



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition, Phase X

Laws of Minnesota 2018 Final Report

General Information

Date: 08/25/2025

Project Title: DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition, Phase X

Funds Recommended: \$2,786,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 2(a)

Appropriation Language: \$2,786,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire in fee and restore lands for wildlife management under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, and to acquire lands in fee for scientific and natural areas under Minnesota statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 5. Subject to evaluation criteria in Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority must be given to acquiring lands that are eligible for the native prairie bank under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands adjacent to protected native prairie. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Jeff Tillma

Title:

Organization: MN Dept. of Natural Resources

Address: 1200 Hw 2

City: Grand Rapids, MN 55155

Email: jeff.tillma@state.mn.us

Office Number: 218-328-8834

Mobile Number: 2182441876

Fax Number:

Website:

Location Information

County Location(s): Martin, Big Stone, Clay and Murray.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Northern Forest

Prairie

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Prairie

Forest

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

We acquired three parcels and split funded another with ML17 that totaled 646 acres. We exceeded our accomplishment plan goals of 470 acres. Restoration of these parcels is complete including tree removal, grassland and wetland restorations and infrastructure such as sign posting and parking lots. We expended 98% of our budget.

Process & Methods

Through this appropriation the MN DNR protected lands in the prairie ecological section. The MN DNR prioritized acquisitions focusing on parcels that are adjacent to existing WMA's and other conservation parcels working towards building habitat complexes that achieve the greatest conservation benefits. All acquisitions were a result of a relationship with a willing seller. We scored them using a GIS tool that assigns points based on the natural resource attributes along with other ecological and management criteria. We then ranked them in importance based on their score and input from local DNR land managers. All acquisitions were then subject to County Board review and approval. Four WMA parcels totaling 646 acres are now permanently protected as a result of acquisitions funded by this program, exceeding our accomplishment plan goal.

How did the program address habitats of significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, threatened or endangered species, and/or list targeted species?

Potential acquisitions for WMAs and SNAs are objectively scored for their habitat value. The DNR uses weighted criteria and prioritizes high scoring parcels for acquisition. For example, candidates for WMAs score higher with a prairie grouse lek, presence of shallow lakes, and occurrence of species in greatest conservation need. Potential SNAs score higher with high quality native plant communities and habitat for rare species. Both programs also give priority to parcels that adjoin existing units or other conservation lands.

How did the program use science-based targeting that leveraged or expanded corridors and complexes, reduced fragmentation, or protected areas in the MN County Biological Survey.

The DNR uses GIS-based scoring systems to rank potential acquisitions so that higher scoring parcels are prioritized. These systems incorporate scientific data including native plant community mapping, rare species locations, and watershed/wetland qualities as well as habitat management considerations and suitability for public access, hunting and fishing. Sites of MCBS Biodiversity Significance and parcels that build upon existing habitat complexes are highly scored in these systems.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

Collaborative partnerships are an integral part of our work in strategic land acquisition. Partners that we consult and work with include local townships, watershed districts, and counties. In addition we work closely with acquisition partners such as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and Trust for Public Lands among others as to ensure we are coordinating our acquisition efforts in a way that maximizes conservation outcomes. We work very closely with counties as we seek resolutions of approval from the County Board of Commissioners for all MN DNR led acquisitions.

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

Our ability to acquire parcels is highly dependent on the real-estate market. When land values are rising our appraisals may not meet the landowner's expectations and it can be difficult to start another acquisition in time to acquire with available funds. When land values are stable or declining we often have more parcels available than we can purchase and we are missing out on great conservation opportunities. Some counties are agreeable to land acquisition, while others are less so.

What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this program?

Other : Other state land acquisition budgets such as Critical Habitat Private Sector Matching Account and Surcharge on small game licenses.

How were the funds used to advance the program?

\$35K in Surcharge funds was used to help purchase one of the parcels in this appropriation

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

All acquisitions funded through this proposal are state lands, and are part of the state outdoor recreation system. Ongoing management will be accomplished through routine work duties by our network of DNR Area staff. Periodic enhancements will be accomplished by DNR staff, MCC crews, temporary project staffing or through vendor contract using traditional habitat funding, bonding, and future requests for funding from dedicated funding sources.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2024 and beyond	Game and Fish Fund; other dedicated funds	Manage habitats to maximize wildlife benefits consistent with management guidance documentation (e.g., burning, mowing/shearing, timber stand improvement, planting, invasive species control).	Maintain boundaries	Monitor and manage public use

Budget

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$51,700	\$51,700	\$34,400	-	-	-	\$51,700	\$34,400
Contracts	\$120,900	\$100,000	\$29,000	-	-	-	\$120,900	\$29,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$2,346,700	\$2,346,700	\$2,377,900	-	\$35,200	Surcharge on small game licenses	\$2,346,700	\$2,413,100
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$5,600	\$5,600	\$500	-	-	-	\$5,600	\$500
Professional Services	\$131,600	\$152,500	\$162,300	-	-	-	\$131,600	\$162,300
Direct Support Services	\$12,100	\$12,100	\$11,300	-	-	-	\$12,100	\$11,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$117,400	\$117,400	\$116,900	-	-	-	\$117,400	\$116,900
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$2,786,000	\$2,786,000	\$2,732,300	-	\$35,200	-	\$2,786,000	\$2,767,500

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Amount Spent	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
SNA Coordinator & Specialists	0.14	3.0	\$3,200	-	-	\$3,200
WMA Coordinator & Specialists	0.1	3.0	\$31,200	-	-	\$31,200

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 MN DNR uses a standardized DSS calculator that has been developed by our Office of Management and Budget Services.

