

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

2012 Accomplishment Plan

Program Title: Acquisition: WMA, SNA, Prairie Bank Easement

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Funds Recommended: \$3,931,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2011, Ch. X, Art. X, Sec. X, Subd. X (x): *(to be completed when signed by Governor)*

Abstract: Priority lands will be acquired and developed as Wildlife Management Areas, Scientific and Natural Areas and Native Prairie Bank to protect habitat and provide public hunting, trapping and compatible outdoor uses.

Program Narrative

Design and Scope of Work

Minnesota's population has grown by over 1 million people, to 5.3 million, in the past 20 years and is projected to continue this growth rate for the next 20 years. Thousands of acres of habitat are being converted to intensive commercial, residential, and agricultural development each year. Due to the current recession, land prices have stabilized or declined and a short-term opportunity exists to purchase more value for our expenditures.

Lands acquired will become part of the Outdoor Recreation System (M.S. 86A.06) as WMAs, or SNAs. This project includes the initial land development of each parcel acquired including boundary surveys and signage, well and septic closure, building and dump disposal, restoration of shallow temporary and seasonal wetlands and restoration of bare ground with native vegetation. This program is supported by all traditional outdoor stakeholders.

Management Areas

This proposal will protect 956 acres of wildlife habitat through acquisition and development as State Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Lands will be acquired and developed within each Ecological

Planning Region following general guidelines from the 2002 Citizens' Advisory Committee on WMA acquisition and the 2012 LSOHC Call for Funding Request.

WMAs are established to protect those lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and to develop and manage these lands and waters for the production of wildlife, for public hunting, fishing and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses. While highly successful, the current WMA system does not meet all of the present and future needs for wildlife habitat, wildlife population management, hunter access and wildlife related recreation.

DNR Section of Wildlife uses a geospatial analytical (GIS) based tool to identify the highest priority tracts for potential Wildlife Management Area (WMA) acquisitions. This ensures that funds are used to acquire the effective available land consistent with the statutory purpose of WMAs. This approach uses a quantitative or data based approach to score and rank acquisition proposals based on a set of weighted criteria and creates a standardized method for evaluating proposed acquisitions on a statewide level. Criteria and weights are annually reviewed and adapted to changing conditions and priorities.

The WMA acquisition program is guided by the 2002 Citizens' Committee report. This committee was composed of a diverse group of eleven major stakeholder groups. A master list of potential acquisition opportunities from willing sellers is coordinated with interested stakeholders to eliminate duplication and identify concerns or support. All WMA acquisitions by DNR require approval of the County Board of Commissioners in the county of acquisition.

Scientific and Natural Area Program

The Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program will protect sites of biodiversity significance with high game and non-game wildlife habitat value by fee acquisition of about 230 acres to be designated as state SNAs (public use units within the state recreation system) and by conservation easement acquisition of about 150 acres as DNR-held and managed Native Prairie Bank (NPB) Conservation Easements.

SNA Acquisitions To be acquired and designated as SNA, the site must be recommended for SNA designation in an Ecological Evaluation report AND must be part of a Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) outstanding or high biodiversity significance site and/or be a geological feature of statewide significance. All sites designated as SNA are predominantly mapped native plant communities and also contain habitat for rare species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. All sites acquired as SNA require county board approval. The two primary sites targeted for SNA acquisition in this proposal are one forested sites in the Northern Forest Ecological Planning Region with ruffed grouse habitat and excellent fishing opportunities on an island with 2.5 miles of shoreline of the Rainy River and one site in the Forest-Prairie Transition Region which is a natural mosaic of savanna, woodland, and wetland locally known for large deer which will be added to an existing SNA and the whole, combined 320 acres available for hunting. Each of these sites has landowners very interested in selling to the DNR. This funding request includes costs associated with completing boundary surveys, posting boundaries, other signs, minimal parking areas (except for island site), and for one site 10-acres needing restoration from pine plantation to savanna.

