

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2021 / ML 2020 Request for Funding



Date: May 31, 2019

Program or Project Title: Roseau River Habitat Restoration

Funds Requested: \$7,200,000

Manager's Name: Tracy Halstengard

Title: Administrator

Organization: Roseau River Watershed District

Address: 714 6th Street SW

City: Roseau, MN 56751

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Website: www.roseauriverwd.com

County Locations: Roseau

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition

Activity types:

- Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Habitat

Abstract:

Over a century ago, the Roseau River in the northwestern corner of Roseau County was channelized by the State with the establishment of State Ditch 51. The Roseau River Watershed District and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will cooperatively restore 13.6 miles of river channel and enhance its riparian habitat corridor. The restoration adds 366 acres of high-quality large river habitat within the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area, improves native species biodiversity within the riparian wetlands and prairie communities and ultimately strengthens the ecosystem resilience. The project expands outdoor fish and wildlife recreational opportunities within the Wildlife Management Area.

Design and scope of work:

The Roseau River is currently classified as Minnesota State Ditch 51 starting at the Canadian border and continuing 45 miles upstream to County Road 28. This reach of the river was channelized in the early 1900s causing habitat degradation of the river and its riparian corridor. The increased slope of the river has led to entrenchment, disconnected oxbows, high bank erosion, reduced access to floodplain and loss of critical habitat. Altered hydrology affects turbidity and water temperature leading to reduced biodiversity and vulnerability to climate change. The Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD) and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) are leading implementation of a plan to restore this reach of the Roseau River. The project will restore degraded habitat, increase the resilience of the ecosystem surrounding the river, reestablish natural levels of connectivity between the river and its floodplain, strengthen biodiversity, and restore overall watershed hydrology to the area.

The project reconnects 13.6 miles of the Roseau River for a total restoration of 22.5 miles of river, floodplain and associated riparian habitat located almost entirely within the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA). Restoration will include rehabilitation of natural river habitat, and enhancement of wetland and prairie plant communities in both form and function. The river restoration will be based on the principles of natural channel design with an understanding of the hydrology and fluvial geomorphology at the site. The restored river and associated riparian wetlands and prairie will improve habitat for several species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) such as Black sandshell, Yellow rail and Nelson's sparrow, as well as game fish such as Lake sturgeon, walleye, Northern pike and Channel catfish.

The restoration is located within the MN DNR's Aspen Parklands Conservation Focus Area (CFA) identified in the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan 2015 – 2025 (WAP) as well as the Kittson-Roseau Aspen Parkland Prairie Core Area identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. The Roseau River and its riparian corridor is considered a key habitat for SGCN and received a high score (high priority for restoration) in the Wildlife Action Network. Almost all of the land required for restoration is already part of the RRWMA, eliminating the need for major land acquisition and bypassing one of the most difficult steps in conservation projects.

Outdoor recreation within the WMA already includes hunting, fishing and birding. The MN DNR constructed three large waterfowl pools located approximately 1 mile north of the project area. These pools are a rich source of wildlife habitat and are part of the Pine to Prairie Birding Trail. Outdoor recreation will benefit from the restoration by expanding opportunities to enjoy wildlife through improved kayaking and canoeing along the river as well as other activities compatible with the WMA's conservation mission. The restored river would be an excellent candidate for the MN Water Trail.

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

- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregion: A River and Stream Conservation Portfolio
- Red River of the North Fisheries Management Plan

Describe how your program will advance the indicators identified in the plans selected:

Northern Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregion: A River and Stream Conservation Portfolio indicates that channelization is one of the major threats to river habitat conservation. Goals include restoring areas of degradation to appropriate levels of viability and resiliency. The Roseau River was identified as a connection between areas of biodiversity significance. Restoration will strengthen biodiversity in the area and ultimately restore resiliency to the ecosystem.

The Red River of the North Fisheries Management Plan lists applicable goals, "Protect and/or rehabilitate within-channel, riparian, and upland habitat on Red River and in its watershed in order to sustain or enhance components necessary for a healthy and stable riverine ecosystem" and lists the following Habitat Objectives: "Establish and maintain stable stream channels, and provide heterogeneous and complex physical habitat components consistent with the physio-graphic setting and important to aquatic species in the Red River basin."

