

Wednesday, August 28

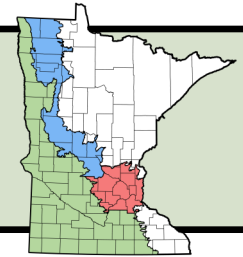
PM

Hearing Handouts



Enhanced Public Lands—Grasslands

Phase VIII – PRE02



Appropriation Year	Total OHF Appropriation Amount	Amount OHF Spent to Date	%OHF Spent to Date	Amount OHF Legally Obligated	% of OHF Legally Obligated	OHF Funding Remaining	Match Spent	Acres Rest./ Enh. Proposed	Acres Rest./ Enh. Completed	NOTES
Phase I (ML 2012)	\$1,320,000.00	\$1,308,700.00	99%	\$0.00	0%	\$11,300.00	\$700	18,500.00	21,533.00	Closed
Phase II (ML 2015)	\$1,120,000.00	\$1,057,235.00	94%	\$0.00	0%	\$62,765.00	\$156,200	7,845.00	8,227.00	Closed
Phase III (ML 2018)	\$2,160,000.00	\$2,159,166.50	100%	\$0.00	0%	\$833.50	\$45,769	6,500.00	10,781.64	Closed
Phase IV (ML 2020)	\$2,280,000.00	\$2,280,000.00	100%	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	\$19,085	6,289.00	10,115.00	Final report requested
Phase V (ML2021)	\$1,951,000.00	\$1,806,119.79	93%	\$144,880.21	7%	\$144,880.21	\$133,238	5,000.00	3,120.44	100% of remaining funds are legally obligated. Construction in progress.
Phase VI (ML2023)	\$2,772,000.00	\$670,796.53	24%	\$2,101,203.47	76%	\$2,101,203.47	\$44,959	6,870.00	682.40	100% of remaining funds are legally obligated. Construction in progress.
Phase VII (ML2024)	\$1,902,000.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	0%	\$1,902,000.00	\$0.00	3,348.00	0.00	Started 7/1/2024
Totals	\$13,505,000.00	\$9,282,017.81				\$2,246,083.69	\$399,951.53	54,352.00	54,459.48	



Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Easement Program—Phase V

Ducks Unlimited & Pheasants Forever propose to continue accelerating the US Fish and Wildlife Service's working lands habitat conservation easement program on private lands in western Minnesota by strategically restoring and enhancing 4,000 prairie and wetland acres.

- Phase 5 of a successful, ongoing partnership between DU, PF, and the USFWS working with private landowners to restore and protect private working lands. These easements protect high value wildlife habitat in perpetuity while allowing options for delayed haying and grazing.
- This program strategically focuses on private lands in western Minnesota within existing habitat complexes and near existing permanently protected lands (WPAs, WMAs, other protected private lands, etc.)
- Our approach to this program is to restore and enhance lands that are protected under easements purchased and held by the USFWS.
- The USFWS will provide \$1,000,000 in leverage to buy easements, \$200,000 in Inflation Reduction Act funds for personnel, and will monitor/enforce the terms of the easement in perpetuity.

PRIMARY GOALS:

- Restore 4,000 acres of habitat, including 2,800 acres of prairie and 1,200 acres of wetlands.
- Keep prairie and wetland habitats intact for breeding ducks, pheasants, and a wide suite of non-game grassland wildlife such as Monarch butterflies, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Bobolinks, and many more.
- Help the USFWS protect private working lands by providing them with funding, personnel, and expertise for restoration work. Following restoration, many of these working lands are managed with grazing or delayed haying.

FOCUS LOCATION: Prairie and Transition sections of the Prairie Pothole Region in western Minnesota.

HABITAT OUTCOMES: 1,400 acres of prairie grassland restored and 1,400 acres of prairie grassland enhanced along with 600 acres of wetlands restored and 600 acres of wetlands enhanced on habitat easements purchased/protected by the USFWS. This habitat will support a wide range of prairie wetland and upland species.





