

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2014 Accomplishment Plan

Date: December 19, 2013

Program or Project Title: Camp Ripley ACUB - Phase IV ...Protecting one of the last great places in Minnesota

Funds Recommended: \$ 1,200,000

Manager's Name: Helen McLennan

Title: District Manager

Organization: Morrison SWCD

Street Address: 16776 Heron Rd

City: Little Falls, MN 56345

Telephone: 320-616-2479

E-Mail: helen.mclennan@mn.nacdnet.net

Organization Web Site: www.morrisonswcd.org

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: No Counties Listed

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Northern Forest

Activity Type:

- Protect in Easement

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Forest
- Prairie
- Wetlands

Abstract:

Protect 720 acres of high quality habitat a for fish, game, and wildlife through permanent conservation easements along the Mississippi and Crow Wing Rivers and buffer the Nokasippi and Gull River WMAs. Protection will reduce parcelization, improve watershed.

Design and Scope of Work:

The purpose of this initiative is to protect fish, game, migratory birds, and forest habitat along the Crow Wing, Gull, Nokasippi, and Mississippi River corridors via permanent conservation easements. This project will utilize partnerships with Camp Ripley, a State Game Refuge, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and Morrison Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to implement natural resource management and planning to protect the Nokasippi River and Gull River Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). These river corridors are critical to the general public for fishing, hunting, and recreational opportunities. In addition, this corridor is instrumental to the State of Minnesota, MN National Guard (MNNG) and National Guard Bureau (NGB), local economy, the National Mississippi River Flyway, and Mississippi Head Waters Board.

The target work area contains high value existing habitat and public accessibility.

MN DNR 2009 and 2010 fish surveys on the Crow Wing River (Staples to confluence of Mississippi) and Mississippi River (Brainerd to Little Falls) indicate high quality fish communities of walleye, muskellunge, and small-mouth bass. Also, Camp Ripley is home to one of the southern-most wolf populations in Minnesota and 65 species of Greatest Conservation Need including the state's highest population of red shouldered hawks. Not only do the river corridors contain wildlife habitat but also provide public recreation opportunities. Camp Ripley along with the MN DNR hosts the largest public archery hunt in the United States with over 5,000 participants chasing record-book whitetails. Additionally, Camp Ripley also hosts deer hunts, i.e. Disabled American Veterans (DAV), youth hunt, Deployed Soldier Archery, and Deployed Soldier Muzzleloader. A Deployed Soldier and DAV turkey hunt are also provided along with a Trolling for the Troops fishing event. More than 13,000 hunting/angling man-days occur on Camp Ripley annually. Camp Ripley also makes available to the general public access to over 1,800 acres for walk-in recreational activities to include hunting on Camp lands adjacent to the the Camp fence. The Crow Wing and Mississippi Rivers contain over 15 public access points from Staples to the confluence of Mississippi and from Brainerd to Little Falls respectively. This project will protect the current habitat along existing public access areas.

Development along these corridors will have adverse effects to existing high quality wildlife habitat, local economies, and to the MNNG training program. The Camp Ripley is located immediately adjacent to the confluence of the Crow Wing and Mississippi Rivers. Camp Ripley contains 18 miles of Mississippi River frontage and 8 miles of Crow Wing River frontage. In many examples across the nation development adjacent to military training sites has limited the facilities' ability to maintain their military mission. For example, the east shore of the Mississippi River has experienced high decibel levels due to weapon firing, and is also near the flight path of the Camp Ripley airfield. For that reason, the MNNG has asked the partnership to focus on land parcels directly adjacent to the Mississippi and Crow Wing Rivers to help reduce potential conflicts with homeowners. In 2011, Camp Ripley's economic impact to the local economy was \$304 million dollars and Camp Ripley is the largest employer in Morrison County.