NPB Easement Acquisitions Generally, NPB acquisitions are at least 90% native prairie (unless the landowner donates additional non-prairie lands). Each potential NPB site is ranked for protection priority through an evaluation of the following factors: (1) size, quality and diversity of the native prairie, (2) occurrence of or suitable habitat for rare species, (3) location of the tract in relation to other protected prairie, (4) potential for long-term habitat management and enhancement of the site, (5) landowner interest in maintaining the prairie, and (6) additional factors such as US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) plans, DNR Working Lands Initiative Area, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) eco-regional plans, local watershed partnerships, and jeopardy of tract. After the evaluation is complete, NPB acquisitions are chosen based on the protection priority ranking, available funding, and continued landowner interest. One high quality native prairie site is targeted for NPB easement acquisition in this proposal is in the Prairie Ecological Planning Region and one in the Southeast Forest Region. Each of these sites has landowners very interested in selling to the DNR. This funding request includes costs associated with completing baseline property report and boundary survey, posting boundaries, and 30 acres of prairie reconstruction on agricultural fields.

Planning

Strategic habitat conservation is defined as an iterative process of developing and refining a conservation strategy, making efficient management decisions, and using research and monitoring to assess accomplishments and inform future iterations of the conservation strategy. The priority setting process for acquiring and protecting state lands described above meets this definition.

Relationship to the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and Other Published Resource Management Plans

This project will protect habitat in Minnesota. All published resource management and species plans recognize that habitat is critical for the success of Minnesota's fish and wildlife species. Lack of funding is consistently listed in many plans as one of the largest issues limiting the amount of protection that is completed each year.

This project addresses three of the five strategic areas of the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan; Critical Land Protection, Land and Water Restoration and Protection and Sustainability Practices.

H1: Protect priority land habitats (pg 63)

H2: Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes (pg 67)

H3: Improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation (pg 74)

H4: Restore and protect shallow lakes (pg 78)

Other plans that list habitat protection as priorities include:

- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare - Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for species in greatest conservation need has identified significant loss and degradation of habitat as the number one management challenge and one of the principle strategies is to provide protection through selective acquisition of key habitats in each Ecological Section (pg 43).
- The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Strategies #1 and 2.

- Minnesota's Long Range Duck Recovery Plan lists the objective of restoring a breeding population of 1 million ducks by 2056. The primary strategy is the protection and restoration of 2 million additional acres of habitat (pg 16).
- Minnesota's Long Range Plan for the Ring-necked Pheasant lists the objective of increasing pheasant population to 1.8 million birds. To accomplish this objective the plan calls for an additional 21,000 acres of grassland to be protected through acquisition of WMAs (pg 18).
- Citizens report Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition – The Next 50 Years recommends acquisition goals of an additional 702,200 acres of WMAs s over the next 50 years (pg 3)
- Minnesota's Long Range Plan for the Wild Turkey – to achieve turkey population goals Action B recommends acquiring turkey habitat in fee title or easement (pg 7).
- Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Implementation Plan (North American Waterfowl Management Plan) recommends protection through acquisition within the Prairie Pothole region of 200,000 acres of wetlands and 400,000 acres of grasslands (Section II, pg 17).
- The Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan which calls for a system of 500 natural areas by the year 2085 in order to adequately protect all elements of biological diversity in the state (pg. 5).

This proposal addresses the following LSOHC Section Priorities

Forest

1. Protect shorelands and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas.

Forest/Prairie Transition

1. Protect, enhance and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shorelands that provide critical habitat for game and non-game wildlife.
2. Protect, enhance and restore rare native remnant prairie.
3. Protect, enhance and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success.

Metro Urbanizing

1. Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity.
2. Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain.)

Southeast Forest

1. Protect forest habitat through acquisition in fee or easement, to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties.
2. Protect, enhance and restore habitat for fish, game and non-game wildlife in rivers, cold water streams and associated upland habitat.

3. Protect, enhance and restore remnant goat prairies.
4. Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in aerial extent in recent decades.

Prairie

1. Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes.
2. Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna.
5. Protect, restore and enhance shallow lakes.
6. Protect expiring Conservations Reserve Program (CRP) lands.
7. Protect, enhance and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success.

