

## **AMENDMENT REQUEST**

### **Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council**

#### **2009 Recommendation Accomplishment Plan**

**Project or Program Title: Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program in Minnesota – Protecting Our Investment**

**Date: 11/28/11      6/12/2012      Amendment Request**

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	<b>Council Recommendation Funding</b>	<b>Out-Year Projections of Needs</b>		
<b>Funds Recommended (\$000s)</b>	<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>
Outdoor Heritage Fund	<b>5,600,000</b>	0	0	0

#### **Legislative Citation and Language**

ML 2009, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4c Accelerate the Waterfowl Production Area Program in Minnesota. \$5,600,000 in fiscal year 2010 is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Pheasants Forever or successor to acquire and restore wetland and related upland habitats, in cooperation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. or successor to be managed as waterfowl production areas. A list of proposed acquisitions and a list of proposed projects, describing the types and locations of restorations, must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

#### **Summary**

Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will cooperate to permanently restore and conserve approximately 800 acres of grassland and 400 acres of wetland as Waterfowl Production Areas in western and southern Minnesota. All lands acquired through this

grant proposal will be owned and managed by the Service as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

## **Background**

Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) are managed as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. However, land acquisition and restoration have not kept pace with habitat needs. This *LSOHC* project will add to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's acquisition of Minnesota's valuable wetland and grassland habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will immediately identify and prioritize lands to be acquired by Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited. PF and DU will complete landowner contacts, appraisals, and purchase agreements. Lands will be deeded to and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as WPA's. Under this management, restoration of native grasslands and wetlands will be completed and protected in perpetuity. Approximately 800 acres of grassland and 400 acres of wetlands will be protected. Acquisition will occur within 18 months and habitat restoration will occur over the next two years depending on funding and seedbed preparation needs. Waterfowl Production Areas will be open for public recreation according to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. This project will be part of the Waterfowl Production Area program that has successfully protected similar habitats in Minnesota for 50 years.

## **Relationship to the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and Other Published Resource Management Plans**

The *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* calls for protecting priority land (habitat recommendation #1) and this proposal is working to protect and restore priority grassland and wetland habitats important to waterfowl, grassland and wetland birds as well as the myriad species that call grasslands and wetlands home. This proposal will also implement the following habitat recommendations within the plan:

1. Protect priority land habitats – this proposal contains priority grassland and wetland habitats important to waterfowl, grassland and wetland birds as well as the myriad species that call grasslands and wetlands home.
2. Protect critical shorelands of rivers and lakes – there are potential projects that will protect shoreline of shallow lakes contained within this proposal.
3. Improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation - All lands acquired and restored will be open to the public for hunting and other activities allowed under the national wildlife refuge system.
4. Restore and protect shallow lakes - there are potential projects that include protection of shallow lakes contained within this proposal.
5. Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds – this proposal protects and restores wetlands and grasslands. A majority of the lands purchased will be prior-converted.
6. Keep water on the landscape – by protecting and restoring wetlands and grasslands, this proposal will return water to the landscape (permanent wetland restoration) and help keep water on the landscape (permanent vegetation restoration).

Minnesota DNR *Long-range Duck Recovery Plan* has priority goals for long term protection and restoration for wetland and grassland habitat for duck production. This proposal will contribute 1,200-acres to the 2,000,000 acre goal set under the plan. Specifically it will permanently protect and/or restore 400-acres of wetlands towards the 600,000-acre wetland goal and permanently protect and/or restore 800 acres of grasslands towards the 1,400,000-acre grassland goal

Minnesota DNR *Long-range plan for the ring-necked pheasant* in Minnesota has priority goals to protect and restore nesting and winter habitat for pheasants. This proposal contributes 1,200 acres to the plan goal of restoring 1,560,000 acres of habitat within the pheasant range of Minnesota.

This proposal contributes to the *North American Waterfowl Management Plan* by contributing 1,200 acres of breeding habitat (wetlands and grasslands) to the 11.8 million acres goal to restore continental waterfowl populations. Most of the work proposed will occur within the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture which is recognized as a national priority for wetland and grassland habitat and breeding waterfowl and grassland bird species.

## Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 10	Fiscal Year 11*	Fiscal Year 12
<b>Personnel</b>	\$32,921	\$27,079	
<b>Contracts</b>	\$41,294		\$233,706
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies</b>	\$17,200	\$0	
<b>Fee Acquisition</b>	\$2,637,268	<u>\$2,610,532</u>	<u>\$450,000</u>
		<u>\$2,160,532</u>	
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>			
<b>Easement Stewardship</b>			
<b>Travel</b>			
<b>Additional Budget Items</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$2,728,683	<u>\$2,637,611</u>	<u>\$233,706</u>
		<u>\$2,187,611</u>	<u>\$683,706</u>

\*DU, PF and USFWS will make every effort to complete the work outlined in this proposal in FY10, however due to variables that the partnership does not have control over (sellers, acquisition process, weather (as it relates to restoration), etc.) we would request the flexibility to carry the grant into FY11 if necessary.

- 1) Contracting out for appraisals, legal surveys, and design/construction of water control structures.
- 2) Purchase of materials and supplies for grassland and wetland restoration.
- 3) Pheasants Forever direct personnel cost for project management and administration.

Pheasants Forever requests that the equipment tools and supplies budget be moved to the fee acquisition budget item along with the unallocated remainder of the contracts budget. The reason for this is that most, if not all restoration of newly acquired WPA's is being completed in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, PF, DU, other partners, and thus is being funded with funds other than LSOHC.

Should restoration, enhancement or initial development costs of newly acquired parcels require funds from LSOHC through this accomplishment plan, we will amend this accomplishment plan to ensure that we are seeing newly acquired parcels restored and brought into the National Wildlife Refuge System initially developed and ready for wildlife production and public recreation as required by the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

## Personnel Details

Title	Name	Amount.
Sr. Field Coordinator		\$15,000
Regional Staff (2)		\$30,000
Director of Public Finance		\$15,000

Please see amended personnel detail in the attached spreadsheet provided to LSOHC, All personnel costs are direct to project.

## Leverage

Source of Leverage	Fiscal Year 10	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12
<b>Federal Duck Stamp Dollars</b>	\$5,000,000		
<b>Pheasants Forever in-kind</b>	\$50,000 (1)	\$50,000 (1)	
<b>Ducks Unlimited in-kind</b>	\$10,000 (2)	\$10,000 (2)	
<b>U.S. FWS</b>	\$100,000 (3)	\$100,000 (3)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,160,000</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>	

- 1) PF in-kind contribution for grassland restoration and land acquisition.
- 2) DU in-kind contribution for design of wetland restorations and land acquisition.
- 3) U.S. FWS in-kind contribution of Realty staff support to acquire new WPA's.

## Accomplishments:

Table 1 Accomplish- ments	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
<b>Restore</b>		<i>Restore 152 acres of grassland*</i>		
<b>Protect</b>	<i>Protect 350** acres of wetland</i>	<i>Protect 1,181 acres of grassland</i>		
<b>Enhance</b>	<i>Enhance 30 Acres of Wetlands</i>	<i>Enhance 302 acres of grassland</i>		

\*All acquired parcels will be restored and brought up to initial development standards in partnership with US Fish & Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and other partners. Restored and enhanced acreages would increase should LSOHC funds be requested and necessary to complete restorations. Additionally, some parcels, and portions of parcels acquired were in existing habitat (either wetland or grassland) and will not need restoration or enhancements to achieve wildlife habitat.

\*\*Wetland acres include some estimates of wetlands to be restored. Wetlands will be restored to their fullest extent possible.

<b>Table 2 Recommend Fund Allocation</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Restore</b>		\$234,100		
<b>Protect</b>	\$1,291,067	\$4,016,733		
<b>Enhance</b>	\$40,000	\$18,100		

<b>Table 3 Counties* Impacted</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Restore</b>	<i>Counties within the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture of Minnesota and Wright County (See map attached). Counties with identified willing sellers currently include: Polk, Norman, Mahnomen, McLeod, Becker, Clay, Ottertail, Renville, Douglas, Grant, Stevens, Big Stone, Kandiyohi, Wright, Lincoln, Lyon, Jackson, Faribault</i>	<i>Counties within the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture of Minnesota and Wright County (See map attached). Counties with identified willing sellers currently include: Polk, Norman, Mahnomen, McLeod, Becker, Clay, Ottertail, Renville, Douglas, Grant, Stevens, Big Stone, Kandiyohi, Wright, Lincoln, Lyon, Jackson, Faribault</i>		
<b>Protect</b>	<i>Polk, Norman, Mahnomen, McLeod, Becker, Clay, Ottertail, Renville, Douglas, Grant, Stevens, Big Stone, Kandiyohi, Wright, Lincoln, Lyon, Jackson, Faribault</i>	<i>Polk, Norman, Mahnomen, McLeod, Becker, Clay, Ottertail, Renville, Douglas, Grant, Stevens, Big Stone, Kandiyohi, Wright, Lincoln, Lyon, Jackson, Faribault</i>		
<b>Enhance</b>				

\*Please note that we fully expect high quality, priority projects will arise that are not identified here, but meet with the wetland and grassland protection criteria to present themselves within the grant period. It would be the intent of the partners herein to evaluate and add priority projects that are consistent with the goals and purposes of the LOHC and partners.

