

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
FY 2011 Recommendation
Accomplishment Plan**

Date: ~~February 25, 2013 – Amendment Request~~ June 6, 2013 – Amendment Request

Project or Program Title: Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program in Minnesota

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	Council Recommendation Funding	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Funds Recommended (\$000s)	FY 2011			
Outdoor Heritage Fund	\$ 3,505,000	0	0	0

Appropriation Language

Laws of Minnesota 2010, Chapter 361, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 4(b).

\$3,505,000 in fiscal year 2011 is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Pheasants Forever to acquire and restore wetland and related upland habitats, in cooperation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, Inc., to be managed as waterfowl production areas. A list of proposed acquisitions and a list of proposed projects, describing the types and locations of restorations, must be provided as part Article1 Sec. 2. 8 of the required accomplishment plan. All restorations must comply with subdivision 9.3 9, paragraph (b).

Abstract

Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program in Minnesota

Pheasants Forever (PF) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will cooperate to permanently restore and protect approximately 700 acres as Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) in western and southern Minnesota. All lands acquired through this grant proposal will be owned and managed by the Service as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Narrative

Tremendous economic, agricultural, recreational, and developmental pressures including gravel mining, widely fluctuating commodity prices, withdrawal of CRP contracts, wind energy, ethanol and bio-mass production are squeezing Minnesota's habitat resources and the plants and animals that depend on them. WPAs are acquired with funds derived from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps and managed for wildlife and conservation benefits as part of the National Wildlife System. Land acquisition and restoration have not kept pace with habitat needs however.

Funds will be utilized to permanently restore and protect approximately 500 acres of grassland and 200 acres of wetland as Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) in western and southern Minnesota. The loss of grassland and wetland habitats in Minnesota is well documented. One of the primary ways to reverse this downward trend is to permanently acquire, then restore wetland and grassland habitats on those properties. The Service and our partners have been utilizing this strategy for over 50-years with the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program (SWAP). Utilizing the landscape level planning tools produced by our HAPET office in Fergus Falls, MN, the Service and our partners have strategically identified properties for acquisition. These strategies are well tested and are supported by the greater conservation community" here in Minnesota.

This Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) project will add to the Service's acquisition of Minnesota's valuable wetland and grassland habitats. Upon notification of project approval, Pheasants Forever & the Service will prioritize lands to be acquired. PF will complete landowner contacts, appraisals and purchase agreements. At closing PF will take ownership to allow for the required reversionary clause. Then the lands will be donated to the Service as WPAs and all management actions including the prompt restoration of upland habitats and wetlands will be funded by the Service and protected in perpetuity. The Service will also be responsible for payment of PILT to the Counties.

Relationship to *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and other published resource management plans.

The Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan, the U.S. Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Implementation Plan, MN State Waterfowl and Pheasant Plans, the Partners In Flight-Grassland Bird Plans, the US Shorebird Conservation Plan for the Northern Plains/Prairie Potholes Region, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan and many other plans, papers, and studies have directly and indirectly noted that the current pace of conservation actions is not likely to reverse previous wetland and grassland losses in Minnesota or the Prairie Pothole Region of North America. Many authors and organizations have recommended that accelerating protection and restoring lost and degraded habitats are essential strategies in reversing the distressing decline in watershed protection, conservation habitats and wildlife populations.

Project Design and Evaluation

Project Scope	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife (Include Description in Footnote)
Restore				
Protect	200 acres	500 acres		
Enhance				

Counties in which activities will take place	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, Grant, Big Stone, Swift, Kandiyohi, Lyon, Lincoln, Jackson, Fairbault, Freeborn, Mahnomen	Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, Grant, Big Stone, Swift, Kandiyohi, Lyon, Lincoln, Jackson, Fairbault, Freeborn, Mahnomen		
Protect	Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, Grant, Big Stone, Swift, Kandiyohi, Lyon, Lincoln, Jackson, Fairbault, Freeborn, Mahnomen, <u>Murray</u>	Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, Grant, Big Stone, Swift, Kandiyohi, Lyon, Lincoln, Jackson, Fairbault, Freeborn, Mahnomen, <u>Murray</u>		
Enhance				

Acres Within Each Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore					
Protect	30 acres	120 acres		550 acres	
Enhance					

These are estimates based upon current project list and depend upon willing sellers.

