



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Metro Wildlife Management Areas
Laws of Minnesota 2018 Final Report

General Information

Date: 10/23/2025

Project Title: Metro Wildlife Management Areas

Funds Recommended: \$1,174,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(e)

Appropriation Language: \$1,174,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with The Conservation Fund to acquire lands in fee in the metro area planning region for wildlife management under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Emilee Nelson

Title:

Organization: The Conservation Fund

Address: 1000 County Road E W Suite 1300

City: Shoreview, MN 55126

Email: enelson@conservationfund.org

Office Number: 9525955768

Mobile Number:

Fax Number:

Website: www.conservationfund.org

Location Information

County Location(s): Sibley.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Metro / Urban

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Habitat

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

A total of 142 acres of wetlands and grasslands were acquired in Sibley County, located less than an hour from the Twin Cities Metro. The project included the restoration of 21 acres of wetland basins, improved public access, and expanded the Severance Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Process & Methods

The Conservation Fund (TCF) collaborated with DNR Wildlife Managers to identify high-priority land acquisitions within the Metro planning area. The Severance Lake Tract 16 emerged as a strong candidate due to its multiple restorable wetland basins, upland restoration potential, and its proximity to the Twin Cities—an area where public hunting opportunities are limited.

TCF negotiated the purchase directly with the landowner, led the County Board presentation and notification process with assistance from DNR, and successfully acquired the parcel. TCF then donated the property to the DNR, which subsequently carried out the restoration work.

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?

This project lies within the Central Migratory Flyway, a key corridor for nearly all waterfowl species passing through Minnesota. Within a 10-mile radius, there are over 200 documented occurrences of rare or threatened species. The 21 acres of restored wetlands provide critical habitat for spring-migrating waterfowl and serve as valuable nesting grounds for migratory species.

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.

TCF has partnered with DNR ecologists and Minnesota County Biological Survey staff to identify critical sites for Species of Greatest Conservation Need. By building on existing habitat complexes and prioritizing marginal agricultural lands, conservation investments yield greater returns, allowing protection efforts to focus where costs are relatively low and ecological benefits are high.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

Partners included the Minnesota DNR, with leadership from the Nicollet office staff on restoration efforts, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which provided expertise in wetland engineering. The project faced no opposition.

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

The project encountered no significant challenges. The only title issue involved clarifying a boundary line on the north end of the parcel, which was resolved smoothly.

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?

The Nicollet Area Wildlife office has incorporated this parcel into the DNR's WMA ownership and will maintain the property into the future. The restoration work is complete and basic maintenance is expected (burning, parking lot upkeep).

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2025 and beyond	DNR	monitor for noxious weeds post planting	maintain into future	-

Budget

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$8,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	Private Source	\$36,000	\$14,000
Contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,004,000	\$937,000	\$680,100	-	-	-	\$1,004,000	\$680,100
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$3,000	\$3,000	-	-	-	-	\$3,000	-
Professional Services	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$16,900	-	-	-	\$20,000	\$16,900
Direct Support Services	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$1,100	-	-	-	\$4,000	\$1,100
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	-	-	-	\$5,000	\$5,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	\$108,000	\$175,000	\$128,500	-	-	-	\$108,000	\$128,500
Grand Total	\$1,174,000	\$1,174,000	\$839,600	\$6,000	\$6,000	-	\$1,180,000	\$845,600

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Amount Spent	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MN State Director	0.04	2.0	-	-	-	-
MN Acquisition Associate	0.05	3.0	\$8,000	\$6,000	Private Source	\$14,000

Direct Support Services

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

Our real estate support staff keeps hourly time sheets to track direct time spent on projects by grant source. We have used those past metrics to estimate the costs for this grant.

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

TCF was able to negotiate a purchase price \$38,000 below appraised value, resulting in savings to OHF and will be used as RIM match for DNR projects.

Total Revenue: \$12,800

Revenue Spent: \$0

Revenue Balance: \$12,800

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

C. This revenue, or a portion of it, was transferred back to the OHF.

Itemize out how the revenues were spent:

No revenues were spent. Revenue from 1 year of farm rent will be returned to OHF.

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	20	21	0	0	0	0	280	121	300	142
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	20	21	0	0	0	0	280	121	300	142

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	\$70,000	\$124,200	-	-	-	-	\$1,104,000	\$715,400	\$1,174,000	\$839,600
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$70,000	\$124,200	-	-	-	-	\$1,104,000	\$715,400	\$1,174,000	\$839,600

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	300	142	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	300	142
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	300	142	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	300	142

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	\$1,174,000	\$839,600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,174,000	\$839,600
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$1,174,000	\$839,600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,174,000	\$839,600

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

Explain the success/shortage of acre goals

Of the 300-acre goal, 142 acres were achieved. Land values near the metro area were higher than originally anticipated in the grant proposal.

