team to ensure conservation grazing supports habitat objectives.

Before final implementation, LSIC will complete a desktop ecological review to confirm wetland acreage, current land cover, restoration needs, and potential sensitive resources. Threatened and endangered species, Species in Greatest Conservation Need, native plant communities, pollinator resources, grassland birds, and invasive species should be reviewed through the LSIC Office of the Environment and, if time allows, Minnesota DNR Natural Heritage review before final submission or during project due diligence.

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

Timing is critical because LSIC has completed bison feasibility planning, identified a preliminary acquisition pool near existing Tribal lands and bison planning areas, and begun seller outreach. If willing sellers are confirmed, OHF funding would allow LSIC to advance from planning to acquisition, restoration, enhancement, and long-term habitat management. Current project information indicates that four of the five parcels are in CRP status and one is non-CRP agricultural land, creating an opportunity to protect existing conservation cover, restore agricultural acreage, and protect an estimated 32.84 acres of wetland within the Mell/Deborah et al. parcel. The project also leverages a confirmed \$1,000,000 MPCA food sovereignty set-aside for LSIC’s bison project, not yet received or expended. OHF funding would complement that set-aside by supporting land acquisition, habitat restoration/enhancement, infrastructure, planning, and monitoring within the allowable acquisition and restoration/enhancement timelines.

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

The project will expand habitat connectivity by acquiring and restoring lands near existing LSIC lands and the current bison feasibility-study area. Parcels closest to existing LSIC lands and feasibility-study Sites A and B will be ranked highest because they provide the strongest opportunity to expand a functional prairie-wetland habitat-management area rather than create isolated conservation parcels. This prioritization approach will help LSIC build a larger, more connected conservation block that can be managed efficiently for prairie, wetland, grassland, and wildlife habitat.

The proposed acquisition area includes agricultural parcels near County Highway 13, County Highway 2, Porter Avenue, and 320th Street. LSIC’s feasibility study identifies Site A as approximately 84 acres and Site B as approximately 27 acres near these corridors and the proposed bison range. Acquisition of nearby parcels would expand the land base available for habitat restoration, wetland protection, and long-term conservation grazing. By increasing the size and continuity of managed habitat, the project will reduce fragmentation and improve the ecological function of the area.

The project will address fragmentation by restoring non-CRP agricultural acres to native prairie, enhancing existing CRP or grassland cover where appropriate, protecting wetlands and wetland-adjacent areas, and using bison as a conservation grazing tool to support long-term habitat structure and diversity. The project will also allow LSIC to plan fencing, water infrastructure, grazing units, wetland buffers, and restoration activities at a landscape scale rather than parcel by parcel.

The final map exhibit will use the feasibility-study map as the base and overlay the five preliminary acquisition parcels, County Highway 13, County Highway 2, Porter Avenue, 320th Street, and mapped wetlands when available. If not all parcels can be acquired, LSIC will prioritize parcels that most directly connect to existing Tribal lands, expand the bison habitat-management area, protect wetlands, and create the strongest prairie-wetland habitat complex.

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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

**Prairie**

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

**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 create a permanent conservation legacy by moving approximately 250-300 acres, scalable up to approximately 385.68 acres if acquisition and restoration costs allow, into LSIC-owned habitat protection, restoration, enhancement, and long-term stewardship. The lands will be acquired in fee by LSIC and managed for prairie, wetland, and associated wildlife habitat.

The project will produce measurable conservation outcomes by:

- acquiring land in fee title for permanent Tribal ownership and conservation management;
- restoring non-CRP agricultural acres to native prairie where appropriate;
- enhancing existing CRP/grassland or upland cover where appropriate;
- protecting wetlands and wetland-adjacent habitat through site-specific management;
- implementing bison conservation grazing through a written habitat and grazing management plan;
- monitoring vegetation, invasive species, wetland conditions, grazing impacts, and restoration success;
- providing public access consistent with applicable law, Tribal self-governing harvest regulations, habitat objectives, and public safety.