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

Past acquisitions for WMAs and SNAs have been funded in part by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. Currently, the SNA program has a FY12 proposal before the LCCMR for ENRTF dollars towards SNA and NPB easement acquisition and development with priority project lists that far exceed the funds available for both sources combined.

Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

This program funding will be supplemental to traditional funding sources, and is of reasonable size given the scale of DNR's recent fiscal year expenditures. Though Outdoor Heritage Funds would be spread out over multiple years, below are approximate Fiscal Year 2009 expenditures (not including Bonding) as an example of what DNR spends in a given year:

FY09 Approximate Expenditures (not including Bonding funds):

DNR - \$200 M

FAW Division - \$33.1 M

ECO Division - \$11.6 M

Sustainability and Maintenance

Ongoing maintenance of WMAs is a core function of DNR Section of Wildlife and will be funded with biennial appropriations from the Game and Fish Fund and the Heritage Enhancement Fund. Periodic enhancements or one time restorations will seek supplemental funding from a variety of funding sources including Outdoor Heritage Funds, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and state bonding.

Ongoing costs for managing SNA and NPB sites after initial site development are primarily those needed for management of invasive species. Management plans for each site will be developed meeting DNR program standards. Costs for ongoing management will be supported by DNR funding of the SNA and NPB program.

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date completed
Acquire land parcels	At least 200 acres of WMA acquired At least 160 acres of SNA Acquired At least 150 acres of NPB easements acquired	June 30, 2012
Acquire land parcels	At least 656 acres of WMA acquitted At least 70 acres of SNA acquired	June 30, 2013
Initial Site Development Complete	Bare ground vegetated, all non-natural features removed and protection and use management in place on all newly acquired parcels	June 30, 2015

Attachments (*on spreadsheet workbook – 3 separate tabs*):

- A. Budget
- B. Proposed Outcome Tables
- C. Parcel List

No Map is needed for the accomplishment plan

Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet

Name of Proposal:	Acquisition: WMA, SNA, Prairie Bank Easement
Date:	1-Dec-10
Legal Citation / Proposal Number:	/ P-01

[Link Here to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

Total Amount of Request \$ **3,931,000** *From page 1 on the funding form.*

Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
<i>Contract Mgt Spec</i>	1	2	\$ 120,000		\$	120,000
<i>Acquisition Spec</i>	0.16	1	\$ 11,000		\$	11,000
<i>Habitat Field Staff</i>	0.06	3	\$ 13,500		\$	13,500
<i>position 4</i>					\$	-
<i>position 5</i>					\$	-
<i>position 6</i>					\$	-
<i>position 7</i>					\$	-
Total	1.22		\$ 144,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 144,500

Budget and Cash Leverage *(All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)*

Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel - <i>auto entered from above</i>	\$ 144,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 144,500
Contracts	\$ 193,626		\$	193,626
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT <i>(breakout in table 6 & 7)</i>	\$ 3,205,000		\$	3,205,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT <i>(breakout in table 6 & 7)</i>			\$	-
Easement Acquisition	\$ 192,000		\$	192,000
Easement Stewardship			\$	-
Travel (in-state)	\$ 16,700		\$	16,700
Professional Services	\$ 162,000		\$	162,000
DNR Direct Support Services <i>(DNR programs only)</i>	\$ 6,768		\$	6,768
DNR Land Acquisition Costs			\$	-
Other			\$	-
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$	-
Other Equipment/Tools			\$	-
Supplies/Materials	\$ 10,406		\$	10,406
	\$ 3,931,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,931,000

Capital Equipment *(single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)*

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<i>Item 1 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 2 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 3 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 4 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 5 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 6 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 7 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 8 enter here</i>		
Total	0	0

Attachment B. Outcome Tables

Name of Proposal:	Acquisition: WMA, SNA, Prairie Bank Easement
Date:	December 1 1010
Legal Citation / Proposal Number:	/P01

Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same

If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:

Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					0
Protect		783	553		1336
Enhance					0
Total	0	783	553	0	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

1336

These two cells should be the same figure.