PRE 02

Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Easement Program—Phase V

BUDGET:	\$13,800,000 TOTAL REQUEST
Personnel:	\$990,000 for DU and PF biologists and engineers over five years
Contracts:	\$12,200,000 for prairie upland and wetland restoration contracts
In-State Travel:	\$114,000 for DU and PF biologists and engineers over five years
Direct Support Services:	\$116,000 for DU and PF support costs (legal, admin, and office)
Capital Equipment:	\$70,000 for UTVs and trailers for scouting, surveys, and landowner visits
Other Equipment/Tools:	\$130,000 for GPS survey field equipment (purchase/lease)
Supplies/Materials:	\$180,000 for native seed materials and restoration supplies

PRIOR DU/PF OHF EASEMENT APPROPRIATION SPENDING AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ML2018 OHF Phase I Grant Update: 89% spent (\$2,648,730 of \$2,960,000) and 163% of grant acre goal (1,171 acres protected of 720 acre goal)
- ML2020 OHF Phase II Grant Update: 83% spent (\$2,637,480 of \$3,187,000) and 115% of grant acre goal (888 acres protected of 775 acre goal plus 243 acres restored of 50 acre goal)
- ML2021 OHF Phase III Grant Update: 64% spent (\$3,031,355 of \$4,752,000) and 72% of grant acre goal (1,014 acres protected of 1,400 acre goal plus 97 acres restored of 140 acre goal)
- ML2023 OHF Phase IV Grant Update: 3% spent (\$171,538 of \$5,077,000) and 3% of grant acre goal (63 acres restored/enhanced of 1,950 acre goal), but many projects are under contract, out to bid, or budgeted



WA01: Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program

Phase 10



Gandrud Enhancement, USFWS Grassland Easement *Pope County, MN*

Enhancement work on 62 acres was completed in June 2024. These photos show pre and post woody vegetation removal from the prairie. A diverse native seed mix was planted on all disturbed areas to re-establish a perennial native plant community and provide high quality habitat for migratory birds and pollinators.



Before



After

Green Lake, MLT Pending Conservation Easement *Kandiyohi County, MN*

This 229-acre forested property overlooks and lies adjacent to Green Lake, a Lake of Outstanding Biological Significance. The property forms part of a Site of High Biodiversity Significance and protects a calcareous fen. This property is home to a large variety of SGCN and provides habitat for migratory waterfowl and songbirds. A fall 2024 closing is anticipated.