The bison component strengthens the long-term management strategy because grazing can be used to create structural heterogeneity, manage vegetation, and support prairie function when implemented through adaptive conservation planning. LSIC’s feasibility study provides the technical foundation for this approach, including land viability, rotational grazing alternatives, infrastructure needs, and community engagement.

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

Not applicable. The project is designed to produce permanent outcomes through fee-title acquisition by LSIC and long-term habitat stewardship.

**Outcomes**

**Programs in prairie region:**

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *This outcome will be measured by the number of priority acres acquired in fee title, acres restored to prairie, acres enhanced, and wetland acres protected or buffered. Evaluation will include completion of acquisition due diligence, habitat restoration planning, native seeding, wetland protection measures, conservation-grazing infrastructure, and monitoring. LSIC will track vegetation establishment, invasive species, wetland condition, grazing impacts, and habitat-management actions over time. Parcels closest to existing Tribal lands and bison feasibility-study areas will be prioritized because they strengthen a larger habitat complex for fish, game, and wildlife. Results will be documented through maps, records, monitoring notes, and reports.*

**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 replace prior non-legacy funding. The MPCA food sovereignty set-aside will leverage eligible bison-related implementation and infrastructure costs. OHF funds will support acquisition, restoration, enhancement, habitat infrastructure, planning, and monitoring, with both funding sources structured to complement one another and avoid duplication.

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

LSIC will sustain and maintain project outcomes through Tribal general funds. LSIC will fund ongoing bison operations, including herd care, staffing, feed, veterinary costs, and routine annual operations, outside of the OHF request.

The LSIC Office of the Environment will serve as the habitat restoration and ecological monitoring lead. Joseph

Goodthunder, Agricultural Coordinator, will serve as project manager. Long-term stewardship will include habitat monitoring, invasive-species control, maintenance of conservation fencing and water infrastructure, wetland protection, rotational grazing management, and adaptive management based on monitoring results.

**Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2028	OHF / MPCA / LSIC general funds	Complete acquisition due diligence and begin acquisition Develop restoration and grazing-management plans Begin initial habitat preparation where acquisition is complete	Develop restoration and grazing-management plans Begin initial habitat preparation where acquisition is complete	Begin initial habitat preparation where acquisition is complete
2029	OHF / MPCA / LSIC general funds	Install necessary fencing and water infrastructure	Begin native prairie restoration on cropped acres	Conduct baseline habitat monitoring
2030	OHF / LSIC general funds	Continue prairie establishment and enhancement	Implement adaptive conservation grazing where appropriate	Monitor vegetation, wetlands, and invasive species
2031	OHF / LSIC general funds	Continue restoration and enhancement	Maintain fencing and water infrastructure	Adjust management based on monitoring
2032 and beyond	LSIC general funds	Continue long-term stewardship	Continue habitat monitoring and invasive-species control	Maintain public access and safety controls

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

The project is led by the Lower Sioux Indian Community and reflects a community-directed conservation effort that connects habitat protection, food sovereignty, cultural restoration, and intergenerational education. LSIC’s bison feasibility study identifies the Tribe’s goal of re-establishing bison on Tribal farmlands to restore food sovereignty and reclaim a traditional food source. While the primary purpose of this Outdoor Heritage Fund proposal is habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement, the project also supports a broader Tribal conservation model grounded in long-term stewardship of land, water, wildlife, and culturally significant species.

Community engagement completed during the feasibility study demonstrates strong support for the return of bison. Of respondents who answered the final support question, 95.92% supported the Tribe’s effort to restore a bison herd. Survey respondents also expressed strong support for cultural programs, educational programs, meat distribution to elders and community members, natural resource management, trading animals, meat, or hides with other Tribes, and tanning hides or using other parts of the bison. This feedback shows that the project is not only a land and habitat initiative, but also a community-supported effort to restore relationships among land, wildlife, culture, health, and future generations.

