



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2019 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 07/29/2020

Project Title: Protecting Strategic Forestlands Near Camp Ripley

Funds Recommended: \$3,348,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2019, 1st Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 3(a)

Appropriation Language: \$3,348,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with The Conservation Fund to acquire in fee and restore and enhance forest wildlife habitat in Cass, Crow Wing, and Morrison Counties in proximity to the Minnesota National Guard Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape. Land must be acquired for state forests under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 7; for wildlife management under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8; for scientific and natural areas under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 5; or as county forest land or municipal forest land. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Amendment Description: The trail language has been amended to address potential future development of trails, and that no net gain of existing trails is the desired approach in this instance.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Emilee Nelson

Title: Minnesota Representative

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Location Information

County Location(s): Cass and Crow Wing.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest

- Forest / Prairie Transition

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest

Narrative

Abstract

Building on multiple years of conservation success, the Camp Ripley Partnership will protect via fee title acquisition high quality wildlife habitat in Cass, Crow Wing, and Morrison Counties to prevent conversion of forestland habitat to farmland or fragmented, unprotected private ownership. This will benefit wildlife and outdoor recreation that is vital to communities in the Brainerd Lakes area. The Conservation Fund will acquire lands in fee to be owned and managed for wildlife habitat purposes by public entities and open for public recreation. Other ecologically important habitat outside of the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape will also be targeted for protection.

Design and Scope of Work

The program area lies on the divide between northern forests and the forest/prairie transition. The natural beauty and pristine waters are a reasonable drive from the Twin Cities and are famous for outdoor recreationists to enjoy a multitude of activities. The rich natural resources continue to draw thousands to the area, and this pressure has resulted in splitting larger parcels of private forested areas into smaller, subdivided parcels for potential development. The fragmentation of the landscape has had damaging effects on both wildlife populations in the short term, and management needs of the northern forests and associated habitats in the long term.

At the center lies Camp Ripley, which in 2016 was designated as a federal Sentinel Landscape; one of only six in the nation. This designation by both State and Federal entities has shown success in coordinating strategies among federal, state, and local partners to direct funding to protect key habitats near military bases. With input from local government, stakeholders, and federal agency partners, the Camp Ripley Partnership identified the desired outcomes of protecting the landscape's wildlife management areas, watersheds, and agricultural resources. Because of the national recognition that Camp Ripley and partners have received for habitat protection through the help of state sources, including the Outdoor Heritage Fund, this proposal seizes on the opportunity to leverage even more federal funding to protect wildlife habitat in Minnesota.

Parcels to be acquired will be identified by Camp Ripley partners using existing science-based models and will have quality habitat, add to wildlife corridors and large habitat complexes, and lessen the threat of future fragmentation in this ecologically rich area of the state. Evaluation criteria include ecological and habitat factors for resident and migratory wildlife species. The selection criteria will ensure that projects will provide landscape-scale benefits that complement previous and future investments in conservation, and will allow for protection of large forested parcels that are under imminent threat of conversion.

Lands will be protected and managed for forest habitat by the appropriate state agency or county land management department. The protected parcels will be managed under standards of third-party certification of sustainable forestry management. Certification ensures that forestry activities are conducted in a manner that maintains the forest's biodiversity, productivity, and ecological processes, and that forest practices meet high

standards of ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

The Conservation Fund, with assistance from the Camp Ripley Partnership which is coordinated by The Nature Conservancy staff, will discuss these protection priorities with local officials to ensure that permanent protection and eventual ownership aligns with the conservation goals of the community. The best ownership will be determined depending on what makes the most sense for habitat management needs and to ensure the sustainability of the ecological integrity of the site long-term. Fee acquisition and related activities to protect the identified parcels will be completed by The Conservation Fund.

How does the plan address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species?

Over 700 rare features or species occurrences have been documented by the MN Biological Survey in the Sentinel Landscape area. These lands provide habitat for several Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), which include the Northern Long-Eared Bat (threatened), Bald Eagle, and Gray Wolf. There are 65 SGCN found on Camp Ripley. Camp Ripley is home to one of the southern-most wolf populations in Minnesota and the state's highest population of Red-shouldered Hawks which inhabit the large expanse of mature forests found on Camp Ripley, some of the best Red-Shouldered Hawk habitat in the state.

