



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Wild Rice Shoreland Protection - Phase VI

Laws of Minnesota 2019 Final Report

General Information

Date: 08/24/2023

Project Title: Wild Rice Shoreland Protection - Phase VI

Funds Recommended: \$1,187,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2019, 1st Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd, 4(d)

Appropriation Language: \$937,000 the first year is to the Board of Water and Soil Resources to acquire permanent conservation easements on wild rice lake shoreland habitat for native wild rice bed protection. Of this amount, up to \$72,000 is for establishing a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of permanent conservation easements must be provided as part of the final report. \$250,000 the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire lands in fee and restore and enhance lands for wildlife management under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8; for scientific and natural areas under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 5; for state forests under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 7; and for aquatic management under Minnesota Statutes, sections 86A.05, subdivision 14, and 97C.02 to acquire lands for wild rice lake shoreland habitat to protect native wild rice beds. A list of proposed acquisitions in fee must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Bill Pawning

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Location Information

County Location(s): Itasca, Hubbard, Becker and Crow Wing.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Northern Forest

- Forest / Prairie Transition

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Forest

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

Four RIM easements have been recorded on 527.7 acres and are reported in the output tables.

DNR closed on the 99-acre Plantagenet Lake Aquatic Management Area in Hubbard County on 8/30/2022. The county board was notified and is supportive.

Process & Methods

Voluntary, incentive-based conservation protection options for shoreland landowners are few. Unlike the prairie portion of the state where state funded easement options exist for conservation-minded landowners, private land protection options are limited for wild rice shoreland in the forest due to funding constraints. Further, many easement programs are targeted for restoration and not protection. In the northern forest, lower land values allow conservation dollars to stretch further while expanding current wildlife complexes already existing on nearby public lands.

Utilizing permanent conservation easements and fee-title acquisitions, the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Section of Wildlife (DNR Wildlife), and the fourteen local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) offered permanent shoreland protection on the shallow lakes, rivers and shallow bays producing wild rice. The BWSR’s Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program will acquired 528 acres through permanent conservation easements and DNR Wildlife will acquired 99 acres Plantagenet Lake in Hubbard County.

Through the local SWCD offices, BWSR purchased RIM easements using rates set by BWSR. Tracts were selected based on the degree to which they help permanently protect all the land around a given wild rice water body. The RIM easements were acquired through a sign-up process similar to BWSR’s other easement programs. SWCD generated landowner applications were reviewed and parcels ranked by the RIM Wild Rice Technical Committee committee with guidance provided by the "Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Criteria" score sheet.

How did the program address habitats of significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, threatened or endangered species, and/or list targeted species?

Wild rice shoreland encompasses a complex of shallow lakes, rivers, and shallow bays of deeper lakes that support rice and provide some of the most important habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife species in Minnesota. Wild rice habitat is especially important to Minnesota’s migrating and breeding waterfowl. More than 17 species of wildlife listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) use wild rice areas as habitat for breeding, migration, and/or foraging.

These targeted SGCN are as follows:

Common Loon, Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Red-necked Grebe, Sora Rail, Virginia Rail, Yellow Rail, Black Tern, Rusty Blackbird, Sedge Wren, Lesser Scaup, Northern Pintail, and American Black Duck.

Wild rice is some of the most important habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife species in Minnesota as noted in the MNDNR's Natural Wild Rice in Minnesota report to the legislature (2008). Important game species supported by wild rice include the Ring-necked Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Scaup, and Bufflehead.

How did the program use science-based targeting that leveraged or expanded corridors and complexes, reduced fragmentation, or protected areas in the MN County Biological Survey.

To target sites, aerial photos of wild rice lakes were reviewed during a preliminary screening to find those that are the most intact, provide the most wild rice, with the most waterfowl use, and can be protected for the least cost. Lakes were sorted into Low, Medium and High categories. Once the lakes were been ranked the SWCD then contacted landowners on the high and some of the medium priority lakes.

Easement selection occurs with a goal of maximum wild rice habitat complex protection along all shoreland of a lake. Easement parcels were further targeted and prioritized by adjacency to current protected lands/public lands and a low level of current lake development. The following additional factors are considered to ensure site selection reflects current science-based measures for wild rice habitat protection: feet of shoreline protected, development potential of site, acquisition urgency, depth from shore, watershed considerations, easement size relative to the parcel, and an analysis of stakeholder support. Sites that contain a wild rice lake outlet are also prioritized for potential DNR management of water levels to ensure protection.

