

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2015 Accomplishment Plan



Date: October 15, 2014

Program or Project Title: Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection Program - Phase IV

Funds Recommended: \$ 9,040,000

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Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: Le Sueur, Martin, and Nobles.

Regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie
- Wetlands

Abstract:

Ducks Unlimited's Phase 4 program will strive to acquire and restore approximately 900 acres of prairie land and wetlands for inclusion in Minnesota DNR state Wildlife Management Areas, with strategic focus on land containing drained wetlands and bordering shallow lakes.

Design and scope of work:

This is Phase 4 of Ducks Unlimited's facilitative land acquisition program, a component of our Living Lakes Initiative in Minnesota, which contributes to the implementation of Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan and Long-Range Duck Recovery Plan by restoring prairie and small wetlands on new lands acquired by DU for inclusion in the state Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system. This work specifically addresses the need for prairie and wetland restoration as identified in the Prairie Plan, and compliments other efforts to protect intact native prairie. Acquisition and restoration of prairie and small wetlands is important because in the Prairie Section of Minnesota, 90% of our prairie wetlands have been drained and 99% of native prairie uplands lost to conversion for agriculture. Thus, restoration of former prairie and wetlands is critical to improving wildlife habitat in the Prairie Section, and acquisition of lands for sale where easements are not of interest to the landowner is an important component of prairie and wetland restoration efforts.

Drainage and intensive cultivation of the prairie landscape combined with invasive fish such as carp has degraded our remaining

wetlands and shallow lakes, turning them into turbid waters that now provide only limited habitat benefit to wetland-dependent wildlife. This degradation has negatively affected both breeding and migrating waterfowl. To remedy, the Minnesota DNR and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service actively manage shallow lakes and wetlands through temporary water level draw-downs to consolidate sediments and nutrients, reduce and remove invasive fish, improve water clarity, and enhance the aquatic ecology in some shallow lake and large wetland basins under their control. DU is actively involved in delivering these enhancement efforts by providing bio-engineering services supported by other Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations.

This grant strives to buffer our shallow lakes and remaining wetlands with native prairie grass, and restore prairie lands surrounding shallow lakes as agricultural land use intensifies. Some private lands are intensively cultivated right up to the edge of shallow lakes and wetlands, and , and many basins are only protected by a narrow buffer that does not adequately protect them from landscape runoff or provide adequate upland nesting cover for birds. Many degraded shallow lake and large wetland basins with management potential, and those partially drained basins with restoration potential, have only limited or no public land on them, which limits the ability of agencies to restore and manage them. These lands need to be restored and permanently protected through a combination of both easement programs and fee-title public land acquisition efforts to protect our public water resources. Strategic prairie public land acquisition is needed to provide public access and a public investment to justify active management by Minnesota DNR. Protection and active management of shallow lakes and wetlands is identified as a priority action in all major conservation plans in Minnesota. Public land acquisition and restoration is a critical component of shallow lake and wetland conservation in Minnesota, especially in the prairie portion of the state where wetland complexes are critical for both breeding and migrating ducks.

This grant is Phase 4 of Ducks Unlimited's ongoing, facilitative public land acquisition program to strategically acquire and restore lands on shallow lakes and state WMAs, especially those lands containing drained wetland basins, for public ownership and management by Minnesota DNR. This will buffer shallow lakes and existing WMAs, and help restore wetland complexes around them to improve and protect public investments in shallow lake management, and to make new shallow lake enhancement and wetland restoration projects possible. Through this grant, Ducks Unlimited will strive to strategically acquire and restore approximately 900 acres of prairie and wetlands around key shallow lakes and state WMAs in the Prairie Section for Minnesota DNR.

Ducks Unlimited will work with Minnesota DNR Wildlife and private landowners to identify land for sale on shallow lakes and land within state WMA project areas where DNR will accept lands purchased by DU for for inclusion into the state WMA system. Sensitive shoreland and tracts that provide public land on shallow lakes, and those containing restorable prairie and wetlands or make shallow lake enhancements possible, will be prioritized for facilitative acquisition and restoration for the Minnesota DNR. Tracts acquired will be prioritized in consultation with DNR Section of Wildlife. Land purchased will be acquired and held by Ducks Unlimited's land trust affiliate Wetlands America Trust (WAT). Transfer of these lands to the state will be expedited to minimize the time Ducks Unlimited and WAT must hold title to each tract.

Grant funds will be used to pay for land, appraisals, surveys, closing costs, restoration, and DU staff, in-state travel, and associated DSS costs to work landowners and DNR staff to identify, purchase, and restore, land. Budget reallocations up to 10% will not require an amendment to this Accomplishment Plan as per LSOHC and DNR guidance.