MN DNR 2009 and 2010 fish surveys on the Crow Wing River (Staples to confluence of Mississippi) and Mississippi River (Brainerd to Little Falls) indicate high quality fish communities of Walleye, Muskellunge, and Small-mouth Bass.

The majority of the project area falls within the Anoka Sand Plain and the Hardwood Hills Ecological Subsections. Currently much of the Hardwood Hills subsection is farmed. Important areas of forest and prairie exist, but they are continuously threatened with conversion and fragmentation. Urban development and agriculture occur in one third of the Anoka Sand Plain. This program seeks to protect remaining lands from the threat of development or agricultural pressure, as well as sustain the current connectivity of these habitats.

Describe how the plan uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

Targeted parcels for protection will be identified using existing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) modeling, including the North Central Conservation Roundtable (NCCR) GIS model created by The Nature Conservancy that identifies biodiversity significance, high conservation value forests, and critical ecological patches and connections, as well as water quality and existing wetlands and floodplains in the areas identified in this proposal. The science-based models are intended as a tool to help conservation partners evaluate potential conservation projects and develop coordinated support for proposals.

These models are excellent at determining relative ecological importance, but they don't evaluate the initial and long-term costs associated with acquisition. Partners will use these ecological models to weigh the need for permanent protection against the estimated original acquisition costs as well as the long-term restoration and management costs, so that public funds are spent most efficiently. Parcels will also be evaluated for size and adjacency to existing protected lands to build more robust habitat complexes. Our approach will focus on the return on investment, considering ecological and economic factors, that this grant will provide to Minnesotans.

Which two sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are most applicable to this project?

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation

Which two other plans are addressed in this program?

- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- 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

Northern Forest

- Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement

Does this program include leveraged funding?

Yes

Explain the leverage:

The Camp Ripley partnership has been successful in protection of key parcels surrounding Minnesota’s largest Game Refuge and has brought over \$26 million in federal funds to habitat protection. Federal FY18 REPI program recommendations for Camp Ripley are \$3 million. These federal dollars require matching funds, and funding from this proposal will be used as needed match to tap into these federal dollars.

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

This request is not supplanting nor a substitution of any previous funding.

Non-OHF Appropriations

Year	Source	Amount
2007-present	Department of Defense/Army National Guard Bureau	\$26,000,000
2010-present	LCCMR	\$860,000

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

Public entities, including DNR and counties, that will own and manage lands included in this proposal will be responsible for habitat management. DNR Forestry uses the Forest Management Investment Account to restore and maintain forested parcels if restoration or maintenance is required. Counties that will own protected lands use certified forest management and adhere to MN Forest Resource Council management standards that require ecological plans prior to managed harvests. Bud-capping and seedling plantings are practices that these entities currently utilize to maintain forest health.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020 and ongoing	DNR Forest Management Investment Account	Manage and monitor lands consistent with forest certification and management plans		
2020 and ongoing	Cass and Crow Wing Counties	Manage and monitor lands consistent with forest certification and management plans		

Activity Details

Requirements

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

Yes

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

No

Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:

We will speak with local governments to make sure they are aware of activities and pursue projects that make sense with local goals. Since the Camp Ripley Partnership began, biennial public meetings, multiple field trip events and celebrations have occurred that invited public and local official participation.

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

Yes

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program?

No

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?

No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?

Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:

None.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

- State of MN
- County
- Local Unit of Government

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

- WMA
- State Forest
- County Forest

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

We anticipate to close between 3-5 acquisitions with this appropriation.

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

Yes

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

There are existing routes on potential project parcels that were developed for timber harvest and management purposes. In addition to forestry related activities, these routes have been used by hunters and others for recreation, and some of that use has included ATV travel (previously approved accomplishment plan language for FY17 FA 02 and FY18 FA 02).

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

Yes

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?

County land departments and the state agencies will maintain and monitor these trails and roads under the respective forest certification standards. Temporary tote roads may be developed pursuant to county forest management plans (previously approved language for FY17 FA 02 and FY18 FA02).