The project will provide public benefit through permanent habitat protection, public access consistent with applicable law, education, viewing opportunities where safe and appropriate, and restoration of prairie, wetland, and grassland habitat. The project may also support educational programming that helps community members, youth, visitors, and partners understand the ecological role of bison, the importance of prairie-wetland systems, and LSIC’s leadership in conservation.

By centering Tribal land stewardship, the project reaches diverse communities in Minnesota and offers a conservation approach that recognizes Indigenous knowledge, community priorities, habitat restoration, and wildlife management as connected rather than separate goals.

### Activity Details

#### Requirements

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

#### **Where does the activity take place?**

Other : Restoration and enhancement activities will occur on lands to be acquired through this proposal and owned by the Lower Sioux Indian Community. Once acquired, the lands will be Tribal lands managed for permanent habitat protection, prairie and wetland restoration, habitat enhancement, and long-term conservation stewardship. Wetlands are present or expected on portions of the acquisition area, but public-waters status will be confirmed through due diligence and applicable mapping before final restoration or enhancement work occurs.

#### 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

**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:**

Land acquired in fee with Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars will be open to the public taking of fish and game during the open season unless otherwise provided by law. Public access will be managed consistent with applicable law, LSIC ownership, Tribal self-governing harvest regulations, habitat-management objectives,

and public safety. LSIC may establish site-specific access rules, seasonal limitations, or safety restrictions for active bison grazing units, wetland protection areas, restoration areas, or other sensitive locations where necessary to protect habitat values, wildlife, and public safety.

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

Tribal

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

Tribal

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

Yes

**Previous OHF Appropriations**

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

No

**Timeline**

<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
Funding secured and accomplishment plan finalized	July-September 2027
Seller outreach by LSIC buffalo project leaders	In progress; continues through funding and acquisition period
Parcel prioritization and willing-seller discussions	2026-2028
Appraisals, surveys, title review, environmental due diligence	2028
Purchase agreements and fee-title acquisition by LSIC	2028-2029
Habitat assessment and restoration/grazing-management planning	Begins after acquisition
Install fencing and water infrastructure	2028-2031, depending on acquisition timing
Native prairie restoration and enhancement	2028-2032, depending on acquisition timing
Habitat monitoring and adaptive management	Begins after restoration and continues long-term
Long-term stewardship supported by LSIC general funds	Ongoing

**Budget**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	-	-	-
Contracts	\$325,000	\$650,000	MPCA food sovereignty set-aside	\$975,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$4,125,000	-	-	\$4,125,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$300,000	-	-	\$300,000
Direct Support Services	\$100,000	-	-	\$100,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$50,000	\$100,000	MPCA food sovereignty set-aside	\$150,000
Supplies/Materials	\$100,000	\$250,000	MPCA food sovereignty set-aside	\$350,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	-	<b>\$6,000,000</b>

**Amount of Request:** \$5,000,000

**Amount of Leverage:** \$1,000,000

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 20.0%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$100,000

**As a % of the total request:** 2.0%

**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:	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	-	\$1,000,000
% of Total Leverage:	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	

N/A

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

LSIC has a confirmed \$1,000,000 MPCA food sovereignty set-aside for the bison project. Funds have not been expended. They will support complementary bison-related implementation and infrastructure without duplicating or supplanting OHF costs. Formal documentation, allowable uses, disbursement timing, and allocation details will be provided when available by LSIC.

**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?**

At 50% funding, LSIC would reduce the number of acres acquired and prioritize willing-seller parcels closest to existing Tribal lands and the bison feasibility-study area. Lower-priority parcels would be deferred. The reduced project would still include acquisition, restoration/enhancement, habitat planning, wetland protection, fencing, water infrastructure, and monitoring, but total acres protected and restored would be reduced.

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

No OHF personnel costs are requested, so personnel would not be adjusted if partially funded. LSIC will fund staff involvement and stewardship separately. Direct Support Services would be reduced where possible, but not proportionately, because acquisition coordination, tracking, reporting, procurement, documentation, due diligence, and compliance remain required under a smaller project scope.

