

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Laws of Minnesota 2017 Accomplishment Plan



**Date:** October 07, 2016

**Program or Project Title:** Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Land Acquisition - Phase VIII

**Funds Recommended:** \$ 2,683,000

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**Legislative Citation:** ML 2017, Ch. X, Art. X, Sec. X

**Appropriation Language:**

**County Locations:** Big Stone, Brown, Chippewa, Clay, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Norman, Pipestone, Pope, Renville, Rock, Wilkin, and Yellow Medicine.

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

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

**Activity types:**

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee
- Restore

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Prairie

### Abstract:

The Nature Conservancy and US Fish and Wildlife Service will cooperate to permanently protect native prairie and associated complexes of wetlands and native habitats in western Minnesota by purchasing approximately 770 acres of fee title properties and/or habitat easements, with a target of 385 acres of native prairie.

### Design and scope of work:

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2000 to address the loss of America's grasslands and declining grassland wildlife. The Refuge was created to preserve and restore a portion of our disappearing tallgrass prairie. The Refuge encompasses all-or-part of 85 counties in western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa.

A 2015 University of Wisconsin study confirms conversion is still a very real risk. The recent drop in crop prices has slowed this, but the threat isn't gone. Protecting our remaining native prairies before they are lost is critical.

Progress towards the Refuge's goal has been limited by available funding. Since 2000, the Refuge has protected 4,970 acres in Minnesota with funding from non-OHF sources. This falls far short of landowner interest.

Funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund will allow The Nature Conservancy and US Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership, to significantly accelerate this progress. TNC and USFWS will protect approximately 770 acres of native prairie and associated habitat in the 49 Minnesota counties within the Refuge boundary. This will include approximately 385 acres of fee acquisition and approximately 385 acres of permanent habitat easements.

This program targets high-quality native habitat in areas with existing concentrations of native prairie, wetlands, and protected lands. The majority of protected lands will be native prairie and associated habitats including wetlands, streams, and lakes.

Potential acquisitions are reviewed using the following criteria:

- 1) Is there native prairie on the tract? If not, is it adjacent to native prairie?
- 2) Is the property in a priority area identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (Prairie Plan)?
- 3) Is it adjacent to an existing complex of protected land?
- 4) Was it identified by Minnesota Biological Survey as having concentrations of threatened and endangered species and communities?
- 5) Is it suitable for public recreation?

Because of the nature of parcel ownership, some properties acquired through this program will likely include small areas of converted or degraded habitat needing restoration/enhancement. Restoration/enhancement will be completed where needed.

Previous OHF support has allowed us to make significant progress towards protecting and buffering our remaining native prairie. Since 2013, 3,800 acres have been added to the Refuge. 2,470 acres are classified as native prairie. Additional habitat includes 410 acres of wetlands and 11 miles of stream/lakefront. Landowners have committed an additional 294 acres, including 159 native prairie acres. Negotiations are ongoing with a long list of interested landowners.

The Nature Conservancy (the Conservancy) may be reimbursed for salary and fringe benefits based on a provisional fringe benefits rate consistent with federal regulations and negotiated annually with the Conservancy's cognizant agency. Within 180 days of the end of each Nature Conservancy fiscal year, the Conservancy will provide MN DNR with the actual fringe benefits rate for the prior year and reconcile any overpayment made by the State. This approach is consistent with ML 2016, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 8 (Payment Conditions and Capital Equipment Expenditures).

## **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:**

The NTP NWR program takes the approach that specific species are best protected by conserving high-quality habitat in the most critical prairie areas.

This focus on habitat quality has produced results. Of the 3,800 acres protected, most are in areas identified by the Biological Survey as having significant biodiversity. These high-quality lands provide habitat for wide range of species, from game species to those that are endangered, threatened, or in greatest conservation need.