<b>Table 4 Non-State Leverage \$</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Restore</b>	\$			
<b>Protect</b>	\$1,500,000 (1)	\$3,500,000 (1)		
<b>Enhance</b>	\$			

1) U.S. FWS Duck Stamp Dollars used to acquire an additional 1000-1200 acres of WPA.

<b>Table 5 Acquisition Data</b>	<b>Wetlands</b>	<b>Prairies</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife</b>
<b>Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability</b>				
<b>Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability</b>				
	350 acres	1,181 acres		
<b>Permanent Easement</b>				

## Accomplishment Time Table

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Measure</b>
Identify priority acquisitions	March 2009	38 willing sellers
Contract appraisals ordered	September 2009	5 appraisals ordered
Purchase agreements	January 2010	4 options signed
Contract appraisals ordered	September 2010	14 appraisals ordered
Closing on option properties	March 2010	800 acres protected
Purchase agreements	November 2010	12 options signed
Closing on option properties	December 2010	1,200 acres protected
Wetland restorations completed	November 2012	30 ac wetland enhanced
Grassland restorations completed	November 2012	152 ac grass restored & 302 ac grass enhanced

## Relationship to Your Current Budget

LOHC council dollars will be in addition to existing land acquisition dollars available to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## How Will the Habitat Improvements Be Sustained?

All lands acquired with LOHC dollars will be managed as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

***Attach:***

- 1) A list of your projects showing their county location and***
- 2) On the attached eight and a half by eleven map of Minnesota show counties each project as a dot.***

## Potential WPA Projects

June 11, 2009

<u>Name</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>FWS Station</u>	
1. Rustad	Pope	80	Morris WMD	
2. Runestone WPA	Douglas	26	Fergus Falls WMD	Complete
3. Juhlsrud WPA	Otter Tail	209	Fergus Falls WMD	Ongoing
5. Weber	Clay	320	Detroit Lks. WMD	
6. Seidel	Becker	105	Detroit Lks. WMD	
7. Kost	Clay	61	Detroit Lks. WMD	
8. Westley/Haviland	Lincoln	160	Big Stone WMD	
9. Kragh	Lincoln	238	Big Stone WMD	Complete
10. Bendix	Lyon	151	Big Stone WMD	Offer Rejected
11. Pelican Lake 1	Wright	76	Litchfield WMD	Complete
12. Pelican Lake 2	Wright	60	Litchfield WMD	Ongoing
13. Randall WPA*	Kandiyohi	192	Litchfield WMD	Ongoing
14. VanMeeteren	Cottonwood	320	Windom WMD	Complete
15. Demmer	Freeborn	169	Windom WMD	
16. Strawhacker	Rice	80	MN Valley WMD	Offer Rejected
17. Felber WPA	Waseca	40	MN Valley WMD	Ongoing
18. Montanye	Steele	19	MN Valley WMD	
19. Boon Lake WPA	Renville	120	Litchfield WMD	Ongoing
20. Downer Prairie WPA	Clay	320	Detroit Lakes WMD	Complete
21. Sacred Heart WPA	Renville	60	Litchfield WMD	Ongoing
22. Pelican Valley WPA	Otter Tail	160	Fergus Falls WMD	Ongoing
23. Timber Lake WPA	Jackson	59	Windom WMD	Ongoing

\*mistakenly named Freese WPA in update reports.

Highlighted projects are those we expect to acquire in fee title under this accomplishment plan

Each of these tracks received a high priority from USFWS Wetland Management District Field Offices and/or partners as opportunities to enhance the biological function of existing investments in habitat conservation as well as provide high quality public recreation benefits to Minnesota.

### Existing WPA Restoration Projects

Olson WPA	Pope	30	Wetland Enhancement
Rustad Slough	Pope	80	Grassland Restoration
Geyer	Traverse	372	Grassland Restoration & Enhancement





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Lessard OHC Proposal

*Accelerating the WPA Program in Minnesota - Protecting Our Investment*