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

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

At 30% funding, LSIC would substantially reduce acreage acquired and select only highest-priority willing-seller parcels closest to existing Tribal lands and bison planning areas. Restoration, fencing, water, and monitoring would be right-sized to acquired acres. Fixed due-diligence, legal, appraisal, planning, and compliance activities would not decrease proportionately at that scale.

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

No OHF personnel costs are requested, so personnel would not be adjusted if funded at 30%. LSIC would fund staff involvement separately. DSS would be reduced where possible, but not proportionately, because acquisition coordination, fiscal tracking, reporting, procurement, due diligence, documentation, and compliance remain necessary even for fewer parcels acquired.

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

**Contracts**

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

Contracts include prairie restoration labor, seedbed preparation, native seeding, invasive-species control, fencing installation, water-infrastructure installation, wetland protection measures, grazing-unit construction, habitat implementation, and specialized contractor work necessary to restore and enhance acquired lands. Contracted work will be limited to direct project activities supporting habitat outcomes and conservation management.

**Professional Services**

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

Appraisals

Design/Engineering

Other : Ecological assessment, wetland review, habitat restoration planning, grazing-management planning, invasive-species assessment, habitat monitoring plan development, GIS/map preparation, and specialized

conservation planning needed to design and implement prairie restoration, wetland protection, and bison conservation-grazing management.

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

## Fee Acquisition

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

LSIC has identified five preliminary acquisition parcels. The anticipated number of fee-title acquisition transactions is up to five, depending on seller willingness, appraisal, negotiated value, due diligence, parcel priority, and available project funds.

## Direct Support Services

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

Direct Support Services were limited to project-specific tasks necessary to implement this proposal, including acquisition coordination, procurement, fiscal tracking, documentation, grant reporting, compliance, and coordination among project partners. No general organizational overhead or unrelated shared support costs are included. Costs will be tracked to this project and adjusted to actual implementation needs.

## Other Equipment/Tools

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

Examples include project-specific fencing tools, gates, water-system components, monitoring supplies, signage, and smaller tools needed for habitat restoration, conservation-grazing infrastructure, wetland protection, and long-term monitoring. Equipment/tools will be limited to items directly necessary for restoration, enhancement, habitat management, and public-safety implementation.

## Federal Funds

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

No

**Output Tables**

**Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	0	80	0	0	80
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	33	242	0	0	275
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	33	162	0	0	195
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>550</b>

**Restoration/Enhancement Acres of OHF Acquired Lands (Table 1a.1)**

	RESTORE: Lands acquired in this proposal	RESTORE: Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	RESTORE Total	ENHANCE: Lands acquired in this proposal	ENHANCE: Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	ENHANCE Total
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	80	-	80	195	-	195
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>195</b>

**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.)	-	-	-	-
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	-	-	-
Easements	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	\$575,000	-	-	\$575,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$492,600	\$3,632,400	-	-	\$4,125,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$150,000	\$150,000	-	-	\$300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$642,600</b>	<b>\$4,357,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	0	0	80	0	80
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	-	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	275	0	275
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	195	0	195
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>550</b>

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	\$575,000	-	\$575,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$4,125,000	-	\$4,125,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	\$300,000	-	\$300,000
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	-	<b>\$5,000,000</b>

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

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	\$7,187	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$14,927	\$15,009	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$4,545	\$925	-	-

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	\$7,187	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$15,000	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	\$1,538	-