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

We were able to acquire more acres with out acquisition budget than we anticipated

Total Revenue: \$0

Revenue Spent: \$0

Revenue Balance: \$0

Of the money disclosed above, what are the appropriate uses of the money:

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Acres (AP)	Total Acres (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	350	646	120	0	0	0	470	646
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	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
Total	0	0	350	646	120	0	0	0	470	646

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

Type	Native Prairie (AP)	Native Prairie (Final)
Restore	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	130	10
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0
Enhance	0	0
Total	130	10

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Funding (AP)	Total Funding (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	\$2,193,100	\$2,732,300	\$592,900	-	-	-	\$2,786,000	\$2,732,300
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$2,193,100	\$2,732,300	\$592,900	-	-	-	\$2,786,000	\$2,732,300

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	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	350	646	120	0	470	646
Protect in	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Fee w/o State PILT Liability												
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	350	646	120	0	470	646

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,193,100	\$2,732,300	\$592,900	-	\$2,786,000	\$2,732,300
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,193,100	\$2,732,300	\$592,900	-	\$2,786,000	\$2,732,300

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Explain the success/shortage of acre goals

We were able to acquire more land than we had originally anticipated due to lower than expected appraised values.

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ~
We did not acquire property in the forest region

Programs in prairie region:

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Acres of prairie acquired. Acres of grassland/wetland habitat complexes acquired that support upland game birds, migratory waterfowl, big-game, and unique Minnesota species (e.g. endangered, threatened, and special concern species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need). Species lists (and numbers where available) of those species observed or documented.*

Parcels

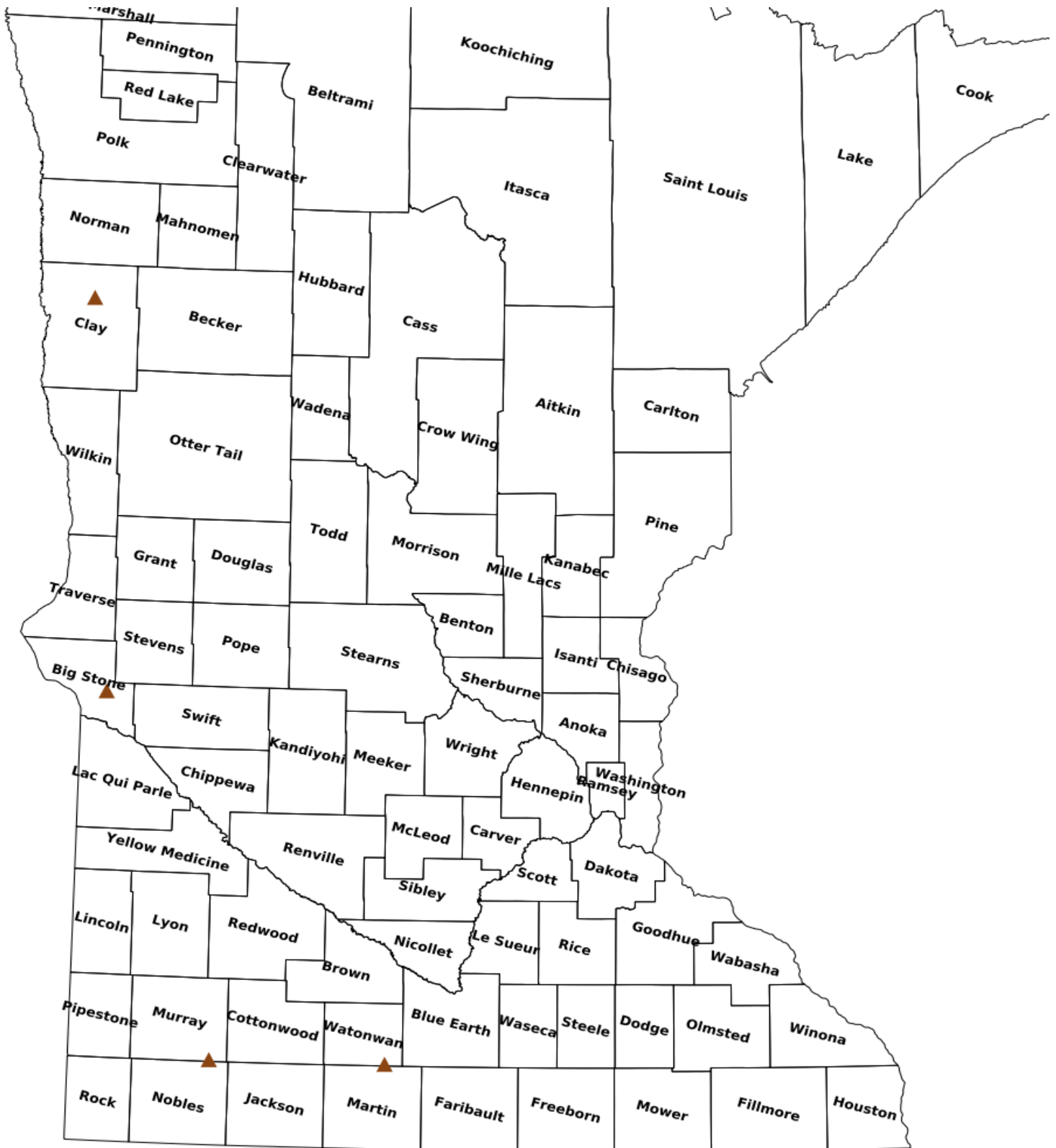
Sign-up Criteria?

No

Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Otrey WMA tr3,3A,12	Big Stone	12245215	247	\$1,000,000	No
Flowing Prairie tr9	Clay	14146223	159	\$500,000	No
Perch Creek WMA tr19	Martin	10530231	159	\$650,000	No
Talcot Lake WMA tr31	Murray	10539231	81	\$625,000	No

Parcel Map



0 15 30 45 mi

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