



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley - Phase IV Laws of Minnesota 2018 Final Report

General Information

Date: 10/24/2025

Project Title: Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley - Phase IV

Funds Recommended: \$1,162,000

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

Appropriation Language: \$1,162,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Pheasants Forever, in cooperation with the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society, to acquire lands in fee and restore and enhance lands in the southern Red River valley for wildlife management under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, or to be designated and managed as waterfowl production areas in Minnesota in cooperation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. 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: Sabin Adams

Title: State Coordinator - MN

Organization: MN Prairie Chicken Society / Pheasants Forever, Inc.

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Location Information

County Location(s): Wilkin.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Prairie

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

In this phase of the program PF purchased the Rogelstad WMA in Wilkin County totaling 324.25 acres. All wetland and upland restorations on this property, including a stream re-meandering, were completed to the fullest extent possible with regard to budgets and time. The property was donated to MN DNR.

Process & Methods

In collaboration with the MN Prairie Chicken Society, Pheasants Forever strategically acquired the Rogelstad WMA for the benefit of Greater Prairie Chicken populations in MN. All acquired tracts have been enrolled into the state Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Program and will be protected and managed in perpetuity by the Minnesota DNR. This purchase address the need to protect nesting and brood rearing habitat in close proximity to leks for Greater prairie chickens. In addition to the wildlife benefits, all properties are open to all peoples to enjoy. Parcels were identified jointly with the MN DNR and USFWS, ranked, and prioritized on habitat goals and feasibility. Pheasants Forever and agency staff collaborated to generate a list of parcels with landowners who had the desire to sell. This parcels ecological impact was evaluated using landscape level planning tools such as the USFWS Habitat and Population Evaluation Team (HAPET), The MN Prairie Conservation Plan and The Pheasant Action Plan among other. By utilizing these tools, we were able to focus efforts in areas where acquisitions and restorations will make the greatest impact on the landscape and thus these additional acres of WMA are very beneficial to wildlife and public recreation. Offers to landowners were based on fair market value as indicated in an independent appraisal. Once acquired, drained wetlands on each parcel were restored by installing surface ditch “plugs” and or breaking subsurface tile. Some wetlands may also have had sediment removed to create proper substrates for wetland function and vegetative growth. Grasslands were restored by planting high-diversity native seed mix of grasses and forbs that are regionally appropriate to the area. As with all restoration work, there are challenges that come from weather and working with private contractors, but we did not face any major issues.

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?

SGCN and T&E were a major consideration when evaluating acquisitions, considering the primary focus of this program is to protect and restore Greater prairie chicken habitat. Parcels with identified SGCN/T&E species were ranked more favorably than parcels without. In addition to the Greater Prairie chicken, species of concern that will benefit from these projects include the short-eared owl, marsh hawk and yellow rail. To maximize our impact, acquisitions in this program add to existing WMA or WPA habitat complexes. Many of these complexes are the strongholds for species of wildlife including SGCN and T&E species. By increasing the size and connectivity of these complexes many species are benefited. The parcels acquired and restored as part of this phase add to the quantity and quality of grasslands and wetlands that are available to species such as mallards, black terns, bobolinks, meadowlarks, and the ring-necked pheasant.

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.

Each potential acquisition tract was developed, reviewed, and selected in conjunction with the MN DNR and USFWS area managers and acquisition staff. Partners employ numerous planning and evaluation tools including the DNR SWAAT scoring tool and USFWS HAPET modeling (breeding duck density maps) to identify quality habitat tracts that also meet recreational requirements. Additionally, conservation plans such as the MN Prairie Conservation Plan and the Pheasant Action Plan, take corridors and complexes into account when creating focus areas. These focus areas are part of the evaluation process used to evaluate parcels for acquisition.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

Pheasants Forever and the MN Prairie Chicken Society worked closely with the MN DNR and USFWS to find and evaluate the best properties 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 if the property is suitable for a WMA or WPA. As with any acquisition program there is occasional opposition, however during the acquisition of the tracts in this phase no significant issues occurred.

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

Rogelstad WMA was a new WMA to the system. After we acquired this parcel the neighbor to the south sold us their property as well which we purchased with a newer appropriation. Rogelstad WMA is now a full section of wildlife habitat and public access.

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

N/A

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

All acquisition's in this appropriation have been transferred to the MN DNR as a WMA for their continued management.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2025 and beyond	PF, Local, DNR	Identify Management Concerns	Work with DNR/USFWS on management.	-
-	-	-	-	-

Budget

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$8,600	\$13,600	\$15,000	-	-	2631	\$8,600	\$15,000
Contracts	\$197,100	\$187,100	\$131,800	-	-	-	\$197,100	\$131,800
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$910,000	\$910,000	\$912,500	\$12,100	\$22,800	Federal, Private, PF, MPCS	\$922,100	\$935,300
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$600	\$600	\$600	-	-	-	\$600	\$600
Professional Services	\$21,800	\$21,800	\$21,200	-	-	-	\$21,800	\$21,200
Direct Support Services	\$3,400	\$3,400	\$2,600	-	-	-	\$3,400	\$2,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$9,500	\$14,500	\$14,500	-	-	-	\$9,500	\$14,500
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000	-	-	-	\$11,000	\$11,000
Grand Total	\$1,162,000	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200	\$12,100	\$22,800	-	\$1,174,100	\$1,132,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Amount Spent	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
PF State Coordinator - MN	0.01	3.0	\$1,800	-	-	\$1,800
PF Field Staff	0.02	3.0	\$9,800	-	2631	\$9,800
PF Grant Staff	0.02	3.0	\$3,400	-	-	\$3,400

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

PF utilizes the Total Modified Direct Cost method. This methodology is annually approved by the U.S. Department of Interior's National Business Center as the basis for the organization's Indirect Cost Rate agreement. PF's allowable direct support services cost is 4.12%. In this proposal, PF has discounted its rate to 1.5% of the sum of personnel, contracts, professional services, and travel. We are donating the difference-in-kind.

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

Land, restoration and enhancement, all cost way more today than they did when we proposed.

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	303	324	0	0	0	0	303	324
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	303	324	0	0	0	0	303	324

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	-	-	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200	-	-	-	-	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200	-	-	-	-	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200

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	303	324	0	0	303	324
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	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	303	324	0	0	303	324

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	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200	-	-	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200	-	-	\$1,162,000	\$1,109,200

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Explain the success/shortage of acre goals

We over achieved our proposed acres by 21 and are under budget.

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need ~

Programs in prairie region:

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ One parcels, totaling 324 acres was purchased, and restored to the greatest extent possible. This parcel is located in areas that are identified as core areas or corridors for Greater prairie chickens; however, all area wildlife will benefit from these acquisitions.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

No

Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Rogelstad Swanson WMA addition	Wilkin	13546210	324	\$960,000	No

Parcel Map