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles**

**Parcels**

**Sign-up Criteria?**

No

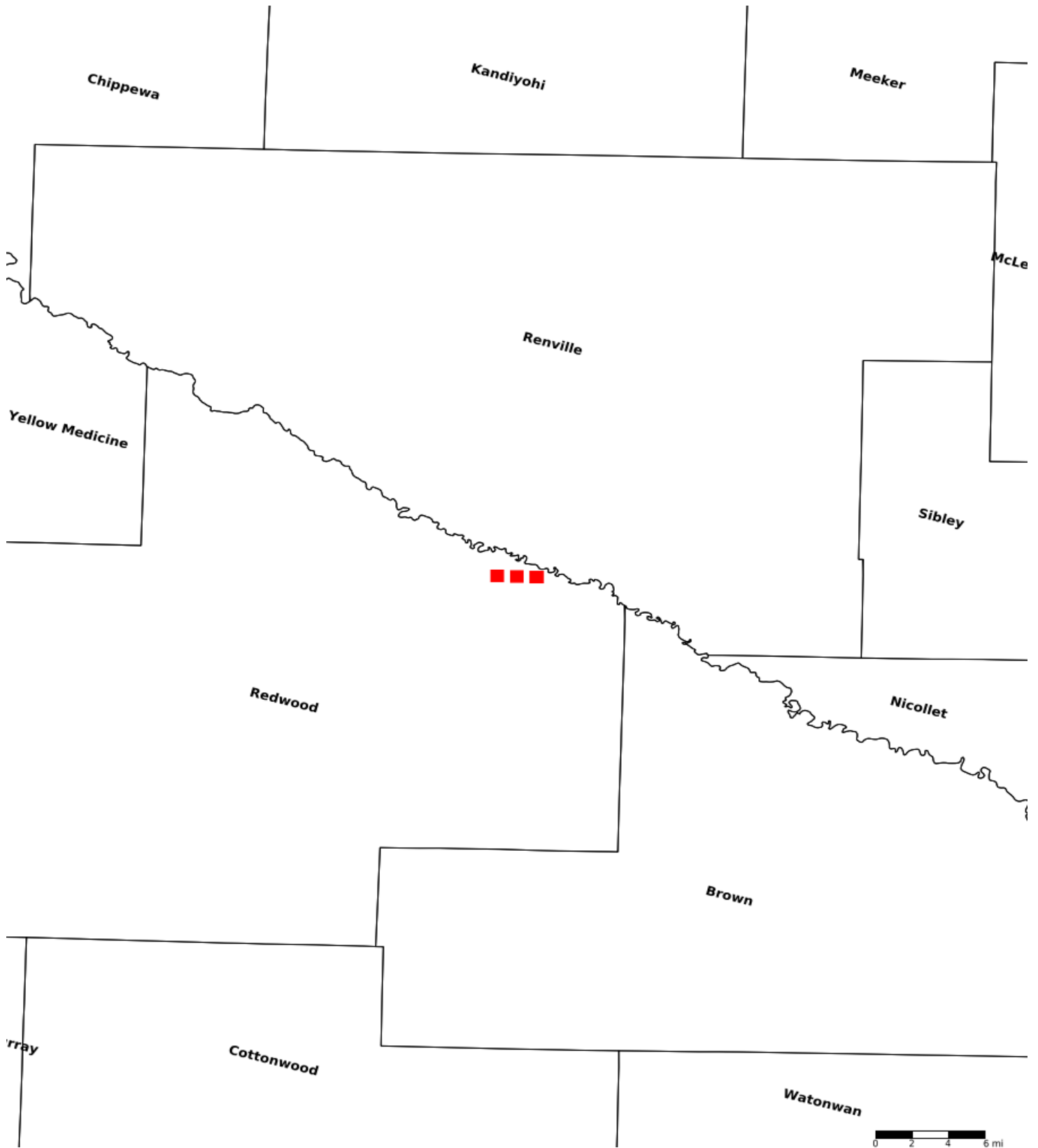
**Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:**

Parcels will be prioritized based on proximity to existing LSIC lands and the current bison feasibility-study area; ability to expand or connect prairie, wetland, and grassland habitat; restoration potential; wetland protection value; suitability for rotational bison conservation grazing; long-term management efficiency; seller willingness; appraisal-supported value; and ability to complete acquisition, restoration, enhancement, and monitoring within the project budget.