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 Wildlife Management Area (WMA) 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:

In Prairie Minnesota, 90% of our prairie wetlands have been drained and 99% of our native prairie uplands lost to agriculture and development. Ongoing loss of Conservation Reserve Program lands exacerbates this problem. The prairie wetlands that remain are fragmented, and are often large, deep wetlands or shallow lakes that are now degraded because they receive the runoff and drainage from the intensively cultivated landscape that surrounds them. Drainage and intensive cultivation of the prairie landscape has degraded our remaining wetlands and shallow lakes into turbid waters that now provide only limited habitat benefit to migratory

waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife. Altered landscape hydrology, increased nutrient and sediment loading, and invasive fish such as common carp now greatly and negatively impact the aquatic ecology of our remaining wetland basins. This has especially negatively affected the prairie wetland habitat quality for both migrating and brood-rearing waterfowl, and the quality of outdoor recreational opportunities for Minnesota duck hunters. This also affects the habitat of many wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and several threatened and endangered species too. Acquisition and restoration of converted prairie and wetlands is necessary to restore and create prairie wetland complexes required by game and non-game species alike.

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

The Prairie Pothole Region of western and southern Minnesota is the most degraded ecosystem in the state and has lost the most habitat, and remaining habitats remain threatened by intensive agriculture and landscape drainage. Acquisition is imperative to restore and protect land adjacent to existing prairie public lands for wildlife.

Describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

Ducks Unlimited works with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's HAPET to focus our conservation efforts, and with Minnesota DNR to strategically focus our land acquisition and restoration efforts on sites of priority to DNR and those with restoration potential and which buffer shallow lakes and make enhancement projects possible.

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:

- Ducks Unlimited Living Lakes Initiative
- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

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:

This proposal significantly accelerates and supplements Ducks Unlimited's Living Lakes conservation initiative work in Minnesota by providing funding for the land acquisition costs necessary to restore prairie and wetlands, and enhance adjacent shallow lakes. Ducks Unlimited does not have the capital funding required for land acquisition in Minnesota due to our large wetland engineering staff focus, and instead relies on state OHF grants to fund this portion of our conservation work. Thus, funds requested from the OHF for land acquisition in Minnesota are entirely supplementary to our operational budget, and will accelerate our conservation work here.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
None	None	None

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

Lands acquired and restored through this OHF grant by Ducks Unlimited will be transferred to the Minnesota DNR for incorporation into the state Wildlife Management Area system of public land, and will be maintained by the Minnesota DNR Section of Wildlife field

staff through with funding from the Game & Fish Fund, and other traditional sources of state funding. Management actions such as prescribed prairie burns, woody tree removal, and wetland water level management may be conducted by DNR roving crews also funded through OHF grants in the future too. Lands proposed for acquisition are part of approved WMA projects, and should not add a considerable amount of additional annual management workload, and management treatments should be infrequent in nature based on habitat conditions as determined by DNR wildlife management field staff.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2018	DNR Game & Fish Account & OHF	Mow restored prairie to remove initial weeds and trees that may respond before enough plant material fuel for prescribed burns are possible.	Chemically or mechanically spot treat problem weed and tree areas .	Burn restored prairie on a rotational 5-10 year basis, and manage water levels in restored wetlands with water control structures on a 5-10 year basis as needed.

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 - **No**

Notification will be provided to the county shortly after land acquisition as in past appropriations, and will include DU conservation staff attending a county board meeting with representation from Minnesota DNR to allow for discussion and questions/answers.

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**

No variations are anticipated, and all lands acquired will be transferred into the state Wildlife Management Area system.

Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Purchase approximately 900 acres of prairie land containing restorable prairie and wetlands for inclusion in the state WMA system.	June 2018
Restore lands acquired and transfer to the Minnesota DNR for inclusion into the state WMA system.	June 2020

Federal Funding:

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

Outcomes:

Programs in prairie region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species *Prairie tracts acquired will be restored back to native prairie and forbs, and will transferred into the state wildlife management area system to provide additional prairie habitat for migratory species. Use by migratory species will be monitored by Minnesota DNR field staff, who will also monitor public use.*

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 reduced funding recommendation reduced the number of acres we believe we can acquire and restore down to 900 acres. DU will focus reduced funding on priority tracts, including two larger tracts, whereas several other parcels on our initial list were removed and must wait for future funding.

Total Amount of Request: \$ 9040000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$270,000	\$0		\$270,000
Contracts	\$1,000,000	\$0		\$1,000,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$7,500,000	\$0		\$7,500,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$30,000	\$0		\$30,000
Professional Services	\$40,000	\$0		\$40,000
Direct Support Services	\$30,000	\$60,000		\$90,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$20,000	\$0		\$20,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
DNR IDP	\$100,000	\$0		\$100,000
Total	\$9,040,000	\$60,000		\$9,100,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Biologist	1.00	5.00	\$80,000	\$0		\$80,000
Engineers	1.00	5.00	\$90,000	\$0		\$90,000
Program Manager	1.00	5.00	\$100,000	\$0		\$100,000
Total	3.00	15.00	\$270,000	\$0		\$270,000

Amount of Request: \$9,040,000

Amount of Leverage: \$60,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.66%

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	100	800	0	0	900
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	100	800	0	0	900

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

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

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	\$1,000,000	\$8,040,000	\$0	\$0	\$9,040,000
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	\$1,000,000	\$8,040,000	\$0	\$0	\$9,040,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	900	0	900
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	0	0	900	0	900

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,040,000	\$0	\$9,040,000
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	\$0	\$0	\$9,040,000	\$0	\$9,040,000

