

**Main Request for Funding Form**

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Fiscal Year 2013**

**Program or Project Title:** Prairie Chicken Wildlife Habitat Partnership

**Funds Requested:** \$ 3,150,000

**Manager's Name:** Greg Hoch  
**Organization:** MN Prairie Chicken Society  
**Street Address:** 19503 Av  
**City:** Hawley **State:** MN **Zip:** 56549  
**Telephone:** 218-443-0476 (cell)  
**E-Mail:** gahoch@umn.edu  
**Organization Web Site:** www.prairiechicken.org

**Fiscal Agent:** Ron Leathers, Director of Public Finance  
**Organization:** Pheasants Forever  
**Street Address:** 1783 Buerkle Circle  
**City:** St. Paul **State:** MN **Zip:** 55110  
**Telephone:** 651-209-4919  
**E-Mail:** rleathers@pheasantsforever.org  
**Organization Web Site:** www.pheasantsforever.org; www.minnesotapf.org

**County Location:**

**Ecological Planning Regions:**

- Northern Forest       Forest/Prairie Transition       Southeast Forest  
 Prairie       Metro/Urban

**Activity Type:**

- Protect - Fee       Protect - Easement       Protect - Other  
 Restore       Enhance

**Priority Resources addressed by activity:**

- Wetlands       Forests       Prairie       Habitat

## Project Abstract

This partnership will protect 800 acres of prairie habitat as WMAs and/or WPAs for the benefit of Prairie Chickens within the Red River Valley.

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## Project Narrative

### Design and scope of work

Prairies once covered the western third of Minnesota. Their namesake, prairie chickens, once occurred on Minnesota's prairies in almost unbelievable numbers (Swanson 2007). Today, less than one percent of Minnesota's original prairie remains. Consequently, prairie chicken populations have also dropped precipitously. Along with prairie chickens, populations of grassland nesting songbirds have declined more than any other group of birds on the continent (Peterjon and Sauer 1999). Waterfowl have recovered from lows in the 1980s, but are still well below historic highs. While prairie chickens are the flagship species of our organization, the species is also an excellent umbrella species (Poiani et al 2001) for grassland bird and waterfowl conservation. We want to take a broad view, protecting a host of grassland dependent wildlife species. These acres will also provide a number of ecosystem services. Most importantly in this part of the state, these properties have a number of restorable wetlands. Restoring these wetlands will provide habitat for waterfowl and marshland birds. It will also retain potential floodwater on the landscape instead of allowing it to immediately enter the Red River.

This proposal will permanently protect 800 acres of important prairie chicken habitat within the Red River Valley Watershed. Once acquired, these lands will be fully restored to the highest quality habitat and nesting cover.

We have a list of approximately twenty properties where the owners have approached the DNR, USFWS, or TNC about selling land. These sites are a combination of native prairie, low diversity grasslands, and agricultural lands. Each of these will require different initial and long-term management to become healthy, productive wildlife habitat. The best science tells us that for grassland bird conservation, bigger and with greater plant diversity is better. Our scoring is based on the eventual size of the entire habitat block, the amount of initial management that will be required to create productive upland and wetland habitat, and the locations of known prairie chicken leks. We assume that nearby leks indicate that there is already productive habitat in the area for many species of grassland birds and waterfowl. This project will concentrate even more conservation effort into these areas.

A scoring system has been developed based on the following criteria; distance to nearest prairie chicken lek, inside a core or corridor area as identified by TNC's Prairie Plan, distance to nearest WPA or WMA, tract size, wetland acreage, and grassland type. Each of these categories was scored from 0-10 and total score was calculated for

each site. This scoring broke the tracts into high and low scores. MPCS and PF members and agency staff will revisit with each landowner and conduct an on the ground inspection of each site to determine a priority list.

## **Planning**

This project addresses the following conservation plans:

Mn DNR Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare – This plan lists prairie chickens as well as a number of other bird, invertebrate, and plant species as SGCN. This project will increase the habitat base for all these species.

Mn DNR Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan – This project addresses several recommendations. Under Habitat Recommendations, we address 1) protect priority land habitats, 3) improve connectivity, 5) restore land, wetland, and wetland-associated watersheds, 7) keep water on the landscape, 9) overall research on land and aquatic habitats, and 13) habitat and landscape conservation and training programs for all citizens.

Partners in Flight – This project will increase habitat for all nine of the grassland obligate species in the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Plan (Physiographic Area 40)

Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan – This project will increase habitat and habitat quality for at least seventeen species in Bird Conservation Region 11.

Grassland Bird Conservation Areas (GBCA) – Because many of the tracts in this proposal are adjacent to existing protected lands, WMAs and WPAs, we are increasing the size of grassland blocks.

