

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Laws of Minnesota 2015 Accomplishment Plan

Date: October 15, 2014

**Program or Project Title:** DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition - Phase VII

**Funds Recommended:** \$ 4,570,000



**Manager's Name:** Patrick Rivers  
**Title:** FAW Land Acquisition Supervisor  
**Organization:** MN Dept. of Natural Resources  
**Address:** 500 Lafayette Road  
**City:** St. Paul, MN 55155  
**Office Number:** 651-259-5209  
**Fax Number:** 651-297-4916  
**Email:** pat.rivers@state.mn.us  
**Website:** www.mndnr.gov

**Legislative Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

**County Locations:** Big Stone, Cook, Fairbault, Freeborn, Isanti, Kandiyohi, Koochiching, Lac qui Parle, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Lesueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Meeker, Murray, Norman, Pennington, Pine, Pipestone, Polk, Rice, Rock, Roseau, and Stearns.

**Regions in which work will take place:**

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Northern Forest
- Prairie

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Fee

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Forest
- Prairie

**Abstract:**

Acquire 910 acres of high priority habitats for designation as Wildlife Management Areas or Scientific & Natural Areas emphasizing Prairie Conservation Plan implementation and coordinating with partners. All lands will be open for public hunting, fishing and trapping.

**Design and scope of work:**

This proposal will protect 910 acres of wildlife habitat through fee title acquisition and development as Wildlife Management Areas (610 acres) and Scientific & Natural Areas (300 acres). Lands will be acquired and developed within the Prairie, Northern Forest, and Forest/Prairie Transition Planning Sections with an emphasis on Prairie Conservation Plan core and corridor areas, working toward the long-term goal of a minimum of 40% grassland and 20% wetland in core prairie areas. Lands outside core and corridor areas will be evaluated on their habitat potential and contribution to existing units. Seventy-eight percent of proposed dollars are targeted at the Prairie planning section.

Historically, Outdoor Heritage appropriations for WMA and SNA acquisition have been matched by donations, Reinvest in Minnesota

and Surcharge (a \$6.50 surcharge on small game license sales to be used in part for land acquisition) at approximately 25% (1 dollar of match to 4 dollars of OHF). There are two pending ENRTF M. L. 2015 requests: the WMA program is seeking \$530,000 for one acquisition in Dakota County and the SNA program is seeking \$6,315,700 for acquisition, restoration, enhancement and public engagement. The SNA program received \$2,540,000 in ENRTF funds on July 1, 2014.

**Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)** WMAs are established to protect those lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and to develop and manage these lands and waters for public hunting, fishing and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses. While highly successful, the current WMA system does not meet all of the present and future needs for wildlife habitat, wildlife population management, hunter access and wildlife related recreation. This is notably true in the Prairie Ecological Planning section where public ownership in some counties is less than 2 percent. DNR Section of Wildlife uses a geospatial analytical (GIS) based tool to identify the highest priority tracts for potential WMA acquisitions. This approach uses a quantitative or database approach to score and rank acquisition proposals based on a set of weighted criteria and creates a standardized method for evaluating proposed acquisitions on a statewide level. Criteria and weights are annually reviewed and adapted to changing conditions and priorities. This ensures that funds are used to acquire available lands consistent with the statutory purpose of WMAs. The WMA acquisition program is guided by the 2002 Citizens' Committee report. This committee was composed of a diverse group of eleven major stakeholder groups.

A list of potential acquisition opportunities from willing sellers is coordinated with interested stakeholders and partners to eliminate duplication and identify concerns or support. To date, LSOHC funds have paid for more than 10,500 acres of WMA. Coordinating with partners has been successful to ensure we are working cooperatively and on priority parcels.

**Scientific & Natural Areas (SNAs)** The SNA Program will increase public hunting and fishing opportunities while protecting sites with outstanding natural resource value. About 300 acres will be acquired in fee by the DNR and designated as SNA in order to provide public access and protect sites of biodiversity significance. Protection will be targeted at high priority areas identified in the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan with emphasis on prairie core areas identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. A quantitative system is used to score and rank acquisition proposals at a statewide level based on a weighted set of six criteria. Priority is given to sites of high and outstanding biodiversity significance, sites recommended for protection by the Minnesota Biological Survey, high quality native plant communities and habitat for rare species. Parcels which are larger, adjoin other conservation lands, improve habitat management, are under imminent threat and that are partially donated are also rated higher.