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:

This reach of the Roseau River is located within the RRWMA, which is permanently protected. By restoring the historic meanders of the river, the project will prevent further habitat degradation, enhancing wildlife habitat in the river and along its riparian corridor. River meanders provide important refuge, foraging and spawning habitat for fish (including game species). Reconnecting the oxbows and removing ditch spoil banks adds 366 acres of critical aquatic habitat. Additionally, 22.5 miles of adjacent floodplain will be reconnected to the main channel restoring the natural hydrology to the river and adjacent wetlands. Restored hydrology will allow for a diverse population of native aquatic and wetland vegetation to flourish which will ultimately protect the river corridor from invasive species. This reach of the river provides an important connection between priority habitats including the three WMA waterfowl pools located approximately 1 mile to the north of the project, native remnant prairie located west of the project and the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation located east of the project.

Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

The MN DNR's Wildlife Action Network (WAN) is a map of quality terrestrial and aquatic habitats throughout the state. This reach of the Roseau River received High and Medium High rankings in the WAN which indicates that it should be prioritized for implementing conservation actions that address habitat degradation. The WAN is comprised of several indicators of quality habitat in which the

Roseau River scored High for viable population of SGCN, and Moderate for biodiversity significance and stream index of biological integrity. The MN Biological Survey (MBS) ranking of Moderate for biodiversity significance indicates that this area contains rare species and a strong potential for recovery of moderately disturbed native plant communities.

Additionally, a full fisheries stream survey was conducted on the Roseau River in 2015. The Roseau River was assessed for stream health in the areas of Hydrology, Water Quality, Geomorphology, Biology and Connectivity. This assessment identified several stressors leading to degraded habitat within the river and its riparian corridor. Extensive channel survey, water quality monitoring, fish sampling (including game species), and aquatic plant assessment was used to complete this study. Conclusions indicate that altered hydrology, i.e. river channelization, is a significant driver of habitat degradation for several reasons; increased flows impact the behavior mechanisms of aquatic organisms that depend on a natural flow regime for survival, entrenchment disconnects the main channel from floodplain habitat and reduces access to meanders that provide critical habitat for fish and aquatic macroinvertebrate, and bank erosion increases turbidity levels within the river. Reconnecting the historic oxbows and restoring the natural hydrology to the area will enhance in-stream and floodplain habitat and ensure resilience of this ecosystem. Channel survey work and coordination with the MN DNR stream ecology program will be utilized to design and restore the natural channel geomorphology based on stream classification and channel evolution principles. Because this area is permanently protected by the RRWMA, the river restoration will build upon existing remnant habitat and develop a conservation corridor between existing and restored habitats.

How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species:

The restoration location has already been identified as a priority conservation area in multiple conservation plans including the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and the MN DNR's Wildlife Action Network. The conservation plans used scientific assessments to rank this area as having quality terrestrial and aquatic habitat that is significant in preventing population declines of SGCN and threatened or endangered species.

Oxbows and backwaters are unique habitats of large rivers providing habitat for diverse fish and aquatic organism communities. Oxbows provide important refuge, spawning and foraging habitat for fish. Currently, due to spoil banks and entrenchment, the oxbows have been largely disconnected from the river and are only accessible during high flow.

Reconnecting the historic oxbows will reestablish the natural meandering pattern and riffle-pool-run sequence which is essential to an ecologically functional and productive river system. While Lake sturgeon (a MN species of concern and a SGCN) seek out riffles for spawning habitats, nursery habitat for the recently hatched fry and young Lake sturgeon is often the limiting factor. Runs, bends and sand/gravel bars are often sought out by juvenile Lake sturgeon. The restored meanders will provide better access to these diverse geomorphic river features that are superior to the existing inaccessible oxbows. Natural channel restoration will support and strengthen the reestablishment of Lake sturgeon within the Red River Basin. Other fish game species that will benefit include Northern pike, walleye, and Channel catfish.

In addition to restoring the oxbows, wetlands located within the river's restored riparian corridor will also provide valuable wildlife habitat. Reestablishing the natural hydrology to the area will allow these wetlands to return to their natural inundation and drawdown pattern, supporting native plant communities and suppressing invasive monocultures such as Reed Canary Grass. Recharging the wetlands with essential nutrients will support biodiversity and provide high-quality habitat for species such as Nelson's sparrow, Yellow rail, Wilson's phalarope, American bittern, Northern harriers, Least weasel, Sandhill crane, and Least bittern.