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	\$10000	\$10050	\$0	\$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	\$0	\$0	\$10044	\$0
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

Le Sueur

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Montgomery WMA - Bohn Tract	11123224	100	\$500,000	No	Full	Full
Sanborn Lake - Ordorff Tract 3	11223226	33	\$200,000	No	Full	Full
Sanborn Lake - Tract 11	11223235	5	\$15,000	No	Full	Full
Sanborn Lake - Tract 7	11223235	25	\$200,000	No	Full	Full
Sanborn Lake - Tract 9	11223235	12	\$40,000	No	Full	Full
Sanborn Lake WMA - Gintner Tract 8	11223235	73	\$375,000	No	Full	Full
Sanborn Lake WMA - Tract 10	11223235	35	\$105,000	No	Full	Full

Martin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Rooney Run WMA - Round Lake Krahmer Tract	10332228	280	\$2,100,000	No	Full	Full

Nobles

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Peterson WMA - Larson Tract	10140221	43	\$130,000	No	Full	Full
Swessinger WMA - Jones Trust Tract	10441217	640	\$5,400,000	No	Full	Full

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

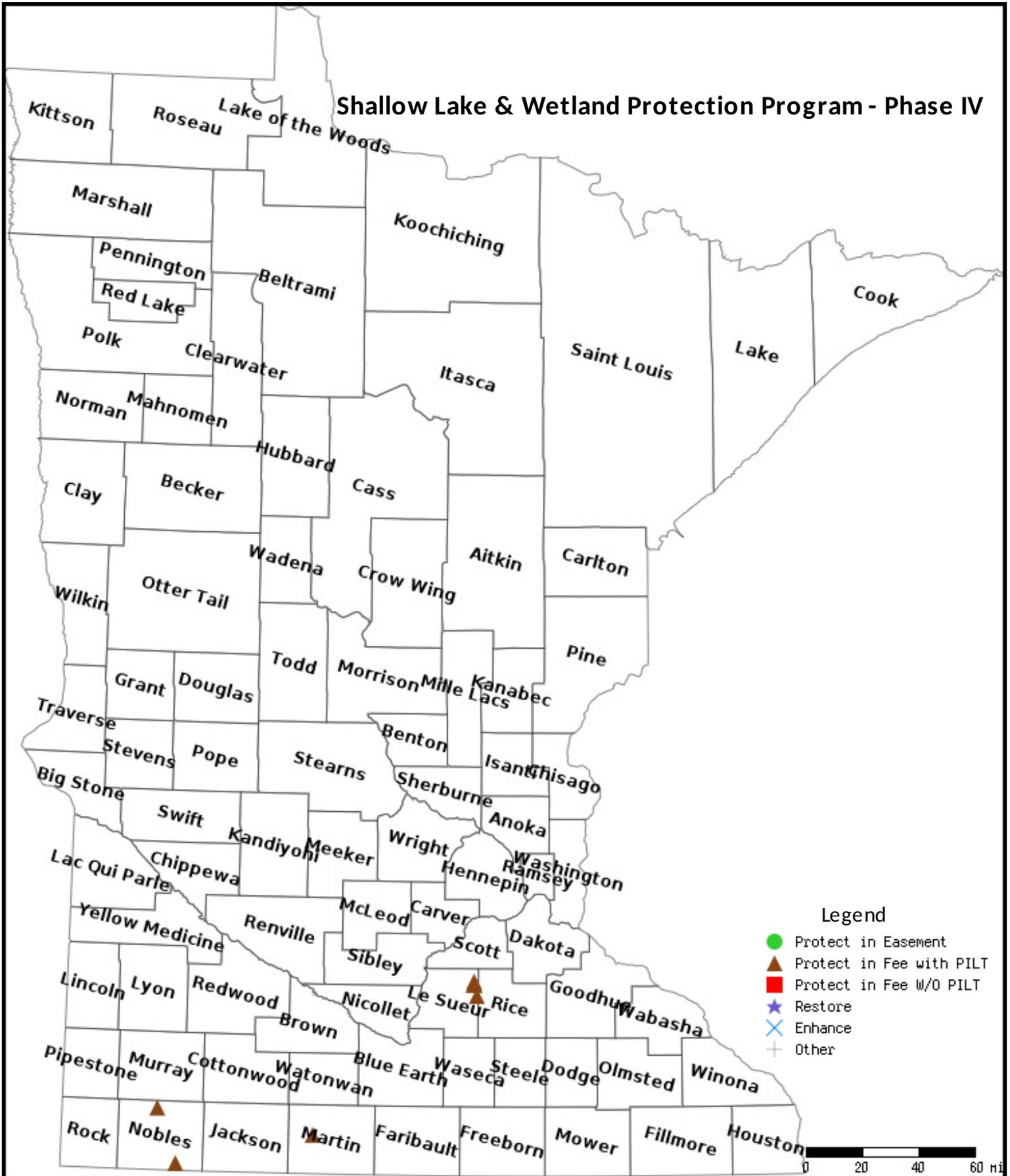
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection Program - Phase IV



Data Generated From Parcel List