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

~~No~~ Yes

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

No new trails are planned for development at this time or in the future. If a new trail is developed in the future, the County will ensure no net gain of new trails occurs on the property. Allowable uses would be motorized and non-motorized use unless posted closed.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?

Management of the property will be for forest wildlife habitat and forestry purposes. The property will be managed to strict environmental standards under third-party forest certification.

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

Yes

Some acquired parcels may require restoration or enhancement such as planting seedlings or bud capping. Entities that will eventually own and manage properties are willing to restore sites if necessary.

Other OHF Appropriation Awards

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Identify ecological sites relative to costs with Camp Ripley partners	Summer 2019
Discuss sites with local officials and communities	Ongoing
Negotiate acquisitions with willing landowners on identified priority acquisitions	Fall 2019 to 2022
Protect properties	2020 to 2022
Convey protected properties to public entities for long-term management	2020 to 2023

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2022

Budget

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$120,000	-		\$120,000
Contracts	\$100,000	-		\$100,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$220,000	\$500,000	Department of Defense	\$720,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,739,000	\$2,500,000	Department of Defense	\$5,239,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-		-
Easement Stewardship	-	-		-
Travel	\$7,000	-		\$7,000
Professional Services	\$80,000	-		\$80,000
Direct Support Services	\$17,000	-		\$17,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$15,000	-		\$15,000
Capital Equipment	-	-		-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-		-
Supplies/Materials	-	-		-
DNR IDP	\$50,000	-		\$50,000
Grand Total	\$3,348,000	\$3,000,000		\$6,348,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MN Representative	0.3	4.0	\$120,000	-		\$120,000

Amount of Request: \$3,348,000

Amount of Leverage: \$3,000,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 89.61%

DSS + Personnel: \$137,000

As a % of the total request: 4.09%

Easement Stewardship: -

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?

With the decrease in the appropriation there is a reduction of acres protected in fee, as well as budget items to reflect a reduced number of projects.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The Conservation Fund is the partner of the national Army National Guard under an agreement to utilize federal REPI acquisition funds, which this proposal will leverage, to acquire environmentally-sensitive lands near Camp Ripley. Current approved federal funding for Camp Ripley is \$3 million of the \$90 million REPI budget.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?

\$100,000 is for R/E work that will be completed if needed on protected sites, such as bud capping and planting tree seedlings. Entities that will eventually own and manage properties are willing to restore sites if necessary.

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

None.

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

No

Direct Support Services

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

The Conservation Fund staff that will be directly involved with this program keep records to track direct time spent on projects by grant source. We have used those past metrics to estimate the costs for this grant request.

Federal Funds

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

Yes

Are the funds confirmed?

Yes

Is Confirmation Document attached?

[Yes](#)

- Cash : \$3,000,000

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	200	0	200
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	2,700	0	2,700
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	2,900	0	2,900

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	\$250,000	-	\$250,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	\$3,098,000	-	\$3,098,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$3,348,000	-	\$3,348,000

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	100	0	0	100	200
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	100	0	0	2,600	2,700
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	200	0	0	2,700	2,900

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	-	\$150,000	-	-	\$100,000	\$250,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	\$120,000	-	-	\$2,978,000	\$3,098,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	\$270,000	-	-	\$3,078,000	\$3,348,000

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	\$1,250	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	\$1,147	-
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	-	\$1,500	-	-	\$1,000
Protect in Fee w/o State	-	\$1,200	-	-	\$1,145

PILT Liability					
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

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 ~ *Protection of key forest-prairie transition habitats will enhance habitat for key migratory waterfowl and species of greatest conservation need. Grassland and forest plant species diversity will be a measure of success, as well as temporal species surveys conducted by DNR.*

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ~ *Improved connectivity to create larger, more robust and durable habitat for healthy wildlife populations can be measured over time with multiple models (NCCR, DNR Watershed Health Assessment Framework, MN DNR Wildlife Action Network).*

