

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2015 Accomplishment Plan



Date: October 16, 2014

Program or Project Title: Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program - Phase IV

Funds Recommended: \$ 2,414,000

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Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: Freeborn

Regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Enhance
- Protect in Fee
- Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Habitat
- Wetlands

Abstract:

The Shell Rock River Watershed District's Watershed Habitat Restoration Program will restore, enhance, and protect 5393 acres of critical shallow lake, wetland and stream bank habitat benefiting fish, waterfowl and wildlife populations, preserving an outdoor legacy for future generations.

Design and scope of work:

Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) encompasses 246 square miles inside Freeborn County and includes 11 lakes that drain to the headwaters of the Shell Rock River. It is a complex system of shallow lakes, wetlands and streams. Among the District's lakes are Fountain Lake and Albert Lea Lake, which are located in the heart of Freeborn County. These lakes are central to Albert Lea's tourism economy and its identity.

Degraded habitat of the shallow lakes, wetlands and streams is a conservation issue of statewide importance that requires accelerated investment in projects to restore, enhance and protect habitat for fish, waterfowl and wildlife populations. Protection and restoration of shallow lake habitat is the highest priority in the SRRWD. Reduction of habitat in the watershed is directly affected by surface water, artificial drainage, aquatic vegetation and populations of invasive fish species such as common carp. A decline in habitat is influencing

available food sources for duck populations that include Northern Pintail, Redhead, Canvasback, Greater/Lesser Scaup and game fish populations that include Northern Pike, Bluegill, Yellow Perch and Walleye.

Projects in the Watershed Habitat Restoration Program are designed to accomplish the following objectives: restore desirable fish, waterfowl and wildlife populations, enhance native aquatic rooted vegetation, increase fish habitat and spawning areas, waterfowl nesting areas, re-establish flyway habitat and increase wildlife habitat and its natural prairie, increase and improve community use of restored natural resources and protect the watershed from invasive species. This will be attained by:

- Re-establishing 61 acres of wetland basins to increase food sources and improve waterfowl habitat.
- 38 acres in land acquisition to re-establish native vegetation, improve nesting habitat and waterfowl food sources.
- Variable crest dam structure installations will maintain and enhance game fish populations, improve waterfowl habitat and establish native vegetation to 620 acres.
- Electric fish barrier and water level control station installation will re-establish native vegetation, improve nesting habitat, restore game fish populations and improve waterfowl habitat on 677 acres.
- 3,778 acres of in-lake habitat structures to improve game fish habitat and food sources.
- 184 acres of fish community reclamation to eliminate rough fish abundance and re-establish native aquatic vegetation.
- 35 acres of vegetative restoration to improve habitat for wildlife

This Program will utilize elements of successful local and previously funded LSOHC Programs throughout the state of Minnesota and implement them into a Watershed Habitat Restoration Program that will enhance, restore and protect fisheries, waterfowl and wildlife habitat within the SRRWD. Project scope in this Program consists of accelerated wildlife management areas, waterfowl production areas, Minnesota Prairie Recovery, living shallow lakes and wetland initiatives along with accelerated shallow lakes and wetland enhancements. In addition the scope of work will consist of rough fish management and game fish habitat improvement, enhancement and protection.

Long-term goals are to restore, enhance and protect the lakes, wetlands and streams in the SRRWD. This will result in improving habitat and water quality of public waters within, as well as, outside of the Shell Rock River Watershed District – Cedar River, Upper Iowa River, Mississippi River and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico. These long term goals interconnect and re-establish important flyway habitats within Minnesota, such as: Mississippi, Le Sueur and La Qui Parle. The goal is to establish waterfowl and fish populations to create the wildlife mecca that was recorded in the late 1800's (See attached article). Finally, this Program will preserve an outdoor legacy for Minnesotans to use and enjoy for generations.

The SRRWD is in the midst of a watershed habitat transformation. The projects funded in this proposal complement and advance the habitat benefits of previously funded LSOHC projects including: Wedge Creek, White Lake and Fountain Lake Fish Barriers (2009-10); Shell Rock River Headwater's Project (2011-12); Albert Lea Lake Dam and Fish Barrier (2013-14); and Goose Creek Fish Barrier (CPL Grant) (2013-2014). Methods and procedures utilized by the SRRWD on successful projects previously funded by the LSOHC will be implemented on 2015 funded projects. The District will leverage its experience to ensure optimum project design and implementation, resulting in rapid habitat restoration and enhancement benefits. In turn, implementation of these projects will provide long-term protection of the SRRWD's shallow lakes, wetlands and streams.