National Audubon Society 20 Common Birds in Decline – Seven of the twenty birds on this list will benefit from this project.

Ecological Section Vision and Priorities – This project will key core parcels for fish, game, and wildlife, restore and enhance upland habitat, remnant native prairies as part of large complexes, increased wildlife productivity, and protect habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species.

## **Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds**

This proposal stands alone and has no direct ties to other constitutional funds. This partnership will coordinate with other conservation groups such as local Friends groups and DU/PF Chapters, as well as larger NGOs such as The Nature Conservancy and the DNR and USFWS to avoid any conflicts or duplication of efforts.

## **Relationship to Current Organizational Budget**

MPCS and PF do not have specific, existing budgets for protection of critical prairie chicken habitat within the prairie chicken range of Minnesota. This proposal is the start of a new partnership between the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society, Pheasants Forever, USFWS, and MN DNR focused on protecting and preserving prairie chickens and their grassland habitat.

## Sustainability and Maintenance

After acquisition, these sites will be fully restored and subsequently donated to either the DNR as WMAs or USFWS as WPAs. Managers and biological staff with each organization will be responsible for the long-term management of these sites. This includes prescribed fires and invasive species control.

Maintenance will be funded through FWS or DNR budgets and will be supplemented with partner funds when available. Partner funds will come from conservation organization's general membership and grants, such as OHC and LCCMR grants.

## Outcomes

Most of the sites on our list are adjacent to existing protected lands and are within the 'core' areas of the TNC's Prairie Plan. They also have numerous restorable wetlands. As such, these parcels meet a number of results. Under short/intermediate results, this project will improve habitat conditions on public lands, restore and enhance upland habitat, perpetually protect remnant native prairie, include native prairie into large complexes of restored prairie, convert agricultural land to functioning prairie systems, and reduce flood potential. Under long-term results, this project will provide healthy, resilient ecosystems that provide habitat maintenance for migratory waterfowl and other species.

## Activity Type Detail

### Fee Acquisition Projects

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here: Current DNR language requires acquisition partners to notify local government of acquisition. However, where local government approval is already required, or if DNR guidance was to change, we will adhere to all requirements and seek approval.

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

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

### Easement Acquisition Projects

Will the eased land be open for public use?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Will the conservation easement be permanent?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

**Restoration and Enhancement Projects**

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Does the activity take place on an Aquatic Management Area (AMA), Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Wildlife Management Area (WMA), or State Forests?

Yes, which ones                       No, please explain                       not applicable

Lands purchased will be a part of the Wildlife Management Area System or the Waterfowl Production Area System. All lands purchased will be restored and/or enhanced to the highest quality as practicable to benefit wildlife, water quality, and provide recreational opportunities.

If so, please indicate which ones:

**Past Outdoor Heritage Fund Appropriations Received for this program**

<b>ML 2009</b>	<b>ML 2010</b>	<b>ML 2011</b>
\$ NA	\$ NA	\$ NA

**Accomplishment Timeline**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date</b>
Identify priority acquisitions	7 willing sellers identified & tracts ranked	07/01/2012

Contract appraisals ordered	4 appraisals ordered	09/01/2012
Purchase agreements	3 options signed	02/01/2013
Re-evaluate tract priority	5 tracts selected & ranked	02/15/2013
Contract appraisals ordered	3 appraisals ordered	04/01/2013
Purchase agreements	2 options signed	07/01/2013
Close on optioned tracts	800 acres purchased	01/01/2014
Restoration completed	800 acres restored	06/30/2014
Lands Donated	800 acres donated to DNR and USFWS	06/30/2014

**Attachments:**

- A. Budget**
- B. Proposed Output Tables 1-5**
- C. Parcel List**

**Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet**

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	Prairie Chicken Wildlife Habitat Partnership
<b>Date:</b>	15-Jul-11

[Link HERE to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

**Total Amount of Request**     \$ 3,150,000 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

**Personnel**

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
				Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
<i>PF Director of Conservation</i>	0.05		\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000
<i>PF Regional Staff</i>	0.01		\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	0.06		\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000

**Budget and Cash Leverage** *(All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)*

*Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.*

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
		Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
<b>Personnel - auto entered from above</b>	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000
<b>Contracts</b>	\$ 240,000	\$ 50,000	<i>MPCS, PF, Federal</i>	\$ 290,000
<b>Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 7)</b>	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 50,000	<i>MPCS, PF, Federal</i>	\$ 1,450,000
<b>Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 7)</b>	\$ 1,400,000			\$ 1,400,000
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>				\$ -
<b>Easement Stewardship</b>				\$ -
<b>Travel (in-state)</b>				\$ -
<b>Professional Services</b>	\$ 65,000			\$ 65,000
<b>Direct Support Services</b>				\$ -
<b>DNR Land Acquisition Costs</b> (\$3,500 per acquisition)	\$ 25,000			\$ 25,000
<b>Other</b>				\$ -
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools				\$ -
Supplies/Materials				\$ -
	\$ 3,150,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 3,250,000

