

1997 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 1999

This project was supported by Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

TITLE: RIM - WILDLIFE HABITAT ACQUISITION PROGRAM

PROJECT MANAGER: Kim Hennings
ORGANIZATION: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
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LEGAL CITATION: ML 1997, Chap. 216, Sec. 15, Subd. 17(l)
APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$500,000

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES: The Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Wildlife Habitat Acquisition Program purchases critical Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) lands that benefit wildlife populations, improve hunting and trapping opportunities and other wildlife related activities.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP): Sixty percent (\$300,000) of this appropriation from the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund was used to purchase wetlands and associated uplands under the NAWMP. NAWMP is a cooperative effort by federal, state, and local governments and private organizations in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to stabilize and restore continental waterfowl populations by preserving and restoring adequate wetland habitats.

Wildlife Management Area Corridor Acquisition: The remaining 40 percent (\$200,000) of this appropriation was used to purchase a new 132 acre WMA located within 15 miles of Rochester, Minnesota that will provide additional opportunities for the public to hunt, trap, and enjoy wildlife close to a major metropolitan area.

OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS:

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

<u>County</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Clearwater	Mosquito Creek WMA	5.61	\$2,113.00
Jackson	Heron Meadow WMA	56.29	\$95,392.00
Lac qui Parle	Madrena WMA	99.66	\$125,200.00
Lincoln	Shaokatan WMA	104	\$59,510.00

Wildlife Management Area Corridor Acquisition

<u>County</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Olmsted	Vermilya WMA	132.16	\$200,000.00

<u>Professional Services</u>	<u>\$17,785.00</u>
TOTAL	\$500,000.00

The NAWMP acquisitions will be submitted for federal matching dollars for projects under the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) generally on a 2:1 match (\$2 state generate \$1 federal match). NAWCA grants are approved on a competitive basis for projects nationwide. Approved NAWCA projects in Minnesota include the Heron Lake, Swan Lake, Northern Tallgrass Prairie, Prairie Wetland Heritage, and Minnesota River Projects and additional phases of these projects.

Increasing populations are creating a higher demand for public hunting, trapping, and other wildlife-related activities in close proximity to major cities. Purchase of the Vermilya WMA will protect valuable wildlife habitat and enhance recreational use, especially public hunting and trapping.

July 1, 1999

LCMR Final Work Program Update Report - ML 1997, Chap. 216, Sec. 15, Subd. 17(I)

and

**LCMR Work Program Update - ML 1996 Chap. 463, Sec. 7, Subd. 22
ML 1998, Chap. 404, Sec. 7, Subd. 14**

Date of Report: June 30, 1999

Date of Next Program Update: January 1, 2000

Date of Work plan Approval: May 13, 1998

Project Completion Date: See page 4 (V. Context, B. Time)

LCMR Work Program 1999

I. Project Title: RIM- Wildlife Habitat Acquisition

A. Project Managers: Kim Hennings, Wildlife Land Acquisition Coordinator

Affiliation: Department of Natural Resources

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B. Current Appropriations/Recommendations: *Amounts in thousands*

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Approp.</u>	<u>Liquid.</u>	<u>Encumb.</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Bonding					
RIM Wildlife & Nat. Area Acq. ¹	1996	500	500	0	0
Environmental Trust Fund					
RIM Wildlife Habitat Acq. ²	1997	500	500	0	0
General Revenue³					
WMA Acquisition N. American	1998	1,000	834	81	85
N. American Waterfowl Man. Plan	1998	500	209	219	72
GRAND TOTAL		2,500	2,043	300	157

C. Legal Citations:

1996 Appropriation

1. ML 1996, Chap. 463, Sec. 7, Subd. 22. \$3,500,000

To acquire land for wildlife management areas under Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.135; to acquire land for scientific and natural areas under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.033; to acquire native prairie bank easements under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96; for the critical habitat private sector matching account under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.943; and for acquisition and wetland restoration under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The commissioner shall determine project priorities as appropriate based upon need. \$500,000 is for scientific and natural areas and native prairie bank easements.

(The total 1996 bonding appropriation for RIM Wildlife and Natural Area land Acquisition was \$3,500,000. The agency has allocated \$500,000 to North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) land acquisitions and \$2,500,000 to the RIM Critical Habitat Matching Program).

1997 Appropriation

2. ML 1997, Chap. 216, Sec. 15, Subd. 17(I). \$500,000

This appropriation is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to accelerate acquisition of North American Waterfowl Management Plan wetlands and associated uplands on a cost share basis and wildlife habitat in areas of high population growth.