The SRRWD proposes to improve degraded habitat conditions through implementation of projects on a lake-shed basis. District staff and board members have demonstrated the ability and capacity to complete these projects with 2015 funding from the LSHOC. The projects are identified as a high priority in the SRRWD Management Plan, a plan developed with public participation, subject to public review and approval by the SRRWD Board. District staff focuses on identifying existing impairments through current conservation modeling and monitoring water quality within the SRRWD, which results in determining project locations with the greatest net return in habitat restoration.

In 2004 the SRRWD released its first Watershed Management Plan to implement reasonable and necessary improvements to natural resources and water quality. Some of the major beneficial outcomes were: overall improved water quality, an aggressive Pollution Prevention Program that centered on repairing septic systems, and restoring a key headwaters lake. The District is now implementing its second ten-year Watershed Management Plan and welcomes the opportunity to build on the success of the first Watershed Management Plan and partner with the LSOHC to demonstrate the leveraged watershed based benefits that can accrue from a strategic approach to habitat restoration and protection efforts. This Program model can be replicated in similar watersheds throughout Minnesota.

We have a proven track record with the LSOHC of implementing projects that protect, restore and enhance Minnesota's natural resources. The Program is designed to shifts habitat capacity of the watershed to a recognizable level for generations to come and complements the habitat restoration and protection benefits from three previous LSOHC funding phases.

Crops:

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **No**

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:

Historically the Shell Rock River Watershed is a shallow lake system with diverse populations of fish, waterfowl and wildlife. An ongoing effort of modeling and monitoring has defined current impairments and invasive species populations. Implementing site specific habitat restoration projects are progressively improving populations of native fish species, waterfowl and wildlife habitat. The Program includes projects that are prioritized based on the significance of benefit to aquatic habitat, urgency of the work, availability of leverage funding, location of projects and agreement with relevant planning documents. This proposal uses a programmatic approach to achieve prioritized aquatic habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement of lakes, streams, and wetlands across the Watershed, to once again create the historic natural resources we once had. A number of internal and external conservation planning documents support this strategic priority resource planned approach.

What is the nature of urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible:

Impairments in Fountain Lake, Albert Lea Lake and the Shell Rock River require action that will restore and enhance native habitat for many species. Science and resource based planning have been utilized to strategically select projects that will advance restoration goals specified in our Habitat Restoration Program and Watershed Plan.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

SRRWD utilizes precision conservation modeling with monitoring to identify priority management zones (PMZs) on a sub-watershed basis. The PMZs are prioritized, evaluated conservation measures and project locations chosen to mitigate specific areas contributing to degradation of habitat which reduce populations of aquatic vegetation, fish, waterfowl and wildlife within the lake-shed.

Which sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are applicable to this project:

- H4 Restore and protect shallow lakes
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Long Range Plan for Muskellunge and Large Northern Pike Management Through 2020
- Managing Minnesota's Shallow Lakes for Waterfowl and Wildlife

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

- Protect, restore, and enhance shallow lakes

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

How does this proposal accelerate or supplement your current efforts in this area:

The Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program consolidates previous programs that include: Fish Barrier Program, Stream Restoration Program and Wetland Restoration Program. Projects are focused on recovery of impaired resources on a watershed basis. Each project is another component in restoring native habitat to the SRRWD. LSOHC funds accelerate ongoing conservation efforts by increasing the number of projects completed each year in the watershed. Projects selected in the Program contribute to the success of long-term management plans, enhance growth of aquatic plants, reduce populations of undesirable fish and vegetation, and increase game fish, waterfowl and wildlife populations.