Biological Survey field work has identified populations of 21 rare species located wholly or partially on NTP NWR properties protected to date with OHF-funding. Protected species include:

Birds - greater prairie-chicken, marbled godwit, Wilson's phalarope, and yellow rail

Plants - blanket flower, few-flowered spikerush, hair-like beak rush, Hall's sedge, least moonwort, Missouri milk-vetch, prairie mimosa, slender milk-vetch, small white lady's slipper, sterile sedge, western white prairie clover

Reptiles - Blanding's turtle

Fish - Topeka shiner

Our most exciting success has been in protecting habitat for rare butterflies. Surveys of these properties identified historic/current populations of Dakota skipper, Pawnee skipper, Poweshiek skipper, and regal fritillary. Protected properties included 3% of the Dakota skipper occurrences in the state, 4% for Poweshiek skippers, 7% for regal fritillary, and 15% for Pawnee skippers.

Future acquisition work will be guided by this same focus on high-quality, diverse habitat, benefiting a wide range of species.

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

This program's goals are guided by the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area plan. Individual properties are reviewed/approved by TNC and USFWS biologists using the parcel selection criteria described above, including: native prairie, location in prairie complexes, nearby protected lands, and Minnesota Biological Survey research.

Biological Survey data is a critical part of this review. Every proposed project is evaluated using Survey information on: 1) Native prairie sites, 2) Rare, threatened and endangered species locations, and 3) Areas of biodiversity significance.

The selection criteria also recognize the importance of building on existing complexes/corridors and reducing fragmentation. If a prairie is small or isolated, the survival of the animal and plant species that live there is at risk. The best approach is conserving larger areas, like the Prairie Plan's cores/complexes/corridors, that have the scale, species diversity, and connectivity to support functioning prairie systems over the long-term.

The numbers shared in the section above help show this program's success at identifying/protecting biologically significant lands located in areas with existing complexes of habitat and protected lands.

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

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

### Which other plans are addressed in this program:

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area (HPA) Final Environmental Impact Statement

### Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program:

#### Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

#### Prairie:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

### Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

#### Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

### How does this program include leverage in funds or other effort to supplement any OHF appropriation:

This proposal includes \$278,500 in leverage. The largest element is \$125,000 of in-kind staff support from USFWS field staff. It includes \$53,500 of support from TNC, covering half the cost of Direct Support Service (DSS) with private funds. In addition, this round includes \$100,000 in leverage from a FWS Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant for NTP NWR fee acquisition.

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

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
ML 2010	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$308,000
ML 2010	TNC Private Contributions	\$37,700
ML 2011	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$144,000
ML 2011	TNC Private Contributions	\$23,200
ML 2012	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$139,400
ML 2012	TNC Private Contributions	\$43,600
ML 2014	USFWS In-Kind Contribution	\$67,000
ML 2014	TNC Private Contributions	\$22,100

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

Outdoor Heritage Funds will be used to purchase the land in fee title or to purchase perpetual habitat easements. The land and easements purchased will be transferred to the USFWS to become units of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. Long term costs for restoration, management, and wildlife/habitat/easement monitoring will be funded through annual USFWS operations funding.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Annually	USFWS - Annual Service Operating Funds	Monitoring and management by USFWS managers, biologists, field and realty staffs to ensure the long-term health of these habitats. Activities may include burning, mechanical, biological, and sometimes chemical treatments.		

**Activity Details:**

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

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **Yes**

Explain

No food plots will be established on OHF acquired properties. Short-term use of agricultural crops is an accepted Best Practice for preparing a site for prairie restoration. For example, short-term use of soybeans could be used for restorations in order to control weed seedbeds prior to prairie plantings. In some cases this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seedbank. Neonicotinoid treated seeds will not be used. We would not expect agricultural crop use to exceed 3 years on any given OHF acquired property.

Are any of the crop types planted GMO treated - **Yes**

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition - **No**

Local governments will be notified in writing of the intent to acquire and donate lands to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, including an offer to answer any questions.

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 by fee will be open to the public taking of fish and game during the open season according to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, United States Code, title 16, section 668dd, et seq.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

The US Fish & Wildlife Service

Will the eased land be open for public use - **No**

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

Who will manage the easement?

The US Fish & Wildlife Service

Who will be the easement holder?