Identify indicator species and associated quantities this habitat will typically support:

Restoration of 22.5 miles of the Roseau River will provide 366 acres of enhanced aquatic habitat. Lake sturgeon, walleye, Northern pike and Channel catfish are expected to benefit from the reconnected meanders that provide high-quality spawning, nursery and refuge habitat. Freshwater mussels such as the Black sandshell and Creek heelsplitter will benefit from improved water quality and lower levels of turbidity within the river after restoration. It is estimated that restored warmwater rivers will support 116 Channel catfish per acre and 8000 mussels (all species) per acre.

Various species of shorebirds and wading birds will benefit from the restoration. High quality native vegetation will recolonize selected riparian areas, enhancing habitat for lowland grass bird species such as the Nelson's sparrow and Bobolinks. It is estimated that this habitat will support 1 male Bobolink and 1.2 female Bobolinks per 2.5 acres, and 1 pair of Nelson's sparrow per 40 acres.

Native bees (solitary and bumbles) as well as butterflies will benefit over time as the native plant diversity increases within the grasslands through a more natural flood regime. Healthy grassland ecosystems can have between 100-250 milkweed plants per acre. An acre of enhanced grassland could potentially contribute 3 to 8 Monarchs to the population.

Outcomes:

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Rivers and streams provide corridors of habitat including intact areas of forest cover in the east and large wetland/upland complexes in the west *This project will restore and enhance in-stream and riparian habitat. Restoration will create a corridor of high-quality aquatic habitat through the RRWMA which will directly improve the population of Lake sturgeon and other fish game species. The benefit to fish populations and macroinvertebrate can be evaluated in future Fishery Stream Surveys which are conducted by the MN DNR approximately every 10 years. This survey will also outline benefits to water quality and connectivity. Additionally, this project will enhance recreational opportunities for paddlers and anglers who will see improvements in quality of fishing and wildlife viewing.*

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

The restoration project will follow natural channel design principles which create habitat conditions that are self-sustaining. Significant long-term maintenance costs are not expected. The MN DNR currently maintains the RRWMA, however the RRWD will work with the MN DNR to put together a formal agreement for future maintenance of the project to ensure that the project endures over time. The RRWD and MN DNR have a strong history of project partnership. Their partnership has so far seen two projects to completion (Palmville Fen Restoration and RRWMA Pool 3 Outlet Project). A third project (Roseau Lake Rehabilitation) is well into the planning phase. All three projects have used a collaborative project team approach to planning. The Roseau River habitat restoration is another opportunity for the RRWD and MN DNR to partner on a project that is mutually beneficial and a step towards meeting the habitat and water management goals of each agency. It is anticipated that maintenance funding will be available through the MN DNR and through funds raised locally by the Watershed District.

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

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Annual	Watershed District - Local Tax Levy	Monitoring and maintenance of channel restoration		
Annual	MN DNR	Manage recreational access and amenities	Manage terrestrial and wetland habitats adjacent to the river	
Approx. 2025	MN DNR	Fishery Survey and Sampling	Monitor changes in aquatic populations	

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

Land acquisition has been one of the most challenging tasks in conservation projects. With appropriate funding, this project is ready for implementation as it is located within the RRWMA, eliminating the need for major land acquisition. Because this project is ready for implementation, it will be a showcase example of the positive impact that river restoration can have on aquatic and riparian habitat. Additionally, this area has been identified as a priority habitat for conservation in two of Minnesota’s conservation plans. The current RRWD Board of Managers and the MN DNR are supportive of the project and they will bring important community support required to accomplish and maintain the project goals.

Does this program include leverage in funds:

No

Relationship to other funds:

- Not Listed

Describe the relationship of the funds:

Not Listed

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Any state agency or organization requesting a direct appropriation from the OHF must inform the LSOHC at the time of the request for funding is made, whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose:

This funding request is not supplanting or a substitution for any previous funding.