1998 Appropriation

3. ML 1998, Chap. 404, Sec. 7, Subd. 14

Critical Habitat, and North American Waterfowl Management Plan \$7,000,000
\$1,000,000 of this appropriation is to acquire land for wildlife management areas under Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.135; \$5,500,000 is for the critical habitat private sector matching account under Minnesota Statutes, section 8 and \$500,000 is for acquisition and wetland restoration under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The commissioner shall determine project priorities as appropriate based upon need.

D. Matching Funds:

Expenditures of state funds for NAWMP acquisitions will be submitted for federal matching dollars for projects under the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) generally on a 2:1 match (\$2 state generate \$1 federal match). NAWCA grants are approved on a competitive basis for projects nationwide. Approved NAWCA projects in Minnesota include the Heron Lake, Swan Lake, Northern Tallgrass Prairie, Prairie Wetland Heritage, and Minnesota River Projects and additional phases of these projects. Minnesota is the third highest recipient of NAWCA dollars in the United States.

Expenditures by the various partners in a project area are pooled to provide the nonfederal match for NAWCA grant proposals. Eligible nonfederal match includes partner expenditures for fee title or easement land acquisition, wetland restoration or development, and in-kind matching for salary and labor to manage or implement the project. Grant partners have included DNR, Board of Water and Soil Resources, soil and water conservation districts, local watershed districts, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and a variety of private conservation groups such as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and Minnesota Waterfowl Association.

Legislative appropriations specifically for NAWMP land acquisition have included \$1.0 million (M.L. 1994, Chapter 643, Section 23, Subd. 23) and \$500,000 (ML 1996, Chap. 463, Sec. 7, Subd. 22) in bonding dollars and \$650,000 (M.L. 1995, Chapter 220, Section 19, Subd. 10(a)) and \$270,000 (ML 1997, Chap. 216, Sec. 15, Subd. 17(l)) in Environmental Trust Fund (ETF) and Future Resources Funds (FRF), for a total of \$2.42 million. Since 1993, \$3.16 million in NAWCA grant funds have been approved or received by DNR and have been expended or budgeted for Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) land acquisition in the Swan Lake, Heron Lake, and Minnesota River Projects. The total NAWCA grant funds received by DNR since 1993 for acquisition, development, and other project-related costs is \$3.86 million. The difference is for nonacquisition activities such as wetland restoration and enhancement, native prairie grass seeding, waterfowl nesting structures, and personnel and administrative costs associated with these activities.

NAWCA regulations require that all federal funds received by the grantees must be expended to fulfill the objectives of the NAWCA project. Federal funds are received and expended by DNR on the respective, approved NAWCA projects under the authority of M.S. 84.085, Subd. 1(b) that provides:

The Commissioner of natural resources, on behalf of the state, may accept and use grants of money or property from the United States or other grantors for conservation purposes not inconsistent with the laws of this state. Any money or property so received is hereby appropriated and dedicated for the purposes for which it is granted, and shall be expended or used solely for such purposes in accordance with the federal laws and regulations pertaining thereto, subject to applicable state laws and rules as to manner of expenditure or use providing that the commissioner may make subgrants of any money received to other agencies, units of local government, and private nonprofit corporations. Appropriate funds and accounts shall be maintained by the commissioner of finance to secure compliance with this section.

II. PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Acquisition of wildlife lands is focused on protecting critical sites for wildlife and native plants, and providing public hunting and other wildlife-related activities, with primary emphasis on completing existing State Wildlife Management Areas. Many critical habitats in the state are irreplaceable and need protection. Many more sites are available needing protection than there are funds available to acquire them.

Minnesota has been a leader in the effort through the NAWMP to stabilize and restore continental waterfowl populations. State funds provided for NAWMP acquisitions are crucial to Minnesota's continued efforts in this unique partnership with federal and local governments, conservation groups, and private citizens to protect and restore wetland ecosystems for their values to wildlife and people.

III. SIX MONTH WORK PROJECT RESULTS 2/22/99-6/30/99:

The following parcels were purchased during this period with the identified funds:

RIM Wildlife Habitat Acquisition 1997: Two tracts totaling 138 acres at a cost of \$173,000.

RIM Wildlife Acquisition 1998: Seven tracts totaling 628 acres at a cost of \$524,000.