Properties acquired through this appropriation require approval of the County Board of Commissioners in the county of acquisition, will be designated as WMA or SNA through a Commissioner's Designation Order, brought up to minimum DNR standards, and listed on the DNR website. Basic site improvements will include boundary and LSOHC acknowledgement signs and may include any necessary site cleanup and restoration of agricultural fields and minimal parking area development.

There are no specific plans to plant corn or other crops as part of this Outdoor Heritage Accomplishment Plan. The parcels will become part of the State WMA or SNA system. The primary purposes of WMAs are to develop and manage for the production of wildlife, for public hunting, fishing, and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses. To fulfill those goals, DNR Wildlife may use limited farming, including Cooperative Farming Agreements, specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife and plant species. Farming may be utilized to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding (e.g. utilizing soybeans to allow any remaining agricultural chemical residue to dissipate and to create a good soil seedbed). It also may be utilized to provide a winter food source (such as corn) for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture-dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources. Those food plots are used to enhance overwinter survival of wildlife or in some cases to help mitigate wildlife damage to property owners and they are also popular public hunting locations. DNR Wildlife currently uses farming as a wildlife management tool on less than 2.5% of the total WMA land base.

#### 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:

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; and candidates for 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.

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

## **possible:**

Once a state with more than 18 million acres of native prairie, Minnesota has less than two percent remaining. Each year native prairie is lost to agriculture and development. There is no better time than now to protect what remains of North America's most endangered habitat type.

## **Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:**

The DNR uses GIS-based scoring systems to objectively rank potential acquisitions and develop statewide priority lists. 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.

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H7 Keep water on the landscape

## **Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:**

- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

## **Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:**

### **Forest / Prairie Transition:**

- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

### **Northern Forest:**

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

### **Prairie:**

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

## **Relationship to other funds:**

- Not Listed

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

For WMAs, traditional sources of acquisition dollars are bonding and a surcharge on individual small game licenses. The most recent bonding appropriations for acquisition were in M.L. 2010 (\$1M for fee title, \$3M for Reinvest in Minnesota). These funds are not sufficient to meet the acquisition goals of 439,000 acres acquired between 2002-2052 (Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition-- The Next Fifty Years). This proposal will account for 12% of the annual acquisition goal of 8,000 acres per year. Donated value has the potential of increasing the total acres acquired.

SNA acquisition and designation is primarily funded through project funds such as Outdoor Heritage Fund and Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. Occasionally, but not regularly, the state general fund obligation bonding funds are appropriated for SNA acquisition.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2014	ENRTF (SNA)	\$1,115,450
2009	Surcharge on individual small game license (WMA)	1,860,000
2009	RIM (WMA)	\$3,072,138
2009	ENRTF (SNA)	\$1,026,000
2008	Bonding (WMA)	5,000,000
2008	ENRTF (SNA)	\$1,000,000
2008	Bonding (SNA)	\$2,700,000
2008	RIM (WMA)	\$1,694,262
2008	ENRTF (WMA)	\$100,000
2010	ENRTF (SNA)	\$1,096,400
2013	ENRTF (SNA)	\$1,500,000
2013	Surcharge on individual small game license (WMA)	1,968,000
2012	RIM (WMA)	\$864,750
2012	RIM license plate match (SNA)	\$720,000
2011	ENRTF (SNA)	\$403,000
2011	RIM (WMA)	\$824,259
2011	Surcharge on individual small game license (WMA)	1,830,000
2010	Bonding (WMA)	500,000
2010	RIM (WMA)	\$2,308,358

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

The DNR Section of Wildlife manages 1,521 WMAs encompassing 1.3 million acres of land in 86 of the state's 87 counties. Lands acquired with Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars will add to this system. Management of WMAs is guided by Management Guidance Documents and is funded primarily through the Game and Fish Fund. For SNAs, field staff monitor project sites and take any necessary actions to sustain the habitat improvements as part of their public land management responsibilities. Ongoing costs for managing SNA sites after initial site development are primarily those needed for management of invasive species and prescribed burning. Management plans for each site will be developed meeting DNR program standards. Site management will be carried out by existing staff, CCM crews, temporary project staffing or through vendor contracting. Periodic enhancements will be funded through annual funding requests from a variety of funding sources, including bonding, gifts, federal sources, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020	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.

## 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

Lands acquired will be open to hunting, trapping and, where a fishery exists, fishing.

## Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Protect in fee 610 acres and designate as Wildlife Management Areas	06/30/2018
Protect in fee 300 acres and designate as Scientific and Natural Areas	06/30/2018
Initial development of acquire lands completed	06/30/2020

## Federal Funding:

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

## Outcomes:

### Programs in the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation *Acres of forested lands acquired.*

### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced aspen parklands and riparian areas *Acres of native plant community acquired.*

### Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *Acres of protected lands acquired, acres acquired in Prairie Conservation Plan Core/Corridor/Complex areas, acres of native prairie acquire.*

# 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

This program will acquire fewer acres than proposed, working in fewer LSOHC planning sections. The reduction in acreage is less than the reduction in funding.

**Total Amount of Request: \$ 4570000**

### Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$63,300	\$0		\$63,300
Contracts	\$185,000	\$0		\$185,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$4,054,500	\$500,000	Landowner donations, Reinvest in Minnesota Critical Habitat Match Program	\$4,554,500
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$7,400	\$0		\$7,400
Professional Services	\$195,400	\$15,000	Wildlife Surcharge, Reinvest in Minnesota Critical Habitat Match Program	\$210,400
Direct Support Services	\$36,400	\$0		\$36,400
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$28,000	\$0		\$28,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$4,570,000	\$515,000		\$5,085,000

### Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Acquisition Coordinator	0.08	3.00	\$19,200	\$0		\$19,200
Field Staff (spec/tech/labor)	0.21	3.00	\$44,100	\$0		\$44,100
Total	0.29	6.00	\$63,300	\$0		\$63,300

Amount of Request: \$4,570,000

Amount of Leverage: \$515,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 11.27%

## Output Tables

**Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	610	300	0	910
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	610	300	0	910

**Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?**

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	130
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	130

**Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$3,566,000	\$1,004,000	\$0	\$4,570,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$3,566,000	\$1,004,000	\$0	\$4,570,000

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro Urban	Forest Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	120	0	570	220	910
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	120	0	570	220	910

**Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro Urban	Forest Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$3,630,400	\$639,600	\$4,570,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$3,630,400	\$639,600	\$4,570,000

**Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$5846	\$3347	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$2500	\$0	\$6369	\$2907
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles**

0

## 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

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

### Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

#### Big Stone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Hornstein WMA 3	12449223	56	\$100,000	No	Full	Full
Hornstein WMA 4	12449214	110	\$210,000	No	Full	Full

#### Cook

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Myhr Creek Ridge SNA	06203124	80	\$200,000	No	Full	Full

#### Fairbault

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Drake Woods	10127207	300	\$1,200,000	No	Full	Full

#### Freeborn

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Panicum Prairie WMA 21	10120231	46	\$75,000	No	Full	Full

#### Isanti

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Becklin Homestead WMA 6	03624214	56	\$175,000	No	Full	Full

#### Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Dietrich Lange WMA 7	12133233	45	\$135,000	No	Full	Full
Ringo-Nest WMA 7, 8	12134231	42	\$61,000	No	Full	Full

#### Koochiching

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Watrous Island	07027236	60	\$54,000	No	Full	Full

#### Lac qui Parle

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Ten Mile Creek	11842236	40	\$200,000	No	Full	Full

#### Lake

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Art Lake Hardwood Ridges	05807215	160	\$320,000	No	Full	Full

#### Lake of the Woods

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Graceton WMA 7	16132227	60	\$36,000	No	Full	Full
Rocky Point WMA 5	16334205	68	\$250,000	No	Full	Full

#### Lesueur

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Factor WMA 4	11023206	100	\$343,000	No	Full	Full

#### Lincoln

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Richard J. Dorer 10 & 18	11345219	129	\$735,000	No	Full	Full

#### Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Sioux Prairie 12	11143207	57	\$350,000	No	Full	Full

## Meeker

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Prairie-Big Woods WMA	11830218	153	\$435,000	No	Full	Full

## Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Irruption WMA 15	10639220	80	\$240,000	No	Full	Full

## Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Moccasin WMA 8	14343226	160	\$380,000	No	Full	Full

## Pennington

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pembina WMA 61	15245205	32	\$25,000	No	Full	Full

## Pine

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pine V&S WMA 1	03822202	381	\$750,000	No	Full	Full

## Pipestone

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Devils Run WMA 6	10739232	65	\$262,500	No	Full	Full
Prairie Coteau	10844233	200	\$1,200,000	No	Full	Full

## Polk

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Kertsonville	14945204	200	\$12,000	No	Full	Full
Sheas Lake WMA 1A	11224232	29	\$87,000	No	Full	Full