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

Not Listed

Activity Details

Requirements:

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

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

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 - **Yes (WMA)**

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

Are the funds confirmed - **No**

What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds - **Summer 2020**

Land Use:

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

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Finalize Restoration and Construction Plans	Summer 2021
Begin Construction	Fall 2021
Complete Construction	Summer 2023

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$7,200,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	\$6,500,000	\$0		\$6,500,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$700,000	\$0		\$700,000
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	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$7,200,000	\$0	-	\$7,200,000

Amount of Request: \$7,200,000
 Amount of Leverage: \$0
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.00%
 DSS + Personnel: \$0
 As a % of the total request: 0.00%
 Easement Stewardship: \$0
 As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -%

What is included in the contracts line?

All contract work is for river habitat restoration and enhancement.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

Currently, potential leverage sources have been identified and will be pursued by the RRWD, however there are no confirmed funds at this time.

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable? - Yes

Tell us how this project would be scaled and how administrative costs are affected, describe the “economy of scale” and how outputs would change with reduced funding, if applicable:

The restoration reach will be shortened as needed given the length that can be funded. Total restoration can be accomplished in phases as additional funding becomes available. Oxbow reconnection will be prioritized and phased based on habitat impact.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	366	366
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	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
Total	0	0	0	366	366

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,200,000	\$7,200,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$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
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,200,000	\$7,200,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	366	0	0	0	366
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	366	0	0	0	366

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$7,200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,200,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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	\$7,200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,200,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$19,672
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$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	\$19,672	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$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

Automatic system calculation / not entered by managers

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

22.5

I have read and understand Section 15 of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Statute 97A.056, and the Call for Funding Request. I certify I am authorized to submit this proposal and to the best of my knowledge the information provided is true and accurate.

Parcel List

Explain the process used to select, rank and prioritize the parcels:

All parcels within the project reach have been identified. Restoration will be prioritized based on habitat impact.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

Roseau

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
MICHAELSOHN ANGELA	16342219	6	\$123,900	No
ROSEAU RIVER WATERSHED DIST	16342219	9	\$181,000	No
ROSEAU RIVER WATERSHED DIST	16342230	5	\$98,400	No
STATE LAND-ACQUIRED & DNR BUREAU OF R E MANAGEMENT	16342219	6	\$110,200	Yes
STATE LAND-ACQUIRED & DNR BUREAU OF R E MANAGEMENT	16342219	6	\$122,000	Yes
STATE LAND-ACQUIRED & DNR BUREAU OF R E MANAGEMENT	16343213	4	\$82,600	Yes
STATE LAND-ACQUIRED & DNR BUREAU OF R E MANAGEMENT	16343213	22	\$424,900	Yes
STATE LAND-ACQUIRED & DNR BUREAU OF R E MANAGEMENT	16343224	174	\$3,421,000	Yes
STATE LAND-ACQUIRED & DNR BUREAU OF R E MANAGEMENT	16344206	40	\$784,900	Yes
STATE LAND-ACQUIRED & DNR BUREAU OF R E MANAGEMENT	16344215	91	\$1,784,300	Yes
TAX FORFEITED	16344218	2	\$45,200	No
THORBUS RUBEN S	16342230	1	\$21,600	No

