



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

DNR Forest Enhancement and Restoration-Phase 4  
Laws of Minnesota 2024 Accomplishment Plan

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### General Information

**Date:** 06/26/2024

**Project Title:** DNR Forest Enhancement and Restoration-Phase 4

**Funds Recommended:** \$1,727,000

**Legislative Citation:** ML 2024, Ch. 106, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(d)

**Appropriation Language:** \$1,727,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources to restore and enhance forest wildlife habitats on public lands throughout Minnesota.

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Ted Dick

**Title:** Forest Habitat Supervisor

**Organization:** DNR

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### Location Information

**County Location(s):** St. Louis, Aitkin, Wabasha, Koochiching, Cass, Wadena, Itasca, Lake, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Fillmore, Winona, Olmsted, Goodhue, Waseca, Le Sueur, Meeker, Sibley, Washington, Chisago, Todd, Kittson, Marshall, Pennington and Morrison.

### Eco regions in which work will take place:

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

### Activity types:

- Restore
- Enhance

**Priority resources addressed by activity:**

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Habitat

## Narrative

### Abstract

Minnesota's iconic forests and brushland habitats require enhancement beyond DNR timber harvest practices. Enhancements, such as brushland shearing provide critical wildlife habitat but are not achieved through timber harvest practices. These additional habitat benefits improve the quality of the forests for wildlife, water quality and outdoor recreation. DNR's Conservation Agenda, Wildlife Action Plan, Forest Action Plan, SNA Strategic Land Protection, Fish Habitat Plan, will guide habitat enhancements in this proposal to meet the objectives put forth in these plans.

### Design and Scope of Work

Minnesota's forest habitats include many different native plant communities in different growth stages. Forests also includes rivers, lakes, sedge meadows, bogs, and brushland. Each of these habitats are home to a wide array with game and non-game species, including multiple Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Forests provide outdoor recreation, timber products, and support local communities. Forests protect water quality and sequester carbon. However, forests face increasing stress from invasive species, climate change, critical habitat loss, forest conversion, and fragmentation. While timber harvest is an important tool providing habitats in the forest, additional or different enhancements are needed to maximize the diversity for fish and wildlife. For example timber harvest can create a wildlife opening, however other management such as periodic mowing is needed to maintain the opening.

We will accomplish strategic and targeted enhancements through contractors to conduct activities which support healthy, diverse and resilient habitats. Activities may include:

- 1) control invasive species
- 2) assist with oak regeneration through seeding and tree planting
- 3) firebreak development and maintenance as well as prescribed burns in fire-dependent forests, brushlands and wetlands
- 4) remove trees, mow and shear brush
- 5) maintain/restore open lands and brushland habitats
- 6) regenerate forests through site preparation, seed procurement/harvest, seeding, and planting
- 7) plant trees to reforest and restore habitats, add conifer to the landscape, provide thermal cover, diversify forests, and address ash stand management
- 8) restore floodplain and savanna forest habitat with tree planting, burning and mowing

DNR managers collaborate with other State, Federal, County agencies and many conservation organizations to take a landscape view of forests and manage across administrative units. For example, DNR managers are working together with USFS managers to maintain and enhance rock outcrops that provide spring forage and mast for a variety of wildlife.

This request seeks funding to restore and enhance habitat on public lands open to hunting, primarily but not limited to, WMA, AMA, SNA and State Forests. Strategic and targeted work will be accomplished through the added capacity of contractors hired to conduct activities that support healthy, diverse and resilient habitats.

### **Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation**

Both young forests and mature forests require management other than DNR timber harvest methods to maximize habitat benefits for wildlife. Prescribed fire in mature forests helps clear underbrush and open up the understory. Fire is especially important in oak and pine forests. Shearing brushlands creates open lands that provide critical habitat for American woodcock, yellow rails and sharp-tailed grouse that are SGCN species. Planting conifers along north shore trout streams provides shade and infiltration of ground water to native brook trout streams that are threatened by climate change. Young forests and small forest openings are critical to many species of birds, including golden-winged warblers. Young forests provide critical habitat for moose to maintain and enhance the existing population.

Each of the practices mentioned in the design and scope will benefit a wide range of game and non-game species, including mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, as well as pollinating insects.

### **What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?**

Pressures on Minnesota forests are increasing. It is crucial to keep critical habitat for wildlife species and conserve SGCN species now than to address habitat needs in the future. Current DNR plans provide the opportunity to address these habitat needs, funding will accelerate implementation of these plans. Increased management of brushland habitats is a particularly urgent need in east-central Minnesota where sharp-tailed grouse depend upon them and have declined significantly in the past 10 years. Early detection and swift control of invasive species is also urgent.

### **Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:**

DNR's Conservation Agenda, Wildlife Action Plan, Forest Action Plan, SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan (along with specific site management plans), Fish Habitat Plan, which will guide activities, were developed using the best information and science to identify goals and strategies. DNR habitat management is always based on science. Restoring and enhancing habitat expands corridors and complexes reduces fragmentation, and directly applies research to on the ground projects. Habitat projects that occur on SNA will enhance critical habitats identified by MCBS.

The habitat needs of many forest species, including mature forest species such as marten and fisher, and young forest species like woodcock and golden-winged warblers are well documented. Many wildlife species require mature forests during some point in their lives. Research conducted in Minnesota will be used to apply these funds to enhance and restore habitats in the forested areas of the state.