**Capital Equipment** *(single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)*

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<b>Total</b>	-	-

## Attachment B. Output Tables

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	Prairie Chicken Wildlife Habitat Partnership
<b>Date:</b>	15-Jul-11

*Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same*

*If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:*

*Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides*

**Table 1. Acres by Resource Type**

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					0
Protect Fee	200	600			800
Protect Easement					0
Protect Other					0
Enhance					0
<b>Total</b>	200	600	0	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)  
Total Acres (sum of Total row)

800  
800 *These two cells should be the same figure.*

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

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					\$ -
Protect Fee	\$ 787,500	\$ 2,362,500			\$ 3,150,000
Protect Easement					\$ -
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance					\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ 787,500	\$ 2,362,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)  
Total Dollars (sum of Total row)  
Check to make sure this amount is the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

\$ 3,150,000  
\$ 3,150,000 *These two cells should be the same figure.*

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

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						0
Protect Fee				800		800
Protect Easement						0
Protect Other						0
Enhance						0
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	800	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)  
Total Acres (sum of Total row)  
Total Acres from Table 1.

800  
800  
800 *These three cells should be the same figure.*



**Attachment B. Output Tables**

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

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						\$ -
Protect Fee				\$ 3,150,000		\$ 3,150,000
Protect Easement						\$ -
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,150,000	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)      \$ 3,150,000 *These two cells should be the same figure.*  
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row)      \$ 3,150,000  
 Check to make sure these amounts are the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

**Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles**

# miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

**Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	100	300			400
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	100	300			400
Permanent Easement PILT Liability					0
	200	600	0	0	

**Table 7. Estimated Value of Land Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total	
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,050,000			\$ 1,400,000	\$ 1,400,000
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,050,000			\$ 1,400,000	\$ 1,400,000
Permanent Easement PILT Liability					\$ -	\$ -
	\$ 700,000	\$ 2,100,000	\$ -	\$ -		

*FYI: should match total in budget table that is auto entered below*

**Attachment C. Parcel List**

**Name of Proposal:** Prairie Chicken Wildlife Habitat Partnership  
**Date:** 15-Jul-11

County	Township (25-258)	Range (01-51)	Direction most parcels are 2 with the exception of some areas of Cook County which is 1	Section (01 thru 36)	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)	Description	Activity PF=Protect Fee PE=Protect Easement PO=Protect Other R=Restore E=Enhance	If Easement, what is the easement cost as a % of the fee acquisition?	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)
<b>Parcel Name</b>												
Elkton Township WPA	Clay	138	46	2	3	13846203	157	\$549,500	Waterfowl Production Area	PF, R	N	Y
Spring Prairie WPA	Clay	140	46	2	34	14046234	160	\$560,000	Waterfowl Production Area	PF, R	N	Y
Riverton WPA	Clay	139	46	2	2	13946202	93	\$325,500	Waterfowl Production Area	PF, R	N	Y
Hagen WMA	Clay	142	45	2	29	14245229	160	\$560,000	Wildlife Management Area	PF, R	N	Y
Elkton Township WPA2	Clay	138	46	2	11	13846211	300	\$1,050,000	Waterfowl Production Area	PF, R	N	Y
hawley Township WMA	Clay	139	45	2	5	13945205	320	\$1,120,000	Wildlife Management Area	PF, R	N	Y
Tansem Township WPA	Clay	137	44	2	19	13744219	236	\$826,000	Waterfowl Production Area	PF, R	N	Y
Strand Township WPA	Norman	145	44	2	29, 31, 32	14544229	460	\$1,610,000	Waterfowl Production Area	PF, R	N	Y
Haugvedt WPA Addition	Clay	137	44	2	33	13744233	350	\$1,225,000	Waterfowl Production Area Addition	PF, R	N	Y
Whiskey Lake WPA addition	Clay	137	44	2	25	13744225	246	\$861,000	Waterfowl Production Area Addition	PF, R	N	Y
Havercamp WPA addition	Becker	141	41	2	8	14141208	31	\$108,500	Waterfowl Production Area Addition	PF, R	N	Y
W side of Frenchman's Bluff WM/	Norman	143	43	2	18	14343218	80	\$280,000	Wildlife Management Area	PF, R	N	Y
Goose Lake WPA addition	Clay	141	44	2	20	14144220	56	\$196,000	Waterfowl Production Area Addition	PF, R	N	Y

*Information provided will be used to map project locations. Incomplete or inaccurate information will result in that parcel or program not being mapped.*