Funding Per Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore	\$15,000	\$60,000		\$271,000	
Protect	\$135,000	\$542,000		\$2,482,000	
Enhance					

Contract and personnel costs are prorated based on acres per ecological section and are assigned to the restore protect category.

Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program in Minnesota

Funding Resource Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	\$100,000	\$246,000		
Protect	\$916,000	\$2,243,000		
Enhance				

Contract and personnel costs are prorated based on acres per ecological section and are assigned to the restore protect category.

Acquisition and Tax Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability				
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability	200 acres	500 acres		
Permanent Easement				

All acquisitions take a willing seller, thus the projects identified and listed as part of this work plan are in constant flux. Some projects will inevitably fall off the list as potential sellers choose not to accept an offer, or simply choose not to sell at this time. While every effort will be made to acquire the priority properties on the list included herein, it is likely that projects will be added to the list as priority opportunities constantly are arising while others are unattainable. Thus, geography and acreage figures above are estimates based upon the current priority list.

Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel			\$34,000
Contracts*			\$346,000
Equipment/Tools			
Materials/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition			\$3,125,000
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Travel			
Additional Budget Items			
—Restoration			
TOTAL			\$3,505,000

*Contracts for restoration work of acquired parcels.

Relationship to Current Budget

LSOHC recommended dollars will augment the limited land acquisition funds received by the Service and accelerate the number of acres enrolled as Waterfowl Production Areas.

Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program in Minnesota

Personnel

Position	Name	Amount
PF Personnel		\$ 34,000
PF Sr. Field Coordinator/Director of Conservation		\$ 10,000
PF Regional Staff (2)		\$ 16,000
PF Director of Finance		\$ 8,000

Only documented, direct to project costs will be part of this grant. Should all personnel dollars not be used, PF and the Service will utilize the remainder to get additional projects acquired or restored.

Leverage

SOURCE	FY 11		FY 12		FY 13	
	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated
State						
Non state						
Pheasants Forever	\$25,000	\$50,000		\$25,000		
Federal Duck Stamp Funds	\$2,500,000					
In-kind/Volunteer						
Service		\$50,000		\$50,000		\$200,000
TOTAL	\$2,525,000	\$100,000		\$75,000		\$200,000

Leverage	State				Non-State			
	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore					\$50,000	\$350,000		
Protect					\$750,000	\$1,750,000		
Enhance								

Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program in Minnesota

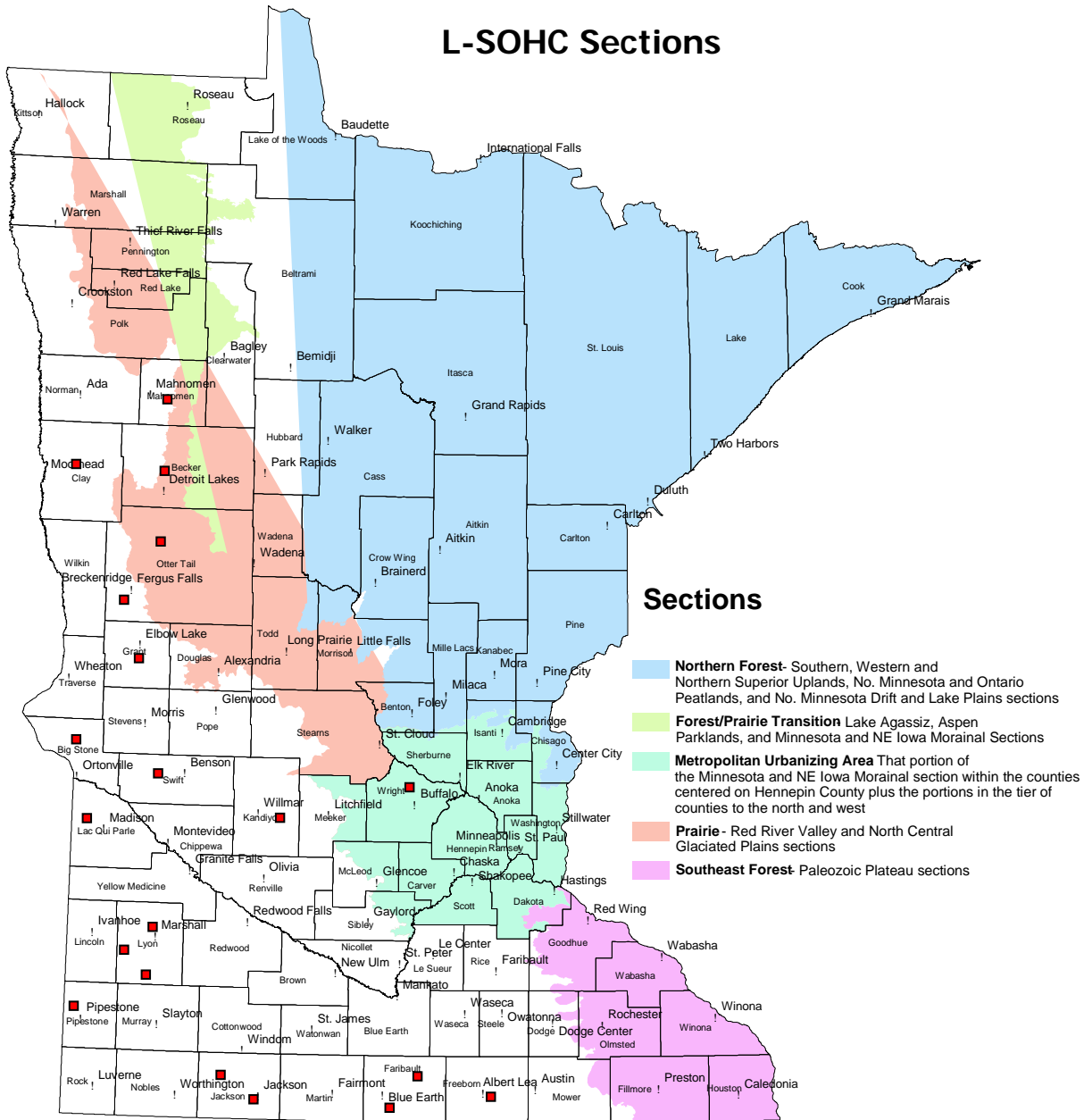
Accomplishment Timeline

Milestones	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Budgetary Expenditure
<i>Identify priority acquisitions.</i>	10/01/2009			
<i>Contract appraisals ordered.</i>	10/01/2010			\$ 50,000
<i>Purchase agreements.</i>	02/01/2011			
<i>Re-evaluate Tract Priority</i>	02/15/2011			
<i>Contract appraisals ordered</i>	03/11/2011			
<i>Purchase agreements</i>	09/01/2012			Estimated cost of approximately \$3,800 per acre
<i>Restoration actions initiated</i>	6/01/2011			
<i>Close on optioned tracts</i>	12/31/2012			
<i>Donate Lands to Service</i>	09/01/2013			
<i>Wetland restorations Completed</i>	09/01/2013			\$100,000
<i>Upland Restorations Completed</i>	09/01/2013			\$246,000

Maintenance and Sustainability

All grant monies received for this project will result in fee title transfers into the National Wildlife Refuge System. The long-term protection and management of these habitats will be the responsibility of the Service, an agency that employs professional managers, biologists, field staffs, and enforcement officers and has an annual operating budget designated specifically for the management of Refuge resources. Wetlands and their contributing watersheds will be protected and prairie habitats monitored and managed. The Service has an active, professional prescribed burning program and utilizes fire to reduce woody invasion of prairies, enhance diversity, and rejuvenate uplands. Biological, mechanical, and sometimes chemical treatments are used as needed in an integrated management approach to provide high quality migration and breeding habitats. Acquisitions in the project will be targeted to complete the restoration of large wetland complexes surrounded by native or planted tall grass prairie uplands. Revenue sharing payments (in lieu of taxes) will be made by the Service for all fee title lands in accordance with federal law.