Parcels

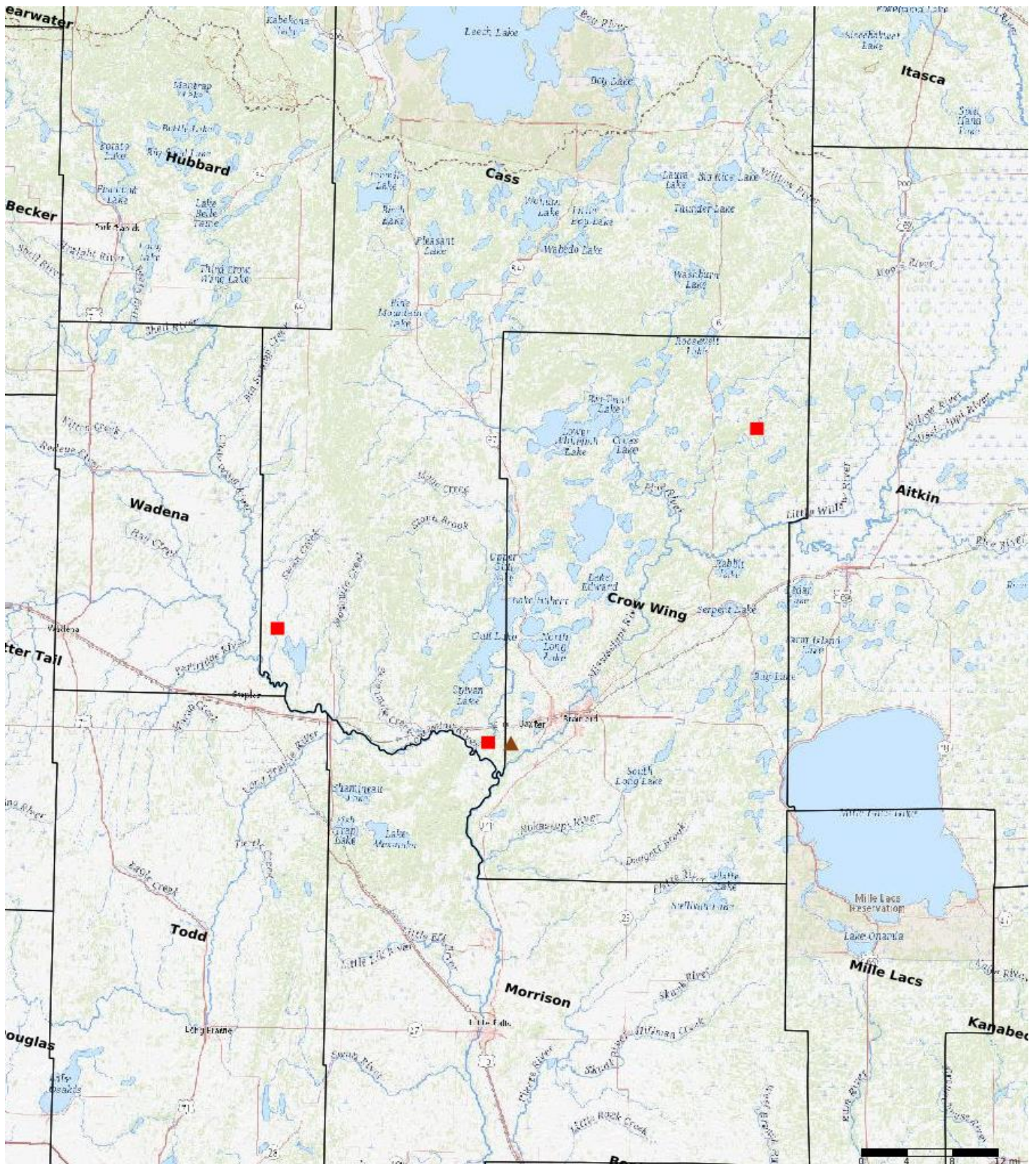
Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes](#)

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

Protect Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Potlatch 1	Cass	13432205	635	\$889,000	No
MN Power Kramer Lake	Cass	13329220	55	\$143,385	No
Potlatch 2	Crow Wing	13725208	1,000	\$1,400,000	No
Potlatch 3	Crow Wing	13329222	560	\$646,800	No



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

Parcel Map
Protecting Strategic Forestlands Near Camp Ripley
(Data Generated From Parcel List)