## Rice

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Boyd Sartell WMA 16	11122233	135	\$454,000	No	Full	Full
Boyd Sartell WMA 18	11022209	70	\$409,000	No	Full	Full

## Rock

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Rose Dell Prairie SNA	10446216	80	\$480,000	No	Full	Full

## Roseau

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Two Rivers Aspen Parkland SNA	16044219	225	\$47,500	No	Full	Full

## Stearns

Name	TRDS	Acres	EstCost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Prairie Smoke WMA 1	12435218	174	\$600,000	No	Full	Full

**Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs**

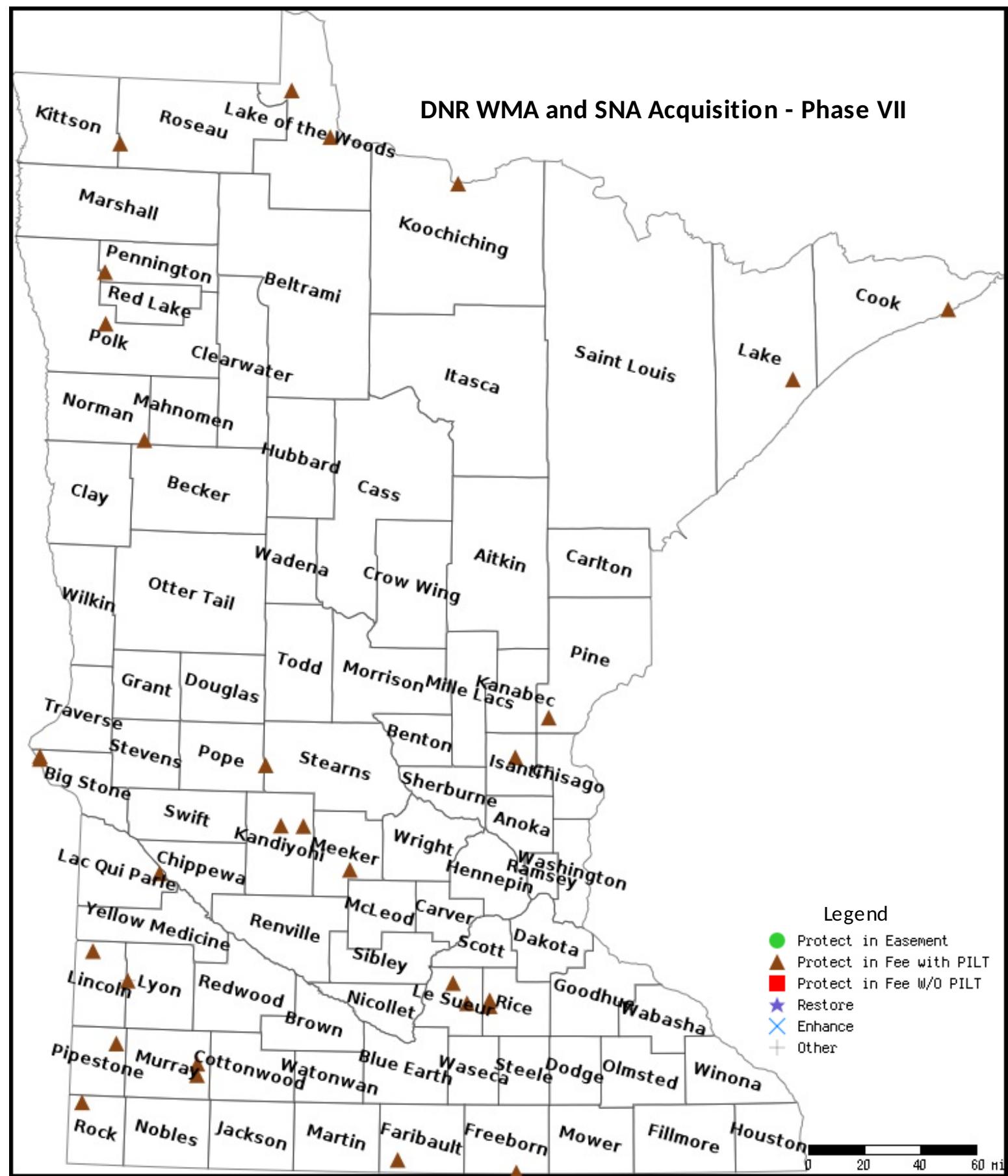
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

**Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity**

No parcels with an other activity type.

## Parcel Map

### DNR WMA and SNA Acquisition - Phase VII



Data Generated From Parcel List