L-SOHC Sections



Parcel List

Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area in Minnesota - FY2011

Parcel Name	County	Township	Range	Direction	Section	TRDS	# of acres	Estimated Cost to OHF	Description	Activity R=Restore P=Protect E=Enhance	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)	Status of Parcel C=completed O=ongoing
Quick WPA Addition	Becker	140	42	2	20	14042220	104.5	\$220,000	WPA Addition, 26 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
TBA WPA	Mahnomen	143	41	2	26	14341226	320	\$600,000	65 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
TBA WPA	Clay	142	45	2	29	14245229	153	\$350,000	27 acres wet, gravel	P	N	Y	O
TBA WPA	Grant	130	32	2	1	13032201	300	\$750,000	54 acres wet	P	N	Y	C
Grefsrud WPA Addition	Otter Tail	136	43	2	29	13643229	76	\$250,000	44 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Pelican Valley WPA Addition	Otter Tail	136	43	2	33	13643229	160	\$375,000	37 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
TBA WPA	Lincoln	113	46	2	23	11346223	80	\$300,000	Adj. to WMA, 53 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Arends WPA Addition	Lyon	113	43	2	18	11343218	38.6	\$160,000	6 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
TBA WPA	Lyon	110	42	2	33	11042233	226	\$850,000	Adj. to Lyons WMA, 11 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Yellow Medicine River WPA	Lyon	111	43	2	8	11143208	40	\$120,000	6 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Randall WPA Addition	Kandiyohi	122	36	2	4	12236204	192	\$320,000	35 acres wet	P	N	Y	C
Iowa WPA Addition	Jackson	101	37	2	31	10137231	157	\$500,000	39 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Minnesota Lake WPA	Faribault	104	26	2	12	10426212	80	\$320,000	27.5 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Two Island WPA Addition	Freeborn	103	22	2	25	10322225	70	\$250,000	24 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Maple River WPA Addition	Faribault	104	26	2	10	10426210	230	\$750,000	53 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Svor WPA Addition	Swift	122	38	2	20	12238220	96	\$270,000	12 acres wet	P	N	Y	C
Little Sioux WPA Addition	Jackson	101	36	2	19	10136219	151	\$500,000	33 acres wet	P	N	Y	O
Forest City WPA Addition	Meeker	120	30	2	29	12030229	235	\$650,000	WPA Addition, Adj. to CBS comn	P	N	Y	O
Sioux Valley WPA Addition	Jackson	101	37	2	29	10137229	83	\$330,000	WPA Addition	P	N	Y	O
Christiania WPA Addition	Jackson	104	35	2	9	10435209	160	\$880,000	WPA Addition	P	N	Y	O
Flickertail WPA Addition	Clay	142	45	2	34,35	14245234	301	\$750,000	WPA Addition	P	N	Y	O
Haugtvedt WPA Addition	Clay	137	44	2	33	13744233	350	\$875,000	WPA Addition	P	N	Y	O
Mondt WPA Addition	Otter Tail	135	40	2	4	13540204	67	\$200,000	WPA Addition	P	N	Y	O
Putnam WPA Addition	Otter Tail	137	42	2	36	13742236	34	\$100,000	WPA Addition	P	N	Y	O
TBA WPA	Norman	145	44	2	29,31,32	14544229	460	\$1,000,000	New WPA	P	N	Y	O
Erin Prairie WPA Addition	Rice	111	22	2	15	111220215	80	\$520,000	WPA Addition	P	N	Y	O
<u>Devil's Run WPA</u>	<u>Murray</u>	<u>105</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>105390206</u>	<u>157</u>	<u>\$550,000</u>	<u>New WPA</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>O</u>