SWCD generated landowner applications were reviewed and parcels ranked by the RIM Wild Rice Technical Committee committee with guidance provided by the "Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Criteria" score sheet.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

Shoreland protection for wild rice lakes and rivers enjoys widespread support from landowners, tribal interests, SWCDs, and other habitat conservation partners.

Exceptional challenges, expectations, failures, opportunities, or unique aspects of program

COVID slowed things down and we could have perhaps acquired one more easement under normal circumstances. However, overall project goals were met and the remaining approximately \$300k will be returned to the OHF.

What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this program?

- N/A

What is the plan to sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement into perpetuity. The BWSR partners with local SWCDs carry-out oversight, monitoring and inspection of its conservation easements. 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. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and partners' staff document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

Land acquired in fee-title by DNR will be held by DNR for permanent ownership and management. Long-term

management costs will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to the Game and Fish Fund, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund, federal grants, and small game surcharge, as appropriate.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Compliance Checks first 5 years then every 3rd year.	-	-

Budget

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$167,100	\$82,700	\$60,700	-	-	-	\$167,100	\$60,700
Contracts	\$33,100	\$33,100	\$16,900	-	-	-	\$33,100	\$16,900
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$230,000	\$230,000	\$158,000	-	-	-	\$230,000	\$158,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$659,500	\$747,200	\$611,500	-	-	-	\$659,500	\$611,500
Easement Stewardship	\$71,500	\$71,500	\$26,000	-	-	-	\$71,500	\$26,000
Travel	\$1,600	\$500	\$100	-	-	-	\$1,600	\$100
Professional Services	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$9,800	-	-	-	\$10,000	\$9,800
Direct Support Services	\$11,200	\$11,200	-	-	-	-	\$11,200	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$2,300	\$600	-	-	-	-	\$2,300	-
Supplies/Materials	\$700	\$200	-	-	-	-	\$700	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$1,187,000	\$1,187,000	\$883,000	-	-	-	\$1,187,000	\$883,000

Partner: BWSR

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$167,100	\$82,700	\$60,700	-	-	-	\$167,100	\$60,700
Contracts	\$23,100	\$23,100	\$8,000	-	-	-	\$23,100	\$8,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$659,500	\$747,200	\$611,500	-	-	-	\$659,500	\$611,500
Easement Stewardship	\$71,500	\$71,500	\$26,000	-	-	-	\$71,500	\$26,000
Travel	\$1,600	\$500	\$100	-	-	-	\$1,600	\$100
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$11,200	\$11,200	-	-	-	-	\$11,200	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$2,300	\$600	-	-	-	-	\$2,300	-
Supplies/Materials	\$700	\$200	-	-	-	-	\$700	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$937,000	\$937,000	\$706,300	-	-	-	\$937,000	\$706,300

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Amount Spent	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.25	5.0	\$49,900	-	-	\$49,900
Easement Processing	0.14	3.0	\$10,800	-	-	\$10,800

Partner: MNDNR

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contracts	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$8,900	-	-	-	\$10,000	\$8,900
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$230,000	\$230,000	\$158,000	-	-	-	\$230,000	\$158,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$9,800	-	-	-	\$10,000	\$9,800
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$176,700	-	-	-	\$250,000	\$176,700

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

Total Revenue: \$0

Revenue Spent: \$0

Revenue Balance: \$0

Of the money disclosed above, what are the appropriate uses of the money:

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Acres (AP)	Total Acres (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	50	99	0	0	50	99
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	580	528	0	0	580	528
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	630	627	0	0	630	627

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Funding (AP)	Total Funding (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	\$250,000	\$176,700	-	-	\$250,000	\$176,700
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	\$937,000	\$706,300	-	-	\$937,000	\$706,300
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	\$1,187,000	\$883,000	-	-	\$1,187,000	\$883,000

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	35	99	50	99
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	58	0	0	0	0	0	522	528	580	528
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	73	0	0	0	0	0	557	627	630	627

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	\$75,000	-	-	-	-	-	\$175,000	\$176,700	\$250,000	\$176,700
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	\$93,700	-	-	-	-	-	\$843,300	\$706,300	\$937,000	\$706,300
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	\$168,700	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,018,300	\$883,000	\$1,187,000	\$883,000

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

2.6

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need ~ *No projects were completed in this region with this appropriation.*

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species. A summary of the total acres is reported in the tables. On-site inspections are performed for the first 5 years then every three years thereafter with compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. Sustained habitat availability within a certain region is expected to maintain the carrying capacity of associated wildlife within that region. We expect sustained populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes - Sign up criteria is attached](#)