For cumulative accomplishments see page 4.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

A. Final Results - ML 1997, Chap. 216, Sec. 15, Subd. 17(l) RIM - WILDLIFE HABITAT ACQUISITION

\$500,000

This appropriation is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to accelerate acquisition of North American Waterfowl Management Plan wetlands and associated uplands on a cost share basis and wildlife habitat in areas of high population growth.

1. Federal Match: Four land acquisitions funded with this appropriation, totaling \$282,215, will be submitted for federal matching dollars for projects under the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) on a 2:1 match (\$2 state generate \$1 federal match). A 132 acre parcel located within 15 miles of Rochester, Minnesota was purchased and will provide much needed opportunities for the public to hunt, trap, and enjoy wildlife close to a major metropolitan area.

2. Projects Completed:

County	Project Name	Acres	Cost
Clearwater	Mosquito Creek WMA	5.61	\$2,113.00
Jackson	Heron Meadow WMA	56.29	\$95,392.00
Lac qui Parle	Madrena WMA	99.66	\$125,200.00
Lincoln	Shaokatan WMA	104	\$59,510.00
Olmsted	Vermilya WMA	132.16	\$200,000.00
<u>Professional Services</u>			<u>\$17,785.00</u>
TOTAL			\$500,000.00

B. Current Appropriations: The balance of funding from previous appropriations for WMA land acquisition will be spent to purchase priority WMA lands identified in Appendix A. Funds appropriated for NAWMP acquisitions will be expended to purchase projects qualifying for federal match under NAWCA.

V. CONTEXT

Wildlife Management Area Acquisition

A. Significance: The Reinvest in Minnesota program provides critical funding to purchase WMA lands to benefit wildlife populations, improve hunting and trapping opportunities and other wildlife related activities. The legislative funding has greatly increased the opportunity for Minnesota's citizens to enjoy wildlife and our natural heritage beyond hunting license or nongame check off revenues. These funds provide a major benefit to the overall quality of life, strength of the environment, community and the economy.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan project acquisition

A. Significance: The NAWMP is a cooperative effort by federal, state, and local governments and private organizations in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. to stabilize and restore continental waterfowl populations by preserving and restoring adequate wetland habitats.

Funding will ensure continued progress on four existing significant NAWMP watershed projects (Heron Lake, Swan Lake, Northern Tallgrass Prairie, and the Minnesota River), one proposed project (Prairie Heritage) and other potential projects. Wetlands and associated uplands will be acquired and restored in key locations within these projects to help fulfill the goals of the NAWMP.

Wildlife Management Area Corridor Acquisition

A. Significance: Extensive rural development in the 18-county "growth corridor" from St. Cloud to the Twin Cities to Rochester threatens sensitive natural resources in this area. In many cases, this may be the last opportunity to protect these critical habitats. Increasing populations also create a higher demand for public hunting, trapping, and other wildlife-related activities in close proximity. Only 7 percent of the acquired WMA lands in Minnesota are located in this 18-county area. Funds will be used to accelerate the purchase of WMA lands within this area to protect valuable wetlands and critical upland wildlife habitat and enhance recreational use, especially public hunting and trapping. Land costs will continue to increase over time in this corridor area and it is imperative that key acquisitions be completed before land prices become too prohibitive.

CUMULATIVE PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS THROUGH JUNE 30, 1999

Appropriation	Budget	WMA Acquisition ^a		Expended	Balance
		Acq. Tracts	Acq. Acres		
1996 Bonding NAWMP	\$500,000.00	7	477.56	\$500,000.00	\$0.00
1997 ETF	\$500,000.00	5	515.27	\$500,000.00	\$0.00
1998 Gen. Rev. WMA	\$1,000,000.00	9	1,171.44	\$834,000.00	\$166,000.00
1998 Gen. Rev. NAWMP	\$500,000.00	1	106.57	\$209,000.00	\$291,000.00
TOTALS	\$2,500,000.00	22	2,270.84	\$2,043,000.00	\$457,000.00

^a See Appendix A for a detailed listing of completed and proposed acquisition projects.

B. Time: The 1998 appropriations are anticipated to be spent by December 31, 1999.

C. Budget Context: For budget history see table on page 1.

Other WMA Acquisition Funding Sources

Source	July 1999-June 2001	July 2001-June 2003	July 2003-June 2005
Surcharge ¹	\$1,350,000.00	\$1,350,000.00	\$1,350,000.00
RIM Match ²	\$750,000.00	\$750,000.00	\$750,000.00
<u>Cash Donations³</u>	<u>\$450,000.00</u>	<u>\$450,000.00</u>	<u>\$450,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$2,550,000.00	\$2,550,000.00	\$2,550,000.00

¹ Wildlife Acquisition Account (\$4 Surcharge on the small game license).