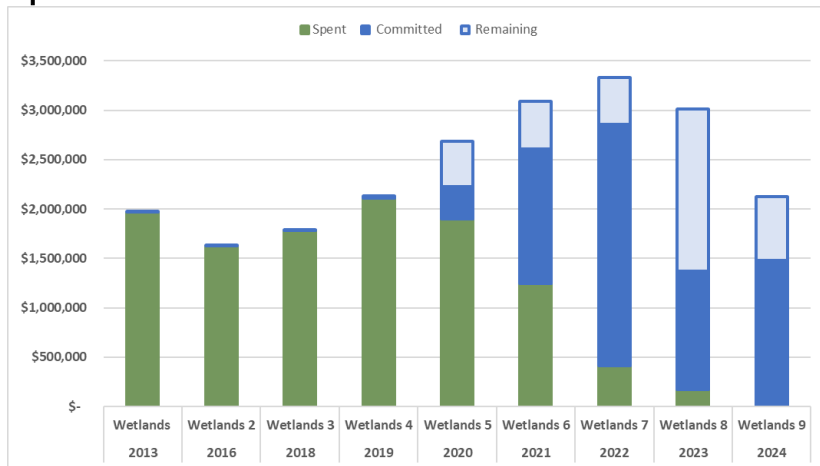
WA01: Wetlands 10: MLT

Results to Date through 8/1/2024



Grant Phase		Budget				Output									
		Total				Protection							Restore/Enhance		
						Protection Leverage			Acres Protected			Projects	Acres Restored/Enhanced		
		Award	Spent	Committed	Remaining	Proposed	Actual	% of Goal	Proposed	Outcome	% of Goal		Proposed	Outcome	% of Goal
2013 Wetlands	Complete	\$ 1,980,000	\$ 1,966,200	\$ -	\$ 13,800	\$ -	\$ 1,209,705		1,100	1,962	178%	14	0	0	
2016 Wetlands 2	Complete	\$ 1,629,000	\$ 1,627,187	\$ -	\$ 1,813	\$ 315,000	\$ 386,975	123%	750	1,025	137%	9	0	0	
2018 Wetlands 3	Complete	\$ 1,786,000	\$ 1,782,213	\$ -	\$ 3,787	\$ 223,500	\$ 10,315,000	4615%	646	666	103%	5	745	880	118%
2019 Wetlands 4	Complete	\$ 2,129,000	\$ 2,106,916	\$ -	\$ 22,084	\$ 277,000	\$ 456,527	165%	800	816	102%	5	978	1,105	113%
2020 Wetlands 5	In Progress	\$ 2,683,000	\$ 1,900,221	\$ 325,196	\$ 457,583	\$ 360,000	\$ 631,248	175%	1,040	1,038	100%	5	942	96	10%
2021 Wetlands 6	In Progress	\$ 3,088,000	\$ 1,245,700	\$ 1,362,695	\$ 479,605	\$ 336,900	\$ 202,700	60%	1,213	700	58%	5	870	90	10%
2022 Wetlands 7	In Progress	\$ 3,330,000	\$ 409,426	\$ 2,445,219	\$ 475,355	\$ 369,000	\$ -	0%	1,144	645	56%	6	992	0	0%
2023 Wetlands 8	In Progress	\$ 3,012,000	\$ 174,125	\$ 1,193,517	\$ 1,644,358	\$ 233,000	\$ -	0%	745	155	21%	1	945	0	0%
2024 Wetlands 9	In Progress	\$ 2,128,000	\$ 800	\$ 1,480,200	\$ 647,000	\$ -	\$ -		0	0		0	983	0	0%
2025 Wetlands 10	Proposed	\$ 9,728,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,728,000	\$ -	\$ -		1,314	0	0%	0	1,394	0	0%

Spent and Committed Funds to Date





SHALLOW LAKES & WETLANDS PROTECTION & RESTORATION **PHASE XIV**

WA 02

Ducks Unlimited proposes to strategically acquire and restore 1,000 acres of prairie and wetlands for inclusion in Minnesota DNR state Wildlife Management Areas, including 200 acres of wetlands and 800 of upland prairie.

- **Phase 14 of Ducks Unlimited's ongoing programmatic land acquisition and restoration program.**
- **Focus: Restorable prairie-wetland complexes on state WMAs and federal WPAs.**

Primary goals:

- ◆ Strategically acquire and restore marginal agricultural lands with drained prairie wetlands adjacent to WMAs & WPAs.
- ◆ Strategically restore and buffer prairie land around DNR-managed shallow lakes and large wetlands.
- ◆ Benefit breeding and migrating waterfowl, pheasants, non-game prairie birds and pollinators.
- ◆ Help implement Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan and other plans by restoring prairie & wetlands in key landscapes.

Secondary goals:

- ◆ Preserve remnant native prairie patches and permanently protect USDA CRP acres where possible on land tracts for sale.
- ◆ Provide public hunting and other outdoor opportunities on lands acquired for Minnesota DNR state WMAs.

Location: Prairie Pothole Region in the southwest prairie portion of Minnesota.

Habitat Outputs: 1,000 acres of protected prairie and wetland habitat for breeding ducks and other wildlife.

Wildlife Outcomes: Strategically adding new lands and restoring wetlands and prairie adjacent to existing state WMAs and federal WPAs will increase habitat for breeding wildlife to increase production of ducks, pheasants, and many non-game birds.

BUDGET:

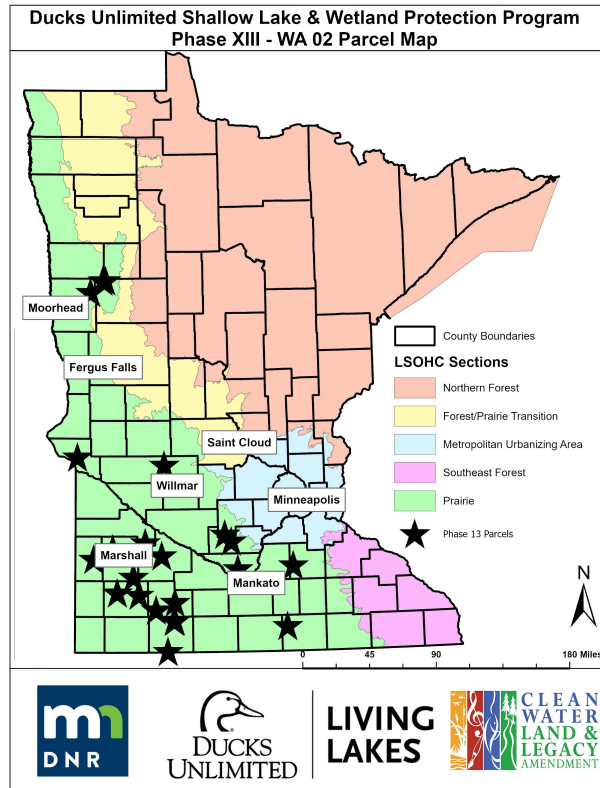
\$12,990,000 TOTAL REQUEST

Land Acquisition:	\$ 9,000,000 to purchase 1,000 acres, depending on appraised value of land, for MNDNR & USFWS
Contracts:	\$ 2,200,000 for wetland and native prairie restoration contracts
Professional Services:	\$ 300,000 for land appraisals, title reviews, boundary surveys, closing costs, etc.
Personnel:	\$ 840,000 for DU biologists and engineers over five years to buy and restore land
In-state Travel:	\$ 60,000 for DU biologists and engineers over five years to buy and restore land
Supplies and Materials:	\$ 60,000 for native grass and forb seed materials and other supplies to restore land
Tools and Equipment:	\$ 80,000 for prairie seeding and wetland restoration equipment, including GPS survey lease
Direct Support Services:	\$ 90,000 for DU staff support costs, including legal, administrative, office, etc.
DNR Land Acquisition:	\$ 192,000 for DNR Lands & Minerals Division realty staff and AGO staff fees to transfer land
DNR IDP Costs:	\$ 168,000 for DNR wildlife to implement "Initial Development Plan" signs, posts, parking areas, etc.

PRIOR DU OHF ACQUISITION APPROPRIATION SPENDING AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Appropriation Year:	Appropriation \$:	Funds Spent:	\$ Remaining:	Acres Accomplished:
2009 (Phase I)	\$ 450,000	\$450,000 (100%)	\$ 0	2 tracts, 85 acres - <i>completed</i>
2010 (Phase II)	\$2,625,000	\$2,616,500 (100%)	\$ 0	3 tracts, 330 acres - <i>completed</i>
2013 (Phase III)	\$3,530,000	\$3,530,000 (100%)	\$ 0	11 tracts, 567 acres - <i>completed</i>
2015 (Phase IV)	\$9,040,000	\$8,958,800 (99%)	\$ 0	3 tracts, 1,004 acres - <i>completed</i>
2016 (Phase V)	\$5,801,000	\$5,788,800 (99%)	\$ 0	8 tracts, 824 acres - <i>completed</i>
2017 (Phase VI)	\$5,750,000	\$5,750,000 (100%)	\$ 0	8 tracts, 764 acres - <i>completed</i>
2018 (Phase VII)	\$4,770,000	\$4,678,000 (98%)	\$ 92,000	4 tracts, 607 acres, 110% - <i>restoration ongoing</i>
2019 (Phase VIII)	\$6,150,000	\$5,089,900 (83%)	\$ 1,060,100	7 tracts, 609 acres, 127% - <i>restoration ongoing</i>
2020 (Phase IX)	\$4,608,000	\$4,039,300 (88%)	\$ 568,700	5 tracts, 518 acres, 100% - <i>restoration ongoing</i>
2021 (Phase X)	\$4,581,000	\$4,488,000 (98%)	\$ 93,000	5 Tracts, 562 acres, 100% - <i>restoration ongoing</i>
2022 (Phase XI)	\$4,779,000	\$4,083,000 (85%)	\$ 696,000	8 Tracts, 469 acres, 85% of goal so far
2023 (Phase XII)	\$7,061,000	\$5,435,600 (77%)	\$ 1,625,400	1 Tract, 538 acres, 68% of goal so far
2024 (Phase XIII)	\$7,670,000	\$2,220,000 (29%)	\$ 5,450,000	1 Tract, 320 acres, 52% of goal, just started!

--> By 2026, DU will have spent most current OHF grant budget funds for fee-title land acquisition!





Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program Phase XVII- WA04

Appr. Year (ML)	Total OHF App.	Amount OHF to Date	%OHF to Date	Amount OHF Obligated	% of OHF Obligated	OHF Remaining	Match Spent	Acres Acq. Proposed	Acres Acq. Completed	NOTES
2009	5,600,000	5,581,344	100%	0	0%	18,656	5,722,775	1,200	1,522	Closed
2010	3,505,000	3,495,730	100%	0	0%	9,270	3,241,328	700	1,397	Closed
2011	9,815,000	9,715,133	99%	0	0%	99,867	5,357,646	2,250	2,267	Closed
2012	5,400,000	5,338,182	99%	0	0%	61,818	3,788,846	935	1,001	Closed
2013	6,830,000	6,722,533	98%	0	0%	107,467	3,813,298	1,230	1,240	Closed
2014	7,280,000	6,332,761	87%	0	0%	947,239	3,673,884	887	1,554	Closed
2015	7,620,000	7,603,017	100%	0	0%	16,983	4,998,329	900	1,506	Closed
2016	5,650,000	5,645,600	100%	0	0%	4,400	5,779,691	760	1,062	Closed
2017	5,500,000	5,471,781	99%	0	0%	28,219	6,320,985	1,000	1,310	Closed
2018	5,061,000	5,020,936	99%	0	0%	40,064	425,187	915	1,150	Acquisitions done. Restoration work in progress.
2019	5,631,000	5,558,881	99%	0	0%	72,119	203,901	1,003	1,335	Acquisitions done. Restoration work in progress.
2020	3,658,000	3,322,777	91%	0	0%	335,223	183,184	611	643	Acquisitions done. Restoration work in progress.
2021	3,869,000	3,638,959	94%	0	0%	230,041	2,371,486	659	944	Acquisitions done. Restoration work in progress.
2022	5,537,000	4,829,655	87%	0	0%	707,345	1,324,890	905	883	Acquisitions done. Restoration work in progress.
2023	5,231,000	2,199,474	42%	1,235,500	24%	3,031,526	674,966	678	477	Closed on 4 properties. One tract set to close in a month and 2 additional tracts are in progress which will spend out remaining fee title dollars. These do not have Purchase Agreements yet.
2024	7,020,000	0	0%			7,020,000	0	864		Four Tracts in progress that will spend \$3,574,105.00 of the Fee dollars.
Totals	93,207,000	80,476,764		1,235,500		4,416,318	47,880,396	15,497	18,291	

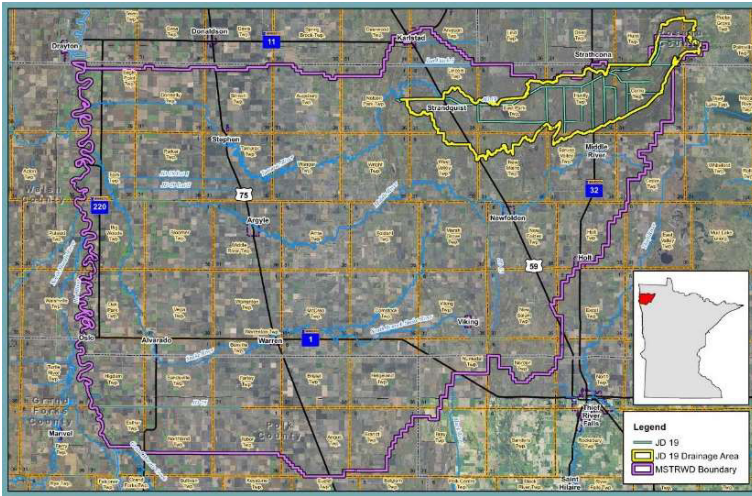
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council East Park WMA – Nelson Slough

Proposal ID# WRE01

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DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

HOUSTON
engineering, inc.



About the Project

The project is located in northwest Minnesota in Marshall County close to Roseau and Kittson counties. The project footprint covers approximately 3 square miles within the well known East Park WMA.

The Nelson Slough within the East Park WMA is an on-channel multi-purpose impoundment site constructed in 1971 and has undergone significant degradation over the years with hybrid cattail growth and water levels consistently above normal pool levels.

Watershed planning started in 2016 through which the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District (MSTRWD) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have been cooperatively working to develop a plan to provide improved water level management capabilities and wildlife habitat.

Over the past few years, traces of **Sheathed Pondweed** (an Minnesota endangered Species) was observed in Nelson Slough which increases the importance of the project to keep not only this plant but also numerous others protected.

The project design incorporates a **new outlet structure** that enables the operators to manage water levels to the appropriate elevation in different seasons of the year to maximize natural resource benefits. The project design also includes increasing the levee height to meet today's dam safety standards, as the existing levee lacks the required freeboard.

Whether we call it climate change or the new normal, it is obvious we are having heavier and flashier rain fall events, making water elevation management in the facility a tough task and detrimental to the wildlife habitat within.