The US Fish & Wildlife Service

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list - **No**

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition - **No**

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 (Refuge Lands)**

### Accomplishment Timeline:

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Identify priority fee and permanent conservation easement acquisitions	December 2018
Purchase agreements/Options for first 185 acres of fee and 185 acres of easement acquisition	December 2018
Purchase agreements/Options for remaining 200 acres of fee and 200 acres of easement acquisition	June 2020
Grassland/wetland restoration and enhancement completed	June 2022

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 11/1/2022

### Federal Funding:

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **Yes**

Are the funds confirmed - **Yes**

#### Documentation

What are the types of funds?

**Cash Match** - \$100000

**In-Kind Match** - \$125000

**Other** -

### Outcomes:

#### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands *This program's work is primarily focused on the Prairie region. A small portion of the Refuge, however, falls in the Forest-Prairie Transition region. If work is done in this region, the following outcomes will be measured using GIS tools and reported: 1) Total acres protected, 2) Acres of native prairie, 3) Acres of wetland, 4) Feet of stream- and lake-front, 5) Acres within Prairie Plan priorities, 6) # of endangered/threatened/SGCN on protected properties.*

#### Programs in prairie region:

- Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and small wetlands *The program's top priority is protecting native prairie. The majority of lands acquired will be native prairie and associated habitats including wetlands, streams and lakes. The parcel selection criteria also favor building onto existing complexes of prairie/grassland/wetland and protected land. The following outcomes will be measured and reported for acquisition in this region: 1) Total acres protected, 2) Acres of native prairie, 3) Acres of wetland, 4) Feet of stream- and lake-front, 5) Acres within Prairie Plan priorities, 6) # of endangered/threatened/SGCN on protected properties.*

# 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 Budget and Accomplishments were reduced roughly in proportion to the difference between the original request and recommendation. The recommendation was 43.4% of the request. The proposed accomplishments were reduced to 42.7% of the original. This small reduction is due to economies of scale in a larger program.

**Total Amount of Request: \$ 2683000**

### Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$214,000	\$125,000	USFWS	\$339,000
Contracts	\$101,500	\$0		\$101,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$1,230,000	\$100,000	USFWS	\$1,330,000
Easement Acquisition	\$925,100	\$0		\$925,100
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
Professional Services	\$124,500	\$0		\$124,500
Direct Support Services	\$53,400	\$53,500	TNC	\$106,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$4,000	\$0		\$4,000
Supplies/Materials	\$25,500	\$0		\$25,500
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$2,683,000	\$278,500		\$2,961,500

### Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Protection Staff	0.65	3.00	\$153,000	\$0		\$153,000
Project Manager	0.15	3.00	\$38,000	\$0		\$38,000
Grant Administration	0.08	3.00	\$22,000	\$0		\$22,000
Science/Steward	0.01	3.00	\$1,000	\$0		\$1,000
USFWS In-Kind Staff Support	0.00	0.00	\$0	\$125,000	USFWS	\$125,000
Total	0.89	12.00	\$214,000	\$125,000		\$339,000

Amount of Request: \$2,683,000

Amount of Leverage: \$278,500

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 10.38%

DSS + Personnel: \$267,400

As a % of the total request: 9.97%

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

DSS is based on The Nature Conservancy's Federally Negotiated rate as proposed and subsequently approved by the US Dept. of Interior. The portion requested from the grant represents 50% of this rate, with the remaining 50% contributed as leverage.

### Does the amount in the contract line include R/E work?

These funds are all for restoration/enhancement work on properties acquired with appropriations for this program.

### Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

The Personnel line item includes USFWS In-Kind support. Fee Acquisition w/o Pilt includes leverage from an LWCF fee acquisition grant. See the Federal Funds tab for documentation. The leverage offered on the DSS line reflects one-half of the Conservancy's

federally approved indirect rate. These funds are privately raised.