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *This project created another important link in the chain of wildlife habitat corridors. Within just 10 miles, more than 200 documented species occurrences show the rich biodiversity supported in the area.*

Parcels

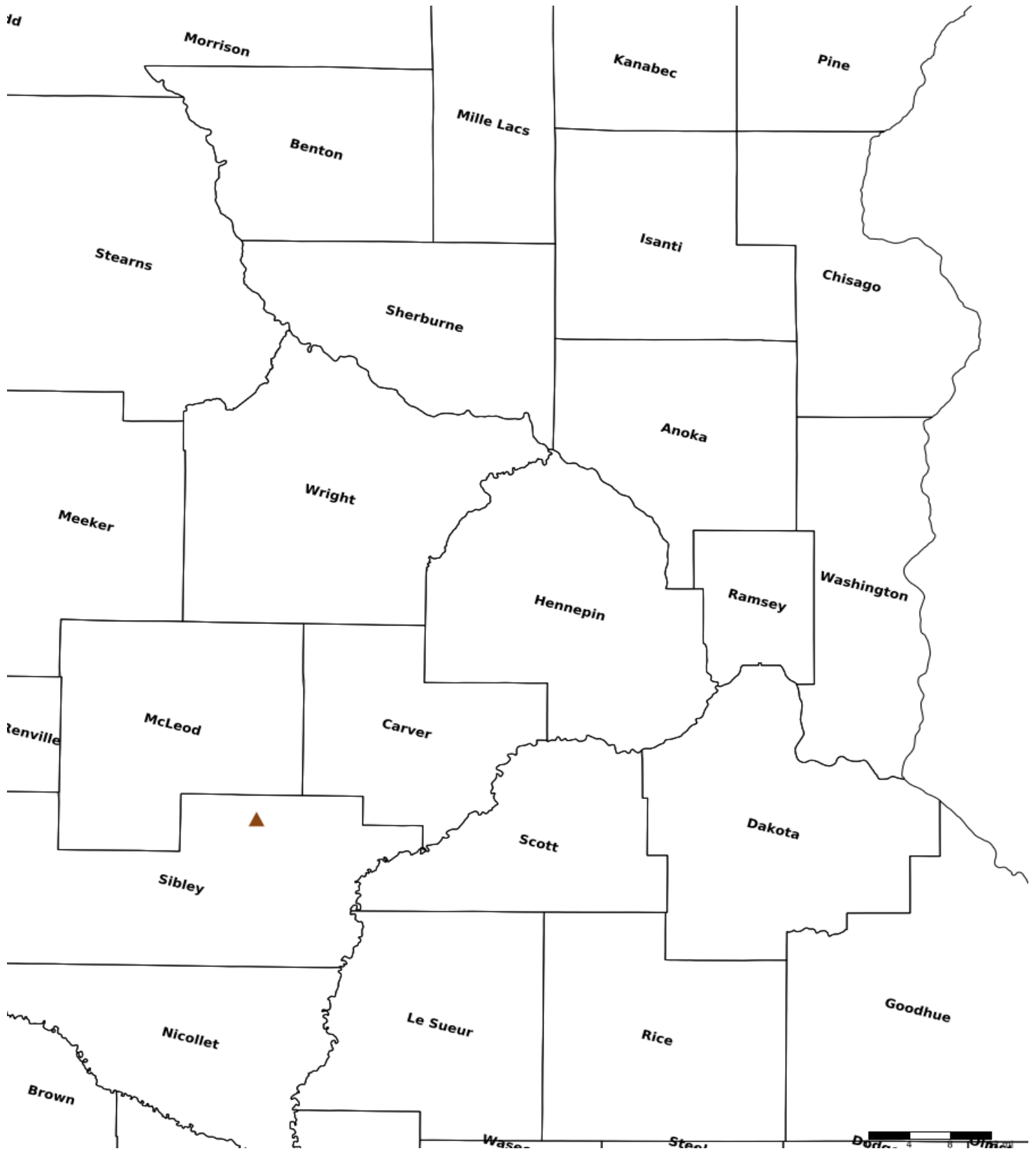
Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes - Sign up criteria is attached](#)

Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Severance Lake WMA	Sibley	11427217	142	\$676,400	No

Parcel Map



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