Project Benefits



Natural resource enhancement

- Improve the Nelson Slough **shallow lake**
- Improve **over water nesting birds** habitat
- Improve habitat for **migratory birds**
- Improve biodiversity and aquatic plants
- Improve mix of open water and vegetated areas within the impoundment
- Enhance diversity and composition of wetland plant communities and aquatic invertebrate populations



Recreational aesthetic

- Hunting and bird watching
- Scientific research potential
- Canoeing and kayaking



Water quality

- Improve stability of Judicial Ditch (JD) 19
- Reduce sediment transfer downstream



Flood control

- Provide local and Red River flood damage reduction
- Improve hydrologic conditions within the JD 19 sub-watershed

Project Partners

- MSTRWD
- Minnesota DNR
- LSOHC
- America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC)
- RRWMB
- JDA
- Townships

Project Readiness



Project Design

95% complete



Permitting

DNR Public Waters and Dam Safety application submitted. All other pre-project permits completed.



Joint Powers Agreement

99% complete



Operations & Maintenance Plan

99% complete



Cost Share

RRWMB committed \$2.9 million

Estimated Total Project Cost = \$10.4 Million

How it Fits in with Existing Plans

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan: The East Park Prairie Core Area has a wetland goal shortfall of more than 15,000 ac – though this project will not decrease those acres, improved management of the impoundment will enhance existing wetland acres in the Core Area
- DNR Shallow Lakes staff has been monitoring this impoundment for many years, monitoring water quality, aquatic plant assemblages, expansion of non-native cattail, and endangered species, as well as noting wildlife use
- The existing structure does not allow for ease of management should a drawdown or other management be necessary
- DNR Wildlife has been managing cattails with herbicides – the updated structure may make management easier by eliminating or reducing the number of floating cattail bogs
- Shallow Lakes are listed as a Target Habitat in Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan, 2015-2025 for the Aspen Parklands Conservation Focus Area
- East Park WMA has a "High" score within the Aspen Parklands Conservation Focus Area in the Wildlife Action Network
- A number of non-forested wetland communities within the Aspen Parklands are also listed as target habitats – many of which are likely found within Nelson Slough



Sheathed pondweed

Plants in the Impoundment

- **Sheathed pondweed, a state-endangered plant, is found in the impoundment – one of only a dozen noted occurrences in the state**
- While coverage of submerged aquatic plants has been good over the past few surveys, it is somewhat limited by floating cattail bogs – which as stated above, should be limited with the new structure
 - Submerged plants provide food for waterfowl and other wildlife, refuge for important invertebrates, and play a major role in maintaining water quality

Birds in the Impoundment

- **Colonial waterbirds** nest at Nelson Slough and are intolerant of bounce in water levels once they've begun nesting.
- **Black terns** have been noted on the impoundment and are declining nationally. These terns nest in freshwater marshes and tolerate little disturbance.
- Over the past few seasons, we've seen repeated, rapid water level rises in late spring and early summer when waterbird nests are most at-risk of flooding – the new structure should help reduce the impacts from those events
- Other non-game waterbirds noted include **common loons, pied-billed** and **red-necked grebes**, common and **Forsters's terns, American white pelicans**, double-crested cormorants, bald eagles, and trumpeter swans. Sandhill cranes, a State Watchlist species has also been noted at Nelson Slough
- 21 bird species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) could benefit from this project, 8 of which have been noted in previous surveys (others are secretive or migratory and less likely to show up on summer surveys)
- Impacts to upland areas will be limited – any loss of upland nesting will be offset by improved conditions within the impoundment



Terns on cattail



Hybrid cattail

Other

- Part of the impoundment is open for hunting and other recreation. Floating cattail bogs make navigation of the impoundment difficult. Limited bounce associated with the new structure should limit floating cattail bog activity



LIVING SHALLOW LAKE ENHANCEMENT & WETLAND RESTORATION PHASE XI

Ducks Unlimited proposes to strategically enhance 1,700 acres of shallow lakes and wetlands, restore 200 acres of wetlands, and restore or enhance 600 acres of uplands on state Wildlife Management Areas, federal Waterfowl Production Areas, permanent conservation easements, and other protected lands.

- Phase 11 of DU's ongoing programmatic shallow lake enhancement and wetland restoration initiative.
- Focus: Provide wetland engineering to improve prairie shallow lakes managed by Minnesota DNR and restore prairie pothole wetlands on federal Waterfowl Production Areas.