Describe the source and amount of non-OHF money spent for this work in the past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2011	Local Tax Levy	75,000
2012	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching Funds	180,000.00
2013	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching Funds	230,000.00
2014	Local Tax Levy - 25% Grant Matching Funds	804,750.00

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended:

The Shell Rock River Watershed District is a permanent entity created by state statute and operates under a series of 10-year plans that are approved by MNBWSR. Currently we are completing a second generation 10-year Watershed Management Plan that requires a top-to-bottom comprehensive review of natural resource restoration, management, enhancement and protection strategies. SRRWD relies on multiple funding sources including a local levy, a local option sales tax, and multiple public and private partnerships including three previous LSOHC phased projects. The District continues an aggressive monitoring protocol, generating regular results-driven reporting. The habitat efforts that accrue from the Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program will easily be incorporated into this existing results-driven reporting framework, which can be used to generate public interest and education of a watershed-based restoration approach. We have commitment and funding sources necessary to maintain existing and future natural resource enhancement projects.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2019	Sales Tax and LSOHC	Construction and Erosion Control Inspections	Erosion Control and Maintenance Inspections and Maintenance Implementation	Maintenance Inspections and Maintenance Implementation
2020	Sales Tax and LSOHC	Construction and Erosion Control Inspections	Erosion Control and Maintenance Inspections and Maintenance Implementation	Maintenance Inspections and Maintenance Implementation
2021	Sales Tax	Maintenance Inspections and Maintenance Implementation		Maintenance Inspections and Maintenance Implementation

Activity Details:

If funded, this proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056 - **Yes**

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition - **Yes**

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection - **Yes**

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing - **No**

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion - **Yes**

Open hunting and fishing will comply with State regulations

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program - **Yes**

Is the activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 - **Yes (Public Waters, no)**

Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Begin project planning, design and permitting work following July 2015 appropriation	July 2015
Begin projects during the 2016 construction season following completion of design, permits and contracting	2016 Construction Season
Complete all 2016 restoration and habitat improvement projects.	End of 2017 Field Season
Maintenance and monitoring of all restoration and habitat improvement projects	Ongoing
Tree and plug plantings on restoration projects	June 2018

Federal Funding:

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **No**

Outcomes:

Programs in prairie region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands will provide habitat to wildlife and support healthy natural resource conditions for long term benefits. They will offer an oasis for migratory waterfowl by re-establishing and connecting the flyways in south-central Minnesota. Measurement of success will require multifaceted data collection. Floristic Quality Assessments of restored wetlands, lakeshore, fish population surveys and wildlife surveys will aid in measuring and evaluating the success of protected, restored and enhanced shallow lakes, streams and wetlands. Increases and declines in wildlife, waterfowl and fish populations will be determined and reported in cooperation with MNDNR.

Budget Spreadsheet

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount

The District will prioritize the project list and utilize the funding to complement and advance the habitat benefits of previously funded projects.

Total Amount of Request: \$ 2414000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Contracts	\$1,605,200	\$0		\$1,605,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$175,000	\$0		\$175,000
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$427,800	\$60,000	Local Option Sales Tax	\$487,800
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$161,000	\$0		\$161,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$2,414,000	\$60,000		\$2,474,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Manager	0.43	1.00	\$25,000	\$0		\$25,000
Program Assistant	0.30	1.00	\$20,000	\$0		\$20,000
Total	0.73	2.00	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000

Amount of Request: \$2,414,000

Amount of Leverage: \$60,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 2.49%

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	518	0	0	0	518
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	22	0	0	0	22
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	429	0	0	2,266	2,695
Total	969	0	0	2,266	3,235

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$1,446,900	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,446,900
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$175,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$175,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$544,600	\$0	\$0	\$247,500	\$792,100
Total	\$2,166,500	\$0	\$0	\$247,500	\$2,414,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	518	0	518
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	22	0	22
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	2,695	0	2,695
Total	0	0	0	3,235	0	3,235

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,446,900	\$0	\$1,446,900
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$792,100	\$0	\$792,100
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,414,000	\$0	\$2,414,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$2793	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$7955	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$1269	\$0	\$0	\$109

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2793	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7955	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$294	\$0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

893 miles

Parcel List

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

Freeborn

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Pickereel Lake Outlet	10222213	620	\$651,300	No
Pickereel Lake site 12	10222213	2	\$40,300	No
School Section Lake	10322236	184	\$327,800	No
Unnamed Creek	10220206	40	\$201,300	No
Upper and Lower Twin Lake	10122212	464	\$743,800	No
Upper Twin Lake	10122202	213	\$397,500	No
Wedge Creek Reach 1	10221206	35	\$72,500	No
Wedge Creek Reach 6	10322236	4	\$450,800	No
Wedge Creek Reach 6	10322236	16	\$243,600	No