## 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	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	385	0	0	385
Protect in Easement	0	385	0	0	385
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	770	0	0	770

**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	135
Protect in Easement	250
Enhance	0
Total	385

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

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$149,000	\$0	\$0	\$149,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$1,446,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,446,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$1,088,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,088,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$2,683,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,683,000

**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	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	20	0	365	0	385
Protect in Easement	0	20	0	365	0	385
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	40	0	730	0	770

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

Type	Metro Urban	ForestPrairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$7,500	\$0	\$141,500	\$0	\$149,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$72,500	\$0	\$1,373,500	\$0	\$1,446,000
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$54,500	\$0	\$1,033,500	\$0	\$1,088,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$134,500	\$0	\$2,548,500	\$0	\$2,683,000

**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	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$3756	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$2826	\$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	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$3625	\$0	\$3763	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$2725	\$0	\$2832	\$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?
Big Stone #2	12145206	40	\$30,500	No	No	No
Big Stone #6	12044205	144	\$332,300	No	No	No

#### Brown

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Brown #1	10835229	110	\$311,500	No	No	No

#### Chippewa

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Chippewa #1	11942218	90	\$187,000	No	No	No

#### Clay

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Clay #4	13946202	80	\$120,000	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Clay #5	13846210	40	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

#### Kandiyohi

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Kandiyohi #2	12236210	153	\$434,000	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Kandiyohi #4	12235207	76	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

#### Lac qui Parle

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lac qui Parle #1	11742201	47	\$55,100	No	No	No
Lac qui Parle #2	11746213	219	\$486,400	No	No	No
Lac qui Parle #3	11943215	126	\$188,000	No	No	No
Lac qui Parle #4	11943226	149	\$178,000	No	No	No
Lac qui Parle #5	11943226	39	\$42,000	No	No	No

#### Lincoln

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lincoln #4	11345210	40	\$84,000	No	No	No
Lincoln #5	10945216	60	\$70,100	No	No	No

#### Lyon

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Lyon #2	10942222	32	\$73,000	No	No	No

#### Murray

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Murray #6	10643232	80	\$227,600	No	No	No

#### Norman

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Norman #5	14445228	145	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

#### Pipestone

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pipestone #1	10546223	174	\$360,500	No	No	No
Pipestone #3	10846201	84	\$155,200	No	No	No
Pipestone #4	10846211	76	\$157,300	No	No	No

Pope

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Pope #10	12339234	65	\$208,400	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Pope #11	12337226	18	\$22,900	No	No	No
Pope #12	12339235	80	\$240,000	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Pope #7	12438229	447	\$594,200	No	No	No
Pope #8	12439215	103	\$117,900	No	No	No
Pope #9	12337226	31	\$34,300	No	No	No

Renville

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Renville #1	11335207	257	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Rock

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Rock #1	10545218	77	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Rock #2	10345218	5	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Rock #4	10346213	12	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Rock #5	10345218	21	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Rock #6	10345208	11	\$0	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Wilkin

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Wilkin #1	13646204	27	\$60,500	No	No	No

Yellow Medicine

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Yellow Medicine #1	11546229	302	\$393,400	No	No	No

### Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

Kandiyohi

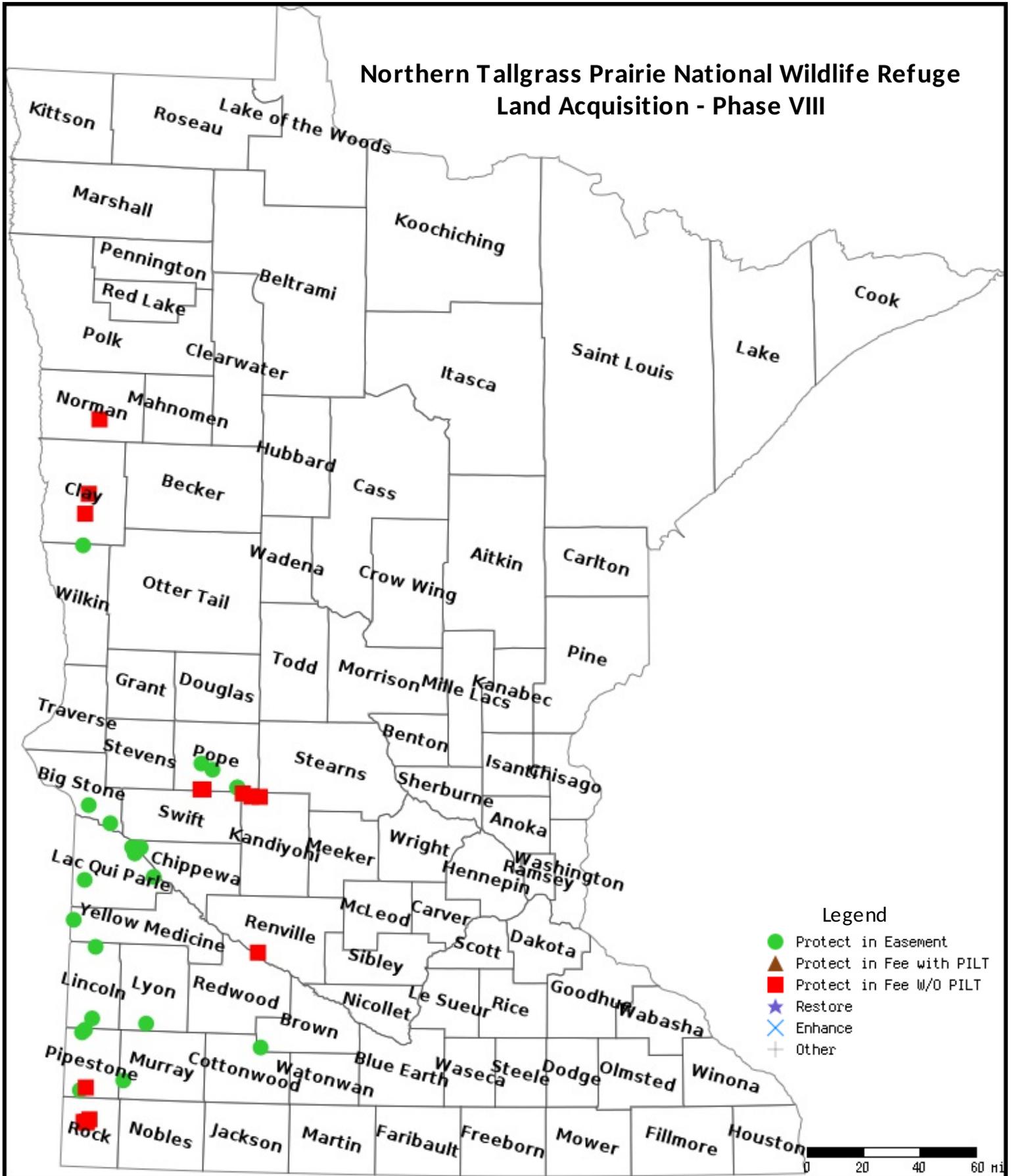
Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	# Bldgs?	Bldg Improve Desc	Value of Bldg	Disposition of Improvements
Kandiyohi #5	12236206	149	\$0	4	House, Barn, 2 other outbuildings, all in tear-down condition.	\$0	

### Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

# Parcel Map

## Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Land Acquisition - Phase VIII



Data Generated From Parcel List

## **Parcel Selection Criteria used by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Land Acquisition Program**

The purpose of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Protection National Wildlife Refuge Program is to accelerate progress towards the US Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) goal of permanently protecting and enhancing 77,000 acres of prairie remnants across the broad area originally covered by the Northern Tallgrass Prairie. The Land Acquisition Program supports the acquisition of fee title or conservation easements in the 49 western Minnesota counties included in the refuge boundary. The USFWS and The Nature Conservancy (Conservancy) are partners in this Program.