Primary goals:

- ◆ Enhance degraded shallow lakes and large wetlands for migrating and brood-rearing waterfowl.
- ◆ Restore prairie pothole wetlands on federal WPAs and state WMAs for breeding waterfowl pairs in spring.
- ◆ Restore and enhance wetland and grassland habitat for non-game wetland-dependent birds.
- ◆ Enhance public water shallow lakes as public waterfowl hunting areas and birding areas for people too.

Focus Location: Prairie Pothole Region in the south and west regions of Minnesota.

Habitat Outputs: 2,500 acres of enhanced or restored habitat for breeding ducks and other wetland-dependent wildlife.

BUDGET:	\$14,975,000 TOTAL REQUEST
Contracts:	\$12,500,000 for shallow lake water control structure construction and wetland restorations
Professional services:	\$ 75,000 for soil investigations, county ditch petitions, county ditch reviews, etc
Personnel:	\$ 1,950,000 for DU biologists and engineers to plan, design, and implement projects
In-state travel:	\$ 75,000 for DU biologists and engineers over five years to deliver projects
Supplies and materials:	\$ 100,000 for native plant seed to restore wetlands and uplands
Other equipment/tools:	\$ 80,000 for engineering equipment to survey, design and manage construction projects
Direct support services:	\$ 195,000 for DU staff support costs, including administrative support, office, etc.

PRIOR DU OHF ENHANCEMENT/RESTORATION APPROPRIATION SPENDING AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Appropriation Year:	Appropriation:	Funds spent:	Funds remaining:	Accomplishments:
2009 (Phase I)	\$2,528,000	\$2,528,000 (100%)	\$ 0	6,882 wetland acres
2010 (Phase II)	\$5,042,000	\$5,042,000 (100%)	\$ 0	7,251 wetland acres
2012 (Phase III)	\$4,490,000	\$4,490,000 (100%)	\$ 0	3,086 wetland acres
2014 (Phase IV)	\$4,910,000	\$4,888,300 (100%)	\$ 0	6,011 wetland acres
2017 (Phase V)	\$4,716,000	\$4,716,000 (100%)	\$ 0	2,856 wetland acres
2018 (Phase VI)	\$3,740,000	\$3,740,000 (100%)	\$ 0	Finalizing, 1,129 wetland acres
2021 (Phase VII)	\$3,960,000	\$3,919,942 (99%)	\$ 40,057	Finalizing, 1,224 wetland acres
2022 (Phase VIII)	\$5,155,000	\$4,174,950 (81%)	\$ 980,049	Ongoing, 2,254 acres
2023 (Phase IX)	\$6,634,000	\$664,322 (10%)	\$5,969,677	Ongoing, 888 acres
2024 (Phase X)	\$7,867,000	\$0	\$7,867,000	Just beginning

By end of 2025, DU will have spent or legally obligated most past OHF grant funds for shallow lake and wetland engineering enhancements and restorations through Phase 9 and most Phase 10 funding.

WRE 02 **SHALLOW LAKE ENHANCEMENTS AND PRAIRIE WETLAND RESTORATIONS**





Board of Commissioners

606 5th Ave. SW, Room #131

Roseau, MN 56751

Phone: 218-463-4248

Fax: 218-463-3252

May 14, 2024

Carter Diesen, Board Chair
Roseau River Watershed District
714 6th St. SW
Roseau, MN 56751

RE: Big Swamp North – Peatland Restoration Project

Dear Mr. Diesen,

At the meeting of the Roseau County Commissioners held May 14, 2024, the Commissioners approved providing this letter of support for the above reference project.

As the drainage authority for the State Ditch 69 (SD 69) system we understand the instrumental roll the systems lateral ditches play in the proposed project, specifically the abandonment of and levelling of said laterals. It is also our intent, as the SD 69 drainage authority, to ensure that the main stem of the system provides drainage benefits to the upstream landowners who pay into the system's maintenance fund. We look forward to working cooperatively with MN DNR and Roseau River Watershed District to address ongoing issues, such as the amount of ditch right-of-way along the main channel.

We understand this project is in the very early stages of development and funding needs to be secured to move the project forward. To that end, we believe the timing to capitalize on meeting our mutual goals is the best it has been in a generation and support the grant application to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

We look forward to working with the project partners as part of the Big Swamp North – Peatland Restoration Project Team (as outlined in the Red River 1998 Mediation Agreement).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "LEVI M NOVACEK".

Levi Novacek
Board Chair