

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Laws of Minnesota 2015 Final Report



Date: March 12, 2020

Program or Project Title: Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley

Funds Recommended: \$1,800,000

Manager's Name: Eran Sandquist

Title: MN State Coordinator

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Legislative Citation: ML 2015, First Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(h)

Appropriation Language: \$1,800,000 in the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Pheasants Forever in cooperation with the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society to acquire and restore lands in the southern Red River Valley for wildlife management purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, or for designation and management as waterfowl production areas in Minnesota, in cooperation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

County Locations: Norman

Eco regions in which work was completed:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie

Summary of Accomplishments:

The proposal was to accelerate the protection of 500 acres of prairie grassland, wetland, and other wildlife habitat as State Wildlife Management Areas or Waterfowl Production Areas in the Southern Red River Valley. Over the course of the appropriation, we acquired the 614 acre Prairie Dunes WMA which exceeded our total acre goal of 141 acres. This tract was also restored to provide the highest quality wildlife habitat possible.

Process & Methods:

Working in close collaboration with partners, Pheasants Forever acquired 614 acres of strategic habitat that directly meets the goals of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. All land acquired has been enrolled into the state Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Program and will be protected and managed in perpetuity by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. This new WMA not only provides access and recreational opportunities for all Minnesotans, but also helps address a strong need to provide more secure nesting and brood rearing habitat for prairie chicken near existing leks.

The offer to the landowner was based on fair market value as indicated in an independent appraisal. The acquired parcel helps address a backlog of willing sellers which is now helping slow the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of habitat in Minnesota. Parcels were identified jointly with the MN DNR, ranked, and prioritized on habitat goals and feasibility. Pheasants Forever's methods are formed around the principle of accelerating the Wildlife Production Area program in MN by targeting only the best available habitat with willing sellers. We utilize local partner expertise to focus on building a system of interconnected wildlife complexes that create habitat mosaics. We also utilize the latest geospatial layers to help determine factors such as: habitat restoration potential, landscape scale significance, presence of rare features and native habitat, and how these acquisitions fit into other priorities for our partners.

The acquired WMA has been restored to as a high of quality as practicable. All agricultural row crops on these parcels have been restored to native grassland/wetland complexes. The grasslands were restored using a diverse mix of native grasses and forb species. Wetlands were restored using a combination of tile breaking, sediment removal, dike construction, and water control structures.

How does the request address MN habitats that have: historical value to fish and wildlife, wildlife species of greatest conservation need, MN County Biological Survey data, and/or rare, threatened and endangered species inventories:

There are a number of game, non-game, and species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) that will benefit from this acquisition. Grasslands are the most threatened habitat in Minnesota and the Midwest, and grassland wildlife are also threatened. SGCN the MN DNR lists for this region include eight mammals, 54 birds, three reptiles, and ten insects. Of those, all eight mammals and ten insects, as well as 38 of the bird species could potentially benefit from these activities. Additionally, almost every game species in the area will benefit, including deer, all species of waterfowl that breed in and migrate through Minnesota, woodcock, snipe, rails, and wild turkey. This tracts can potentially have a number of T&E prairie dependent species utilizing it.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

The Prairie Dunes Wildlife Management Area is found within a Minnesota Prairie Plan Core area, as well as a Grassland Bird Conservation Core Area. Additionally MN DNR's Natural Heritage data shows numerous prairie chicken leks on and around the WMA.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition:

We worked in close collaboration with MN DNR to find and evaluate the best properties to peruse based on the criteria listed in the process and methods section. During the process, we also worked with many other partners to gauge interest levels and determine that the property is suitable for a Wildlife Management Area.

Additional Comments:

Exceptional challenges, expectations, failures, opportunities, or unique aspects of program

There were no exceptional failures or challenges that were encountered.

Other Funds Received:

- Not Listed

How were the funds used to advanced the program:

Not Listed

What is the plan to sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended:

The Prairie Dunes WMA has been transferred to the MN DNR for enrollment into the Wildlife Management Area program, additionally the WMA has been fully restored. The long-term management & maintenance of this WMA will be the responsibility of the MN DNR.

Explain the things you will do in the future to maintain project outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020	Federal/Local/PF Chapters	PF will continue to work with our partners and look for funds, where appropriate, to help maintain quality wildlife habitat on acquisitions.		