**Protect in Fee Parcels**

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Hanna #2 / Dale R. & Nancy A. Hanna	Redwood	11234208	80	\$1,037,129	Yes
Hogan #4 / John L Hogan	Redwood	11234207	80	\$1,037,129	No
Hogan #5 / John L. Hogan	Redwood	11234208	120	\$1,555,694	Yes
Mell/Deborah et al. #1	Redwood	11235212	66	\$851,483	Yes
Neitzel #3 / Katherine Neitze	Redwood	11234208	40	\$518,565	Yes

# Parcel Map



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

# Lower Sioux Prairie and Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Project

Outdoor Heritage Fund request: \$5,000,000 | Total project: \$6,000,000 | Redwood County, Minnesota

## Project Snapshot

The Lower Sioux Indian Community seeks to acquire, restore, enhance, and permanently protect prairie, wetland, and associated wildlife habitat near existing Tribal lands and bison feasibility-study areas. The project will pursue voluntary acquisition of up to 385.68 acres, with a working implementation target of approximately 250-300 acres so acquisition, restoration, fencing, water infrastructure, habitat planning, and monitoring are fully supported. Bison will be used as a conservation grazing tool, not a commercial livestock enterprise, with food sovereignty and cultural restoration as complementary benefits.

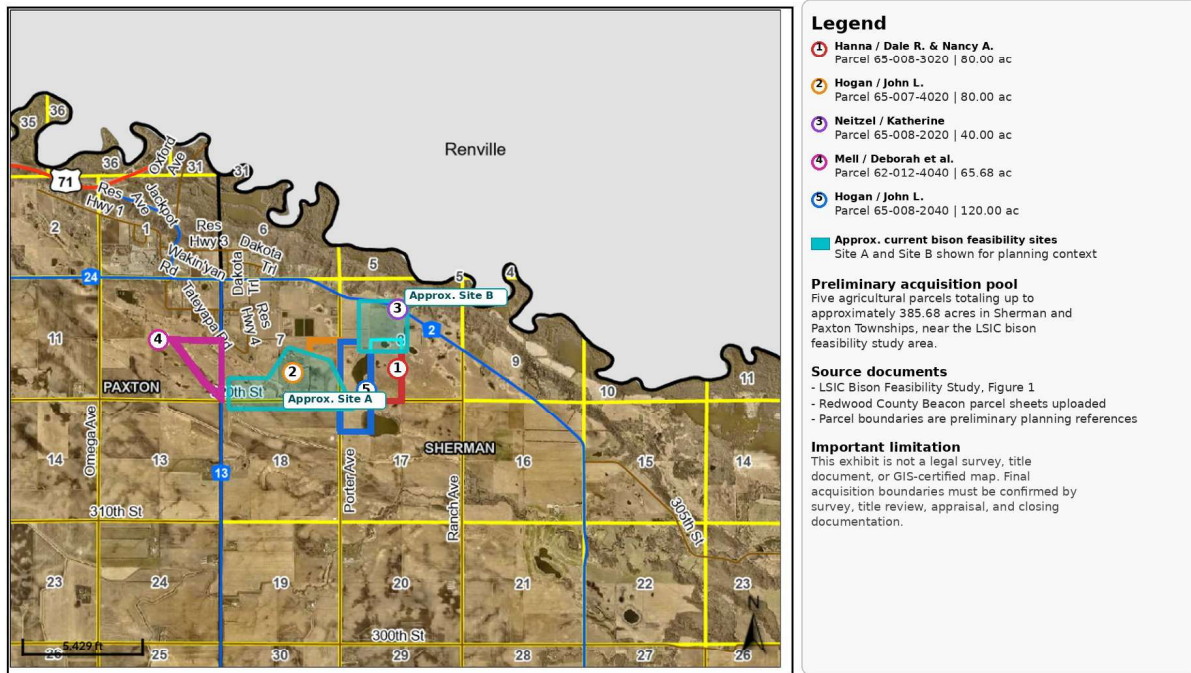
## Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How