These river corridors are also very vulnerable to habitat degradation through development. The Hwy 371 Little Falls to Brainerd corridor is projected to have some of the highest growth rates outside the metropolitan area. According to the 2010 US Census Bureau, the City of Baxter's population has increased 37 percent from 2000 to 2010 and Cass County's population increased by 5 percent 2000 to 2010. The University of Minnesota Land Cover Map indicates Sylvan, Crow Wing, and Forty Ripley townships impervious surface cover has increased by 429-566 acres in 10 years with much of the development near the Gull, Mississippi, and Crow Wing Rivers (UMN Land Cover 1990-2000). The majority of the lakes in Cass and Crow Wing Counties have exhausted available development space on the general development lakes, leaving these major rivers vulnerable to new development.

This project will build upon existing Camp Ripley partnership success with the Army Compatible Use Buffer program (ACUB). This federal program provides funds to protect adjacent lands from encroaching development and in the process protects the training center. Since 2004, Camp Ripley partners have completed 103 land transactions. The MN

DNR completed 15 transactions representing 1,792 acres and BWSR completed 88 land transactions representing 12,017 acres. Collectively, Camp Ripley partners enrolled over 13,809 acres into conservation easements and fee acquisitions. Camp Ripley has leveraged over \$21 million dollars from National Guard Bureau and Department of Army and is a national leader in the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program. This project will leverage \$3.883 million federal funding.

Furthermore, from 2010 through 2013, Camp Ripley partnership had huge success with the LSOHC Little Nokasippi WMA project. The partnership enrolled 1,353.3 acres into conservation easements, increased public access to the WMA by 262 acres, and buffered the WMA from future development. This project will utilize lessons learned from the 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 LSOHC grants and will complement the MN DNR Gull River WMA.

With the proposed funds the Camp Ripley partnership plans to complete conservation easements along the Mississippi, Gull, Nokasippi, and Crow Wing Rivers. Additionally, Crow Wing and Morrison SWCDs will work with landowners to assist with forest management and cost-share forestry programs. The partnership will act quickly and efficiently to protect this high quality riparian habitat before it is developed, and while the residents are willing to convey easements. Currently, the partnership has over 40 landowners signed up ready to participate in the program along these river corridors. Camp Ripley plans to leverage 2013-2014 NGB and Department of Army federal funds to match LSOHC funds.

Planning:

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H4 Restore and protect shallow lakes
- H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams
- H7 Keep water on the landscape
- LU8 Protect large blocks of forest land
- LU10 Support and expand sustainable practices on working forested lands

Plans Addressed:

- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Long Range Plan for Muskellunge and Large Northern Pike Management Through 2020
- Long Range Plan for the Wild Turkey
- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- Mississippi River Headwaters Comprehensive Plan
- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- The Nature Conservancy's Superior Mixed Forest Ecoregional Plan
- Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Projects Joint Ventures Plan

LSOHC Statewide Priorities:

- Address Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife, wildlife species of greatest conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions, as well as long-term or permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species

- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work; provides the most cost-effective use of financial resources; and where possible takes into consideration the value of local outreach, education, and community engagement to sustain project outcomes
- Leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Restore or enhance habitat on permanently protected land

LSOHC Forest Prairie Transition Section Priorities:

- 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
- Protect, enhance, and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

LSOHC Northern Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas
- Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

This application accelerates our existing program, and existing success. We have successfully completed 13,809 acres in easements and fee acquisition and are buffering two wildlife management areas that provide public access for hunting and fishing. This proven track record along with \$21 million in federal funding has demonstrated how true partnerships, state and Federal can work together to preserve one of the last great places in Minnesota. Camp Ripley is also partnering with the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) Landscape Program, BWSR, SWCD, MN DNR and TNC to maintain sustainable forest resources around Camp Ripley's borders. The Landscape program promotes multi-ownership planning focused on voluntary involvement and implementation of landscape visions, goals and strategies. The Camp Ripley landscape has high quality forested systems and ensuring these systems remain healthy requires proper management. Oak is the most dominant cover type and promoting proper management is key to maintaining the forest health while bringing financial support to the landowners. Even though we have 103 land transactions completed, we have a waiting list of 250 interested landowners within the ACUB project area.