Parcels are reviewed by both the USFWS and Conservancy to ensure that they meet the priorities of both partners. They are then submitted to LSOHC staff for final review/approval. This review is based on the following criteria:

1. **Native prairie on all or most of tract, or adjacency to existing native prairie.** The emphasis of this Program is protecting and enhancing native prairie, as identified by DNR Biological Survey or site inspection by trained biologist. Protecting native prairie includes the need to buffer and connect native remnants via restoration of non-native lands. The partners will identify and work with private landowners to acquire tracts that further our shared goal of native prairie conservation, and in particular, those that meet the other criteria listed below.
2. **Within core area boundary or in critical corridors between core areas.** This Program will assist with building "functioning landscapes" by focusing in areas with concentrations of existing native prairie. The 2010 Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan identified 35 prairie cores and corridors within the Refuge. The partners will give priority to those parcels that are within these core areas or that help form critical corridors to maintain landscape function.
3. **Near existing protected lands.** Building larger protected complexes is preferred to simplify and reduce overall management costs and travel time. In general, larger protected blocks are more effective at conserving the full array of wildlife species and biological diversity. The partners will strategically identify properties that are in areas where the USFWS already has a presence and prioritize these higher than those that are isolated.
4. **Greater habitat and species diversity, or host to unique species.** Parcels that host a rare habitat or a continuum of habitats, such as interconnected upland, wetland, riparian, and stream features, will be recognized as having added ecological value and given greater priority. Tracts with underrepresented, small-scale features (e.g. threatened species), will also be prioritized.
5. **Suitability for public recreation.** Constitutional language requires that the lands purchased in fee title be open to the public taking of fish and game. Fee title lands purchased with this grant will be opened. Lands especially suited to these uses will be given a higher priority. Conservation easements purchased with Outdoor Heritage Fund support will be open to hunting only with landowner permission.

6. **Willing Seller.** We will only work with willing sellers, and those that can abide by the statutory process laid out for use of public funds. We work with landowners to ensure that they are comfortable with the Program and how it will affect their property.
7. **Avoid buildings.** Existing buildings pose a challenge because they may not be eligible for Outdoor Heritage Fund use and they require additional effort to demolish or sell. Properties with structures are carefully reviewed to ensure that they do not place an undue burden on the USFWS or Conservancy.

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Comparison Report

**Program Title:** 2017 - Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Land Acquisition - Phase VIII

**Organization:** The Nature Conservancy

**Manager:** Richard Johnson

## Budget

Requested Amount: \$6,175,000

Appropriated Amount: \$2,683,000

Percentage: 43.45%

Budget Item	Total Requested		Total Appropriated		Percentage of Request	
	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Appropriated Amount	Anticipated Leverage	Percentage of Request	Percentage of Leverage
Personnel	\$410,000	\$250,000	\$214,000	\$125,000	52.20%	50.00%
Contracts	\$238,000	\$0	\$101,500	\$0	42.65%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,879,200	\$100,000	\$1,230,000	\$100,000	42.72%	100.00%
Easement Acquisition	\$2,160,000	\$0	\$925,100	\$0	42.83%	-
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Travel	\$12,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	41.67%	-
Professional Services	\$291,000	\$0	\$124,500	\$0	42.78%	-
Direct Support Services	\$114,800	\$114,800	\$53,400	\$53,500	46.52%	46.60%
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$10,000	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	40.00%	-
Supplies/Materials	\$60,000	\$0	\$25,500	\$0	42.50%	-
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,175,000</b>	<b>\$464,800</b>	<b>\$2,683,000</b>	<b>\$278,500</b>	<b>43.45%</b>	<b>59.92%</b>

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

The Budget and Accomplishments were reduced roughly in proportion to the difference between the original request and recommendation. The recommendation was 43.4% of the request. The proposed accomplishments were reduced to 42.7% of the original. This small reduction is due to economies of scale in a larger program.

# Output

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

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	0	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	900	385	42.78%
Protect in Easement	900	385	42.78%
Enhance	0	0	-

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

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	149,000	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	3,529,000	1,446,000	40.97%
Protect in Easement	2,646,000	1,088,000	41.12%
Enhance	0	0	-

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

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	0	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	900	385	42.78%
Protect in Easement	900	385	42.78%
Enhance	0	0	-

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

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	149,000	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	-
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	3,529,000	1,446,000	40.97%
Protect in Easement	2,646,000	1,088,000	41.12%
Enhance	0	0	-