Element	Proposal Detail
Who	Lower Sioux Indian Community. Project manager: Joseph Goodthunder, Agricultural Coordinator. Fiscal contact: Loretta Dixon, Grants Manager.
What	Voluntary fee-title acquisition, prairie restoration, wetland protection, habitat enhancement, and bison conservation grazing infrastructure.
Where	Up to five agricultural parcels totaling 385.68 acres in Sherman and Paxton Townships, Redwood County, near LSIC lands and current bison feasibility sites.
When	Seller outreach is in progress. Acquisition would begin after funds are secured, with restoration and enhancement following acquisition.
Why	Protect key core parcels for fish, game, and wildlife; expand prairie-wetland habitat; reduce fragmentation; and support long-term conservation stewardship.
How	Prioritize parcels closest to Tribal lands; acquire from willing sellers; restore cropped acres; enhance CRP/wetland areas; monitor outcomes; manage with rotational bison grazing.

## Preliminary Acquisition Area

### Preliminary Acquisition Parcel Overlay

Lower Sioux Prairie and Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Project



Draft planning exhibit generated from uploaded Beacon parcel maps and LSIC feasibility study map. For grant-development use only.

Map is preliminary for grant planning only. Final boundaries depend on seller willingness, appraisal, survey, title review, and closing.

Sources: LSIC Bison Feasibility Study, February 2026; Redwood County Beacon parcel sheets; project updates provided by LSIC.

# Project Details and Conservation Outcomes

## Parcel Pool and Working Target

Parcel	Acres	Status	Primary Conservation Role
Hogan #4	80.00	Non-CRP	Restoration-priority agricultural parcel near feasibility area.
Hanna #2	80.00	CRP	Fee protection and habitat enhancement.
Neitzel #3	40.00	CRP	Fee protection and habitat enhancement.
Hogan #5	120.00	CRP	Fee protection and habitat enhancement.
Mell/Deborah et al. #1	65.68	CRP/wetland	Approximately half wetland; wetland protection/enhancement pending NWI/GIS verification.

Total preliminary pool: 385.68 acres. Working implementation target: approximately 250-300 acres so acquisition, restoration, infrastructure, and monitoring remain fully funded.

## Budget and Leverage

Budget Category	OHF Request	Leverage	Purpose
Fee acquisition without PILT	\$4,125,000	\$0	Voluntary acquisition of priority parcels.
Professional services	\$300,000	\$0	Appraisals, surveys, title/legal, design, ecological planning.
Contracts	\$325,000	\$650,000	Restoration labor, fencing, water infrastructure, implementation.
Supplies/materials	\$100,000	\$250,000	Native seed, fencing materials, water materials, monitoring supplies.
Other equipment/tools	\$50,000	\$100,000	Project-specific tools, gates, water components, monitoring items.
Direct support services	\$100,000	\$0	Project-specific fiscal tracking, reporting, procurement, compliance.

Leverage: confirmed \$1,000,000 MPCA food sovereignty set-aside for complementary bison-related implementation and infrastructure. Ongoing bison operations and long-term stewardship will be funded by LSIC, not the OHF request.

## Conservation Outcomes

- Protect key core parcels for fish, game, and wildlife through fee-title Tribal ownership.
- Restore approximately 80 acres of non-CRP agricultural land to prairie, pending final due diligence.
- Enhance CRP, wetland, and grassland acres through native vegetation management, wetland protection, and monitoring.
- Use bison as a rotational conservation grazing tool to support prairie structure and habitat management.
- Allow public access for taking of fish and game during open season unless otherwise provided by law, with site-specific safety and habitat protections for active bison units, wetlands, and restoration areas.

## Implementation Sequence

**1. Secure funds and finalize plan:** seller outreach and parcel prioritization. **2. Acquire willing-seller parcels:** appraisal, survey, title review, due diligence, closing. **3. Restore and enhance:** native seeding, wetland protection, fencing, water systems, invasive-species control. **4. Steward long term:** monitoring, adaptive management, bison grazing plan, LSIC general-fund maintenance.

## Pending Verification

Seller willingness, parcel values, exact wetland acres, structure/improvement status, final access rules, and any prior OHF appropriation history remain pending and will be updated before final submission.

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