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

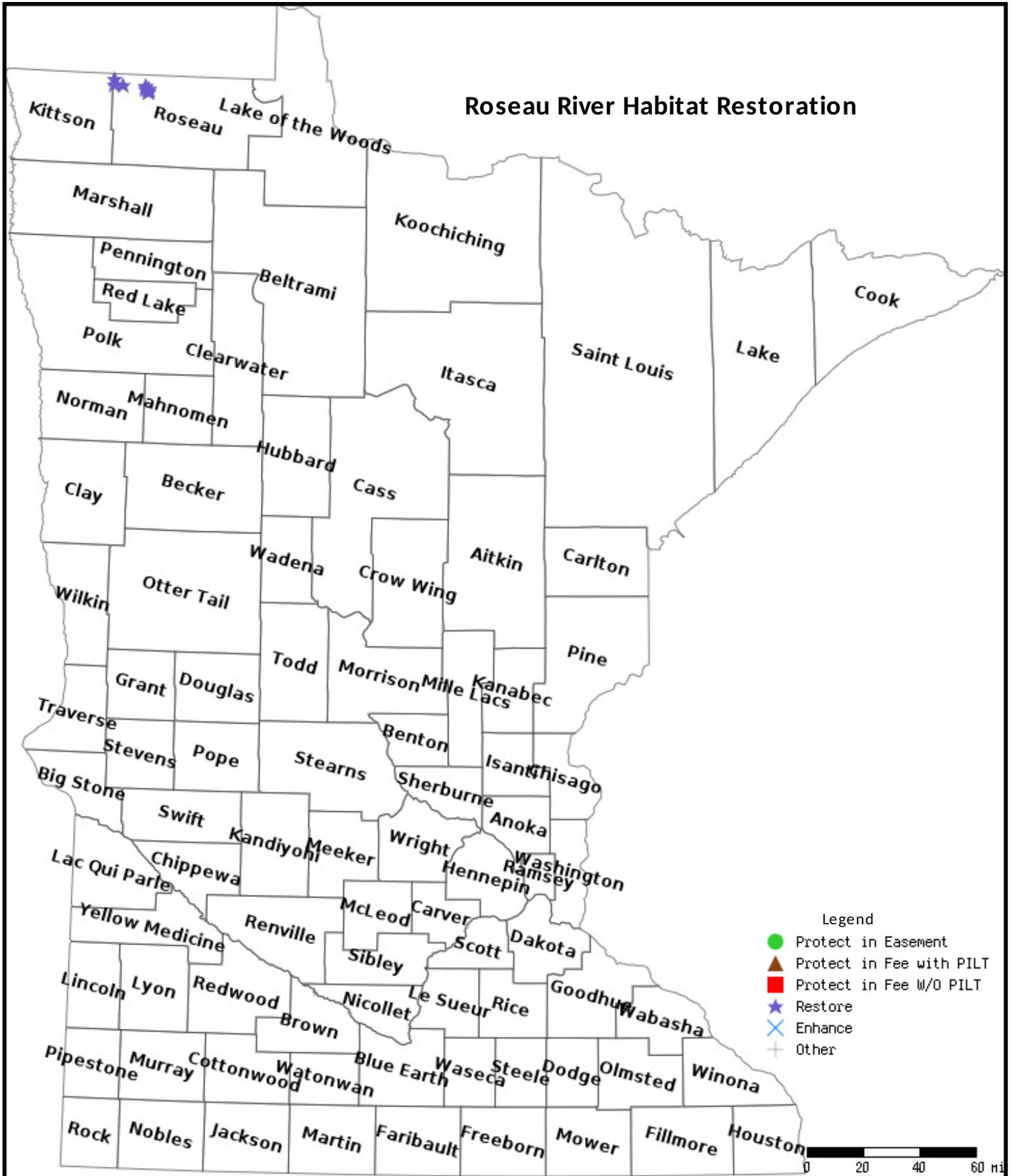
Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List



Roseau River Habitat Restoration



Project Background & Scope

The Roseau River is currently classified as Minnesota State Ditch 51 starting at the Canadian border and continuing 45 miles upstream to County Road 28. This reach of the river was channelized in the early 1900s which caused habitat degradation of the river and its riparian corridor. The increased slope of the river has led to entrenchment, disconnected oxbows, high bank erosion, reduced access to floodplain and loss of critical habitat. Altered hydrology impacts turbidity and water temperature leading to reduced biodiversity and vulnerability to climate change. The Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD) in partnership with the MN Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) is leading implementation of a plan to restore this reach of the Roseau River. **The project will restore degraded habitat, increase the resilience of the ecosystem surrounding the river, reestablish natural levels of connectivity between the river and its riparian corridor, strengthen biodiversity, and restore overall watershed hydrology to the area.**

The project reconnects 13.6 miles of historic oxbows on the Roseau River for a total restoration of 22.5 miles of river and associated floodplain and riparian habitat located almost entirely within the Roseau River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA).

Restoration will include rehabilitation of natural river habitat, and enhancement of wetland and prairie plant communities in both form and function. The stream rehabilitation will be based on the principles of natural channel design with an understanding of the hydrology and fluvial geomorphology at the site. Reconnecting the historic oxbows will reestablish a natural meandering pattern and riffle-pool-run sequence which is essential to an ecologically functional and productive river system. The restored river and associated riparian wetlands and prairie will improve habitat for several species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) and game fish such as Lake sturgeon, walleye, Northern pike and Channel catfish.