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Freeborn

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Headwater Land #2	10221225	5	\$66,700	No	Full	Full
Olson Property	10221236	33	\$406,700	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

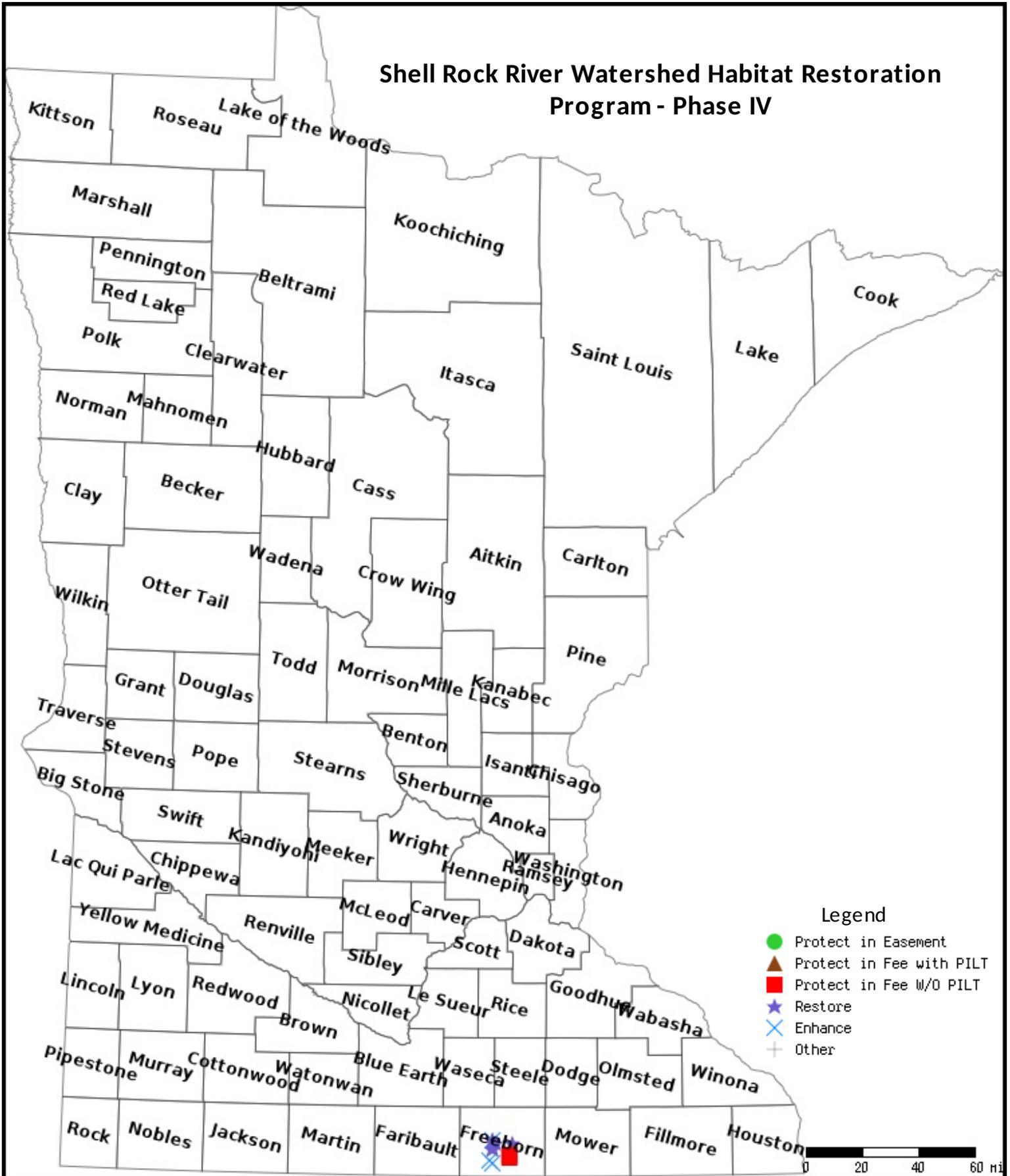
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program - Phase IV



Data Generated From Parcel List