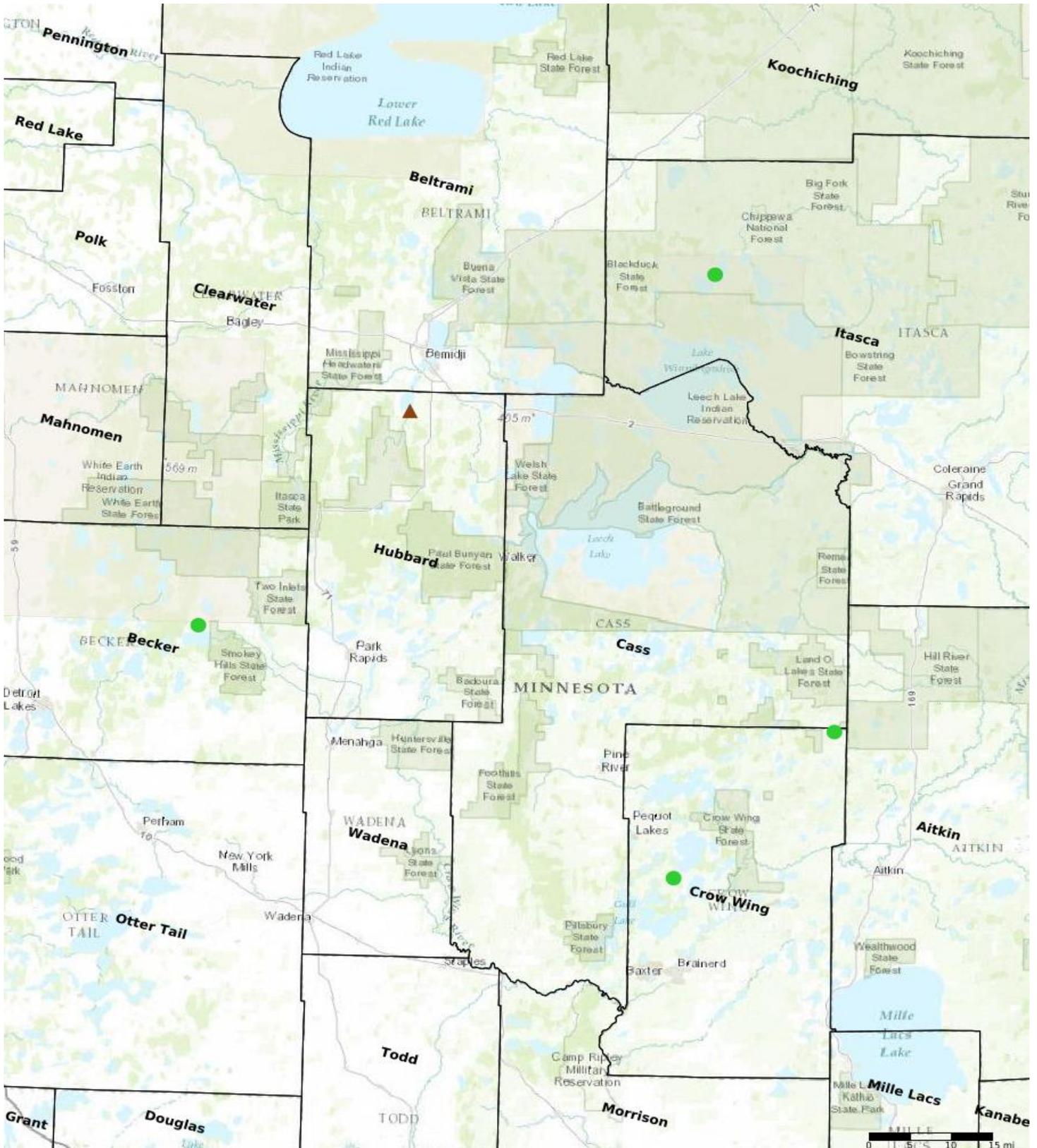
Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Plantagenet Lake	Hubbard	14533218	99	\$176,700	No

Easement Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
03-05-19-13- -	Becker	14038202	382	\$424,100	No
18-06-19-13- -	Crow Wing	13825202	99	\$113,500	No
18-04-20-13- -	Crow Wing	13528209	20	\$40,500	No
31-01-20-13- -	Itasca	14827217	27	\$29,300	No

Parcel Map



- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✕ Enhance
- + Other