² Based on previous 5-year average for WMA purchases with RIM Critical Habitat Matching funds (bonding, ETF, and FRF funds).

³ Based on previous 5-year average for private cash donations for WMA purchases under the RIM Critical Habitat Matching Program.

VI. COOPERATION

Besides the above program managers, Area wildlife, SNA and Nongame personnel coordinate with other divisions, counties, federal agencies and private nonprofit groups involved in the acquisition projects noted.

VII. LOCATION: Ecological classification location: Statewide

VIII. Reporting Requirements: Annual work program update reports will be submitted by January 1st of each year.

APPENDIX A

<u>RIM Wildlife & Natural Area Acquisitions 1996 Bonding</u>					
\$500,000 for NAWMP Acquisitions					
<u>Project</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>WMA Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Est. Cost</u>	<u>Status</u>
Minnesota River					
	Big Stone	Lac qui Parle WMA	178.40	\$104,000.00	C
	Cottonwood	Wolf Lake WMA	24.35	\$29,165.00	C
	Murray	County Line WMA	23.08	\$23,100.00	C
	Renville	Beaver Falls WMA	48.00	\$42,000.00	C
	Swift	Lac qui Parle WMA	<u>77.29</u>	<u>\$41,030.00</u>	C
	SUBTOTAL		351.12	\$239,295.00	
Heron Lake					
	Murray	Wirock WMA	45.42	\$62,000.00	C
	Nobles	Lone Tree WMA	<u>81.02</u>	<u>\$123,200.00</u>	C
	SUBTOTAL		126.44	\$185,200.00	
Professional Services (estimated)				<u>\$75,505.00</u>	
Total			477.56	\$500,000.00	

<u>RIM Wildlife Habitat Acquisition 1997 Environmental Trust Funds \$500,000</u>					
\$300,000 for NAWMP Acquisitions					
<u>Project</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>WMA Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Est. Cost</u>	<u>Status</u>
Heron Lake	Jackson	Heron Meadows WMA	56.29	\$95,392.00	C
Minnesota River					
	Lac qui Parle	Madrena WMA	99.66	\$125,200.00	C
Prairie Heritage					
	Clearwater	Mosquito Creek WMA	5.61	\$2,113.00	C
	Lincoln	Shaokatan WMA	104.00	\$59,510.00	C
Professional Services (estimated)				<u>\$17,785.00</u>	
SUBTOTAL			243.27	\$300,000.00	
\$200,000 for WMA Acquisitions in High Population Corridor					
	Olmsted	Vermilya WMA	272.00	\$200,000.00	C
SUBTOTAL				\$200,000.00	
Total				\$500,000.00	

APPENDIX A (Continued)

RIM Wildlife Acquisition 1998 - \$1.5 million general revenue

\$1,000,000 WMA Acquisition

<u>County</u>	<u>WMA Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Est. Cost</u>	<u>Status</u>
Chippewa	Sween WMA	4.4	\$6,000.00	C
Cottonwood	Talcot Lake WMA	320.0	\$392,700.00	C
Fillmore	Beaver Creek WMA	141.7	\$145,250.00	C
Goodhue	Perched Valley WMA	31.0	\$53,000.00	C
Isanti	Dalbo WMA	262.0	\$158,650.00	A
Kandiyohi	Burbank WMA	170.0	\$107,250.00	C
Kittson	Beaches Lake WMA	160.0	\$19,200.00	C
Lac qui Parle	Lac qui Parle WMA	79.5	\$37,400.00	C
Lyon	Green Valley WMA	2.84	\$1,800.00	C
Marshall	New Maine WMA	33.32	\$12,396.00	A
	<u>Professional Services</u>		<u>\$66,354.00</u>	
Total		1,204.76	\$1,000,000.00	

\$500,000 NAWMP Acquisition

<u>Project</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>WMA Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Est. Cost</u>	<u>Status</u>
Heron Lake	Jackson	Heron Meadows WMA	106.57	\$180,658.00	A
	Nobles	Lone Tree WMA	125.00	\$156,600.00	A
Northern Tall-grass Prairie	Roseau	Roseau Lake WMA	200.00	\$62,400.00	A
	Roseau	Roseau Lake WMA	200.00	\$65,000.00	P
Professional Services(estimated)				<u>\$35,342.00</u>	
Total			631.57	\$500,000.00	

Status Codes: C=Completed, A=Active, P=Proposed