Sustainability and Maintenance:

The BWSR easements are perpetual and will be monitored through the BWSR RIM (Re-Invest in Minnesota) Easement monitoring process. The landowner is responsible for property taxes and on-going maintenance as per the documented and signed Conservation Plans. Funds for easement stewardship have been included in the budget. Monitoring scheduling follows the RIM guidelines and funding through the MN BWSR.

Easements are inspected for the first five consecutive years beginning in the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. Stewardship costs are part of this project and are calculated at \$5,000 per easement for 25 years. BWSR is in the process of reassessing stewardship costs based upon perpetual costs. Accomplishment plan amendments will be requested if costs change significantly.

Public Use:

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

Permanent Protection:

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

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Protect Mississippi, Crow Wing, Gull, and Nokasippi Rivers with BWSR perpetual conservation easement and buffer the Little Nokasippi River and Gull River WMAs with perpetual conservation easements on private lands.	6/30/2017

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation *Establishing easements and buffering WMAs will sustain large tracts of green space/forested land. Easements are targeted towards high value forested lands.*
- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species *Currently Camp Ripley has 65 species of greatest conservation need. This program helps protect 53,000 acre state game refuge. (Camp)*
- Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors *Currently we target parcels adjacent to one another to create habitat corridors consistent with natural resource management.*
- Greater public access for wildlife and outdoors-related recreation *Two of the project areas are buffering WMAs on the Gull/Nokasippi Rivers ensuring the WMAs continue to function allowing public access.*

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need *Camp Ripley lies along 18 miles of the Mississippi, and 8 miles along the Crow Wing River which are critical habitat for waterfowl and SGCN.*
- Water is kept on the land *Lands under easement do not allow additional drainage and allows us to enhance the properties with conservation practices to improve land management.*

Budget Spreadsheet

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

Total Amount of Request: \$ 1200000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$90,000	\$0		\$90,000
Contracts	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$1,038,000	\$0		\$1,038,000
Easement Stewardship	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Travel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$27,000	\$0		\$27,000
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	\$1,200,000	\$0		\$1,200,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Project Management	0.45	3.00	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Program Management	0.02	3.00	\$7,200	\$0		\$7,200
Easement/Database/GIS	0.20	3.00	\$37,800	\$0		\$37,800
Total	0.67	9.00	\$90,000	\$0		\$90,000

Budget and Cash Leverage by Partnership

Budget Name	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	DEFAULT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$0	\$0		\$0

Budget Name	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	Morrison SWCD	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Contracts	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	Morrison SWCD	\$27,000	\$0		\$27,000
Direct Support Services	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	Morrison SWCD	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$72,000	\$0		\$72,000

Personnel - Morrison SWCD

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Project Management	0.45	3.00	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Total	0.45	3.00	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000

Budget Name	Partnership	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	BWSR	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Contracts	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	BWSR	\$1,038,000	\$0		\$1,038,000
Easement Stewardship	BWSR	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000
Travel	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	BWSR	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total		\$1,128,000	\$0		\$1,128,000

Personnel - BWSR

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.02	3.00	\$7,200	\$0		\$7,200
Easement/Database/GIS	0.20	3.00	\$37,800	\$0		\$37,800
Total	0.22	6.00	\$45,000	\$0		\$45,000

Output Tables

Table 1. 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	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	22	72	626	0	720
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	22	72	626	0	720

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	90
Enhance	0
Total	90

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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$33,500	\$125,600	\$1,040,900	\$0	\$1,200,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$33,500	\$125,600	\$1,040,900	\$0	\$1,200,000

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	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	187	0	0	533	720
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	187	0	0	533	720

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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$313,000	\$0	\$0	\$887,000	\$1,200,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$313,000	\$0	\$0	\$887,000	\$1,200,000

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

10 miles

Parcel List

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

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

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.