Outcomes:

The original accomplishment plan stated the program would

Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *Most parcels are within core areas as defined by the MPCP. All abut existing WMAs which will create larger blocks of contiguous habitat. Most tracts have some remaining native prairie on them meeting a second goal of the MPCP of protecting remaining native prairie. Percent increase of core protected areas measured.*

How will the outcomes be measured and evaluated?

The acquisition of the Prairie Dunes WMA added 614 acres of permanently protected, high quality prairie upland and wetland habitat to the Agassiz Beach Ridges Prairie Plan Core area.

Budget Spreadsheet

Final Budget line item reallocations are allowed up to 10% and do not need require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

Total Amount: \$1,800,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	Request	Spent	Cash Leverage (anticipated)	Cash Leverage (received)	Leverage Source	Total (original)	Total (final)
Personnel	\$30,000	\$25,400	\$0	\$0		\$30,000	\$25,400
Contracts	\$165,000	\$135,700	\$0	\$0		\$165,000	\$135,700
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,192,700	\$1,573,200	\$12,500	\$418,900	NAWCA/Private	\$1,205,200	\$1,992,100
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$375,000	\$0	\$12,500	\$0		\$387,500	\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Travel	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$0	\$0		\$1,300	\$1,300
Professional Services	\$20,000	\$11,700	\$0	\$1,700	Bethlen Berens Law/Birkens Law	\$20,000	\$13,400
Direct Support Services	\$6,000	\$4,700	\$0	\$400	PF	\$6,000	\$5,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$0		\$10,000	\$10,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Total	\$1,800,000	\$1,762,000	\$25,000	\$421,000		\$1,825,000	\$2,183,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	Spent	Cash Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MN State Coordinator	0.02	3.00	\$8,400	\$0		\$8,400
PF Regional Staff	0.02	3.00	\$8,500	\$0		\$8,500
PF Grant Staff	0.06	3.00	\$8,500	\$0		\$8,500
Total	0.10	9.00	\$25,400	\$0		\$25,400

Amount of Request: \$1,800,000

Amount of Leverage: \$25,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 1.39%

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

Pheasants Forever and our partners are happy to bring in over \$420,947.21 of non-state match dollars to this effort. While coming in under budget we were able to buy more acres than our original proposal. This demonstrates the efficiency of Pheasants Forever as the economical provider for building Wildlife Management Areas. No challenges were encountered and PF achieved and exceeded all outlined goals within the budget.

All revenues received by the recipient that have been generated from activities on land with money from the OHF:

Total Revenue: \$32,010

Revenue Spent: \$3,495

Revenue Balance: \$28,515

- B. This revenue, or a portion of it, was used for other purposes as approved in the AP by the LSOHC.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	375	614	0	0	0	0	375	614
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	125	0	0	0	0	0	125	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	500	614	0	0	0	0	500	614

Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?

Type	Native Prairie (original)	Native Prairie (final)
Restore	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0
Enhance	0	0
Total	0	0

Table 2. Total Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$1,350,000	\$1,762,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,350,000	\$1,762,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$450,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$450,000	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$1,800,000	\$1,762,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,800,000	\$1,762,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	ForestPrairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SEForest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	375	614	0	0	375	614
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	125	0	0	0	125	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	500	614	0	0	500	614

Table 4. Total Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	Forest Prairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,350,000	\$1,762,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,350,000	\$1,762,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$450,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$450,000	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,800,000	\$1,762,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,800,000	\$1,762,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$3,600	\$2,870	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$3,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	Forest Prairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,600	\$2,870	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,600	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles (original)

0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles (final)

0

Explain the success/shortage of acre goals:

The goal of this proposal was to acquire 500 acres. We were successful in acquiring 614 acres.

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	OHF Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?	Description
Prairie Dunes WMA	14644232	614	\$1,567,700		Full	Not Applicable	New WMA

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Completed Parcel: Prairie Dunes WMA

# of Total Acres:	614
County:	Norman
Township:	146
Range:	44
Direction:	2
Section:	32
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	94.5
# of Acres: Forest:	0
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	519.93
Amount of Shoreline:	0 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	n/a
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	MN DNR
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Jay Johnson
Annual Reporting Address:	500 Lafayette
Annual Reporting City:	St. Paul
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	55155
Annual Reporting Email:	Jay.Johnson@state.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	6512595248
Purchase Date:	March 21, 2017
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$1,986,600
Appraised Value:	\$1,986,600
Professional Service Costs:	\$19,996
Assessed Value:	\$1,013,900
Total Project Cost:	\$1,986,600
Fees Received:	\$32,010
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	DNR - Wildlife Management Area -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Rob Baden

Parcel Map

Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley