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Outdoor recreation within the WMA already includes hunting, fishing and

birding. The MN DNR constructed three large waterfowl pools located approximately 1 mile north of the project area. These pools are a rich source of wildlife habitat and are part of the Pine to Prairie Birding Trail. Outdoor recreation will benefit from the restoration by expanding opportunities to enjoy wildlife through improved kayaking and canoeing along the river.

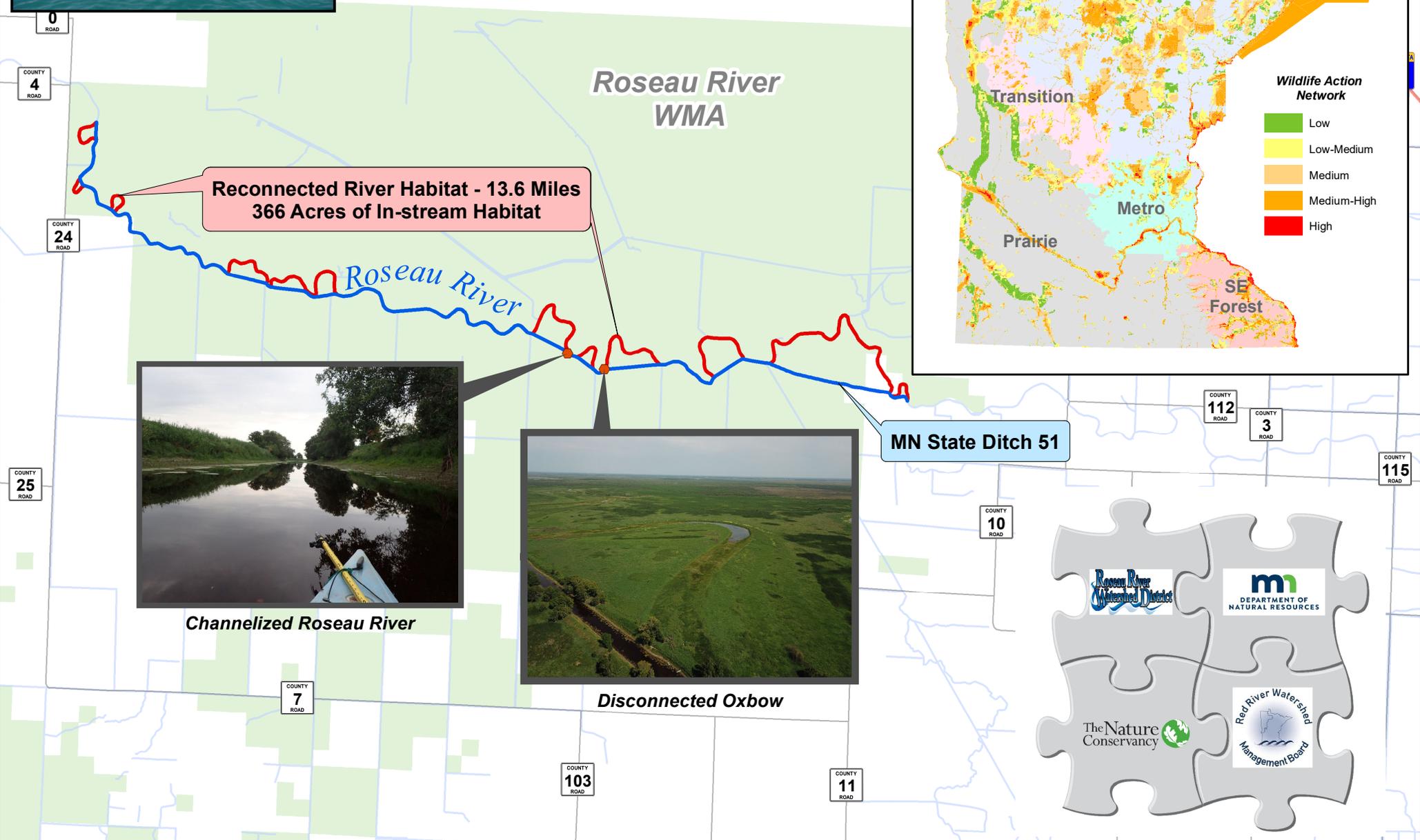
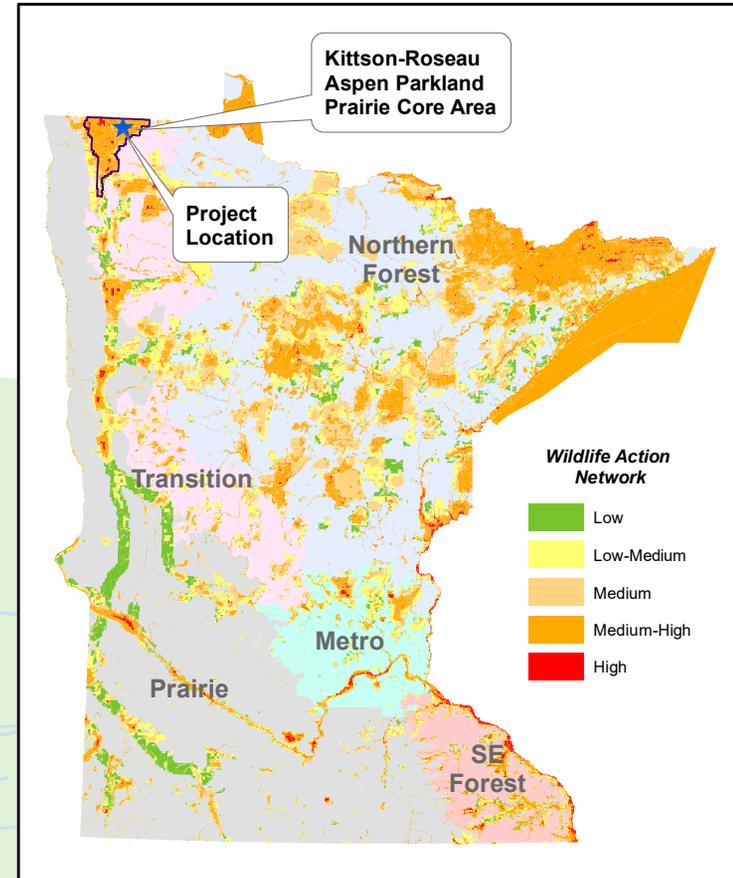
With appropriate funding, this project is ready for implementation as it is located almost entirely on protected land within the RRWMA. Eliminating the need for major land acquisition bypasses one of most difficult steps in conservation projects. This project will be a showcase example of the positive impact that river restoration can have on fish and wildlife habitat as well as provide a unique opportunity to observe the enhancement of adjacent wetland and upland habitats responding to restored natural hydrology.