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

1336

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					\$ -
Protect		\$ 2,150,058	\$ 1,780,942		\$ 3,931,000
Enhance					\$ -
Total	\$ -	\$ 2,150,058	\$ 1,780,942	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 3,931,000

These two cells should be the same figure.

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 3,931,000

Check to make sure this amount is the same

as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						0
Protect	30	280	165	633	228	1336
Enhance						0
Total	30	280	165	633	228	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

1336

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

1336

Total Acres from Table 1.

1336

These three cells should be the same figure.

Attachment B. Outcome Tables

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						\$ -
Protect	\$ 691,220	\$ 892,446	\$ 509,345	\$ 1,414,163	\$ 423,826	\$ 3,931,000
Enhance						\$ -
Total	\$ 691,220	\$ 892,446	\$ 509,345	\$ 1,414,163	\$ 423,826	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 3,931,000

These two cells should be the same figure.

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 3,931,000

Check to make sure these amounts are the same

as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		633	553		1186
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement NO State PILT Liability		150			150
	0	783	553	0	

Table 7. Estimated Value of Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		\$ 1,795,000	\$ 1,410,000		\$ 3,205,000
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					\$ -
Permanent Easement NO State PILT Liability		\$ 192,000			\$ 192,000
	\$ -	\$ 1,987,000	\$ 1,410,000	\$ -	

Attachment C. Parcel List

Name of Proposal:	Acquisition: WMA, SNA, Prairie Bank Easement
Date:	1-Dec-10
Legal Citation / Proposal Number:	/P-01

County	Township	Range	Direction	Section	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)	Description	Activity R=Restore P=Protect E=Enhance	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)	
Parcel Name												
WMA												
Carlos Avery	Anoka	33	22	2	26	3322226	20.00	\$437,653	P	no	yes	
Pelican Lake	Wright	120	25	2	2	1202522	10.00	\$218,821	P	no	yes	
Kettle Lake	Carlton	48	19	2	20	4819220	158.00	\$246,565	P	no	yes	
Barnesville 23	Clay	137	45	2	13	13745213	240.00	\$416,312	P	no	yes	
Coon Creek 6	Lyon	110	43	2	7	1104327	77.20	\$185,437	P	no	yes	
Talcot Lake 13	Cottonwood	105	38	2	29	10538229	115.00	\$517,089	P	no	yes	
Camp Kerk-23	Swift	122	38	2	25	12238225	40.00	\$69,200	P	no	yes	
Camp Kerk-24	Swift	122	38	2	25	12238225	10.00	\$17,300	P	no	yes	
Pembina	Polk	152	46	2	14	15246214	120.00	\$180,991	P	no	yes	
Whitewater	Winona	107	10	2	3	1071023	125.00	\$358,314	P	no	yes	
Whitewater	Winona	108	9	2	5	108925	40.00	\$136,393	P	no	yes	
SNA/NPB												
Englund Ecotone	Benton	37	31	2	14,23	373114	160	\$ 673,726	MCBS high biodiversity significance area with mapped Pin Oak-Bur Oak Woodland, Sedge Meadow, and Dry Barrens Oak Savanna and 4 rare plants species. Site known for large deer. Proposed addition to existing SNA.	P	no	yes
Watrous Island	Koochiching	70	27	2	36	702736	70	\$ 140,581	Is 70-acre island (with ~ 2.5 miles of shoreline) in Rainy River with good fishing opportunity; featuring one of the most northerly high quality floodplain forests and some northern wet-mesic forest.	P	no	yes

Attachment C. Parcel List

Lac Qui Parle - Correll Working Lands Area	Big Stone	121	44	2	31	12144231	150	\$	255,693	This Southern Mesic prairie of High Biodiversity significance contains Small White lady Slippers (SC in MN). The tracts' proximity to LQP WMA, as well as it's location within the Correll Working Lands Initiative Area allows for collaborative site management between ECO and Wildlife. Grazing is allowed on the easement under an DNR-approved grazing plan.	P	no	yes
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