Timeline



Outcomes/Benefits

- Reconnect 13.6 miles of historic oxbows to reestablish natural meanders
- 366 acres of restored aquatic habitat
- Restored hydrology for riparian wetlands and uplands
- Increased ecosystem resilience
- Expanded opportunities for outdoor recreation, fishing and wildlife viewing





May 24, 2019

Mark Johnson
Executive Director
Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 95
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) is submitting this letter of support for the Roseau River Restoration Project being developed by the Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD). This project aligns with the Principle Objective of the RRWMB which includes the enhancement of environmental and water resource management. The RRWD is a member of the RRWMB and many of the projects constructed by our members include Natural Resources Enhancements (NRE) that relate to water quality and wildlife habitat.

The RRWMB and our members are also part of the 1998 Red River Basin Mediation Agreement that is also supported by several state and federal agencies. This agreement calls for the incorporation of NREs into flood mitigation projects in the Red River Basin. While flood mitigation is not a component of this project, the water quality and habitat benefits being proposed will clearly meet the intent of the 1998 Mediation Agreement regarding NREs.

Projects such as the Roseau River Restoration Project can also meet other local, state, federal, regional, and international water quality and wildlife habitat plans that call for various actions on the landscape. This is a multi-purpose project that will help to increase the overall base of natural resource lands in the State of Minnesota, will result in water quality benefits, and will reconnect wildlife habitat areas that have been previously altered.

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 218-474-1084 (cell), by email at rob.sip@rrwmb.org or by calling our main office at 218-784-9500. The RRWMB appreciates the opportunity to submit this letter of support for one of our member watershed districts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert L. Sip", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert L. Sip
RRWMB Executive Director

CC: Tracy Halstensgard, RRWD Administrator
RRWMB Managers and Lisa Frenette, RRWMB Policy and Regulatory Liaison