### **Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?**

- Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

**Explain how this plan will uniquely address habitat resilience to climate change and its anticipated effects on game, fish & wildlife species utilizing the protected or restored/enhanced habitat this proposal targets.**

The forest enhancement projects (e.g. diversifying ash forests) build resiliency in the forest by diversifying the tree species and allowing a forest to be retained after Emerald Ash borer moves into our forest. Diversifying forests in general and matching the native plant communities build resiliency against direct climate changes and increases in forest pests that are more abundant given changes in climate. Changes in climate are increasing invasive species in forests and degrading fish and wildlife habitat. The projects in this proposal work to mitigate against increases in invasive species to provide habitat resilience.

**Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?**

**Forest / Prairie Transition**

- Protect, restore, and enhance habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need

**Metro / Urban**

- Protect from long-term or permanent endangerment from invasive species

**Northern Forest**

- Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in area in recent decades

**Prairie**

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

**Southeast Forest**

- Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in area in recent decades

**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 ~ *A number of species are tied to brushland and young aspen forests in these region, including elk, golden-winged warblers, and sharp-tailed grouse. Ongoing surveys and research on these species will allow the DNR to track local and regional responses to these and related efforts.*

**Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:**

- A forest land base that contributes to the habitat picture ~ *These efforts will help manage forests in this region to benefit a range of wildlife species, both game and non-game. Ongoing surveys, especially among songbirds, will track long-term changes in bird populations in this region.*

**Programs in the northern forest region:**

- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ~ *The DNR and partner agencies conduct a number of wildlife surveys, including moose, deer, ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, woodcock, and songbird surveys.*

**Programs in prairie region:**

- Improved condition of habitat on public lands ~ *These efforts will help manage forests in this region to benefit a range of wildlife species, both game and non-game. Ongoing surveys, especially among songbirds, will track long-term changes in bird populations in this region.*

**Programs in southeast forest region:**

- Large corridors and complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat typical of the unglaciated region are restored and protected ~ *The non-game program is very active in this region with projects assessing wildlife populations. And there are the same ongoing wildlife surveys as in the other regions of the state.*

**Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain 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.**

These funds are for additional enhance/restoration work beyond what the DNR is already conducting. These funds are not supplanting or substituting any funds.

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

We will select and implement projects to achieve high quality and enduring benefits. Projects have variable lifespans depending on project type, weather and other environmental conditions. Many of the projects are meant to endure for decades, at which point, regular forest management activity through harvest. DNR staff and staff from partner agencies/NGOs will monitor them to if and when additional enhancement are needed. Work will be sustained through internal DNR funds, DNR timber harvest practices, and future requests from the OHF and related external funding.

**Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2026 and beyond	listed above and future OHF requests	continue monitoring	adapt results	seek additional funding
2024	listed above and future OHF requests	monitor results	document results	develop budget for additional work with internal and external funds

**Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:**

We have in the past and will continue to consult and coordinate with diverse communities and tribal partners into the project planning and work we do to enhance fish and wildlife habitats for all citizens of the state of Minnesota.

**Activity Details**

**Requirements**

**If funded, this program 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 or on lands to be acquired in this program?**

Yes

**Where does the activity take place?**

- WMA
- SNA
- AMA
- State Forests
- Other : national forest, Con-Con lands, school trust lands.
- County/Municipal

**Land Use**

**Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?**

No

**Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?**

No

**Timeline**

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
continued monitoring and follow-up management and enhancements	ongoing
implement enhancements	Summer 2029

**Date of Final Report Submission:** 11/01/2029

**Availability of Appropriation:** Subd. 7.

Availability of Appropriation

(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.

(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:

- (1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2028;
- (2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2032;
- (3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2029;
- (4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a

maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

**Budget**

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

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	-	-	-
Contracts	\$1,425,200	-	-	\$1,425,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$30,600	-	-	\$30,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	\$271,200	-	-	\$271,200
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,727,000</b>	-	-	<b>\$1,727,000</b>

**Amount of Request:** \$1,727,000

**Amount of Leverage:** -

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 0.0%

**DSS + Personnel:** \$30,600

**As a % of the total request:** 1.77%

**Easement Stewardship:** -

**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

**How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?**

Fewer acres would be accomplished and the majority of projects are scalable.

**Does this project have the ability to be scalable?**

Yes

**If the project received 50% of the requested funding**

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

Number of projects and acres accomplished can be reduced accordingly to meet a 30% funding level. Fund smaller projects that do not need to be scaled down to meet funding.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**



All costs including contracts/supplies/materials etc. for the majority of the projects can be proportionally reduced.

## **Contracts**

### **What is included in the contracts line?**

This line includes contracts for restoration and enhancement work that the DNR or Roving Crews don't have the specialized equipment or staff to conduct. Contracts increase our capacity to impact acres beyond what staff alone are capable of.

## **Direct Support Services**

### **How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?**

We used the standard DNR calculator for proposals to the OHF and ENRTF.

## **Federal Funds**

### **Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**

No

Output Tables**Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	83	-	83
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	2,477	-	2,477
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>2,560</b>	-	<b>2,560</b>

**Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	\$122,800	-	\$122,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$1,604,200	-	\$1,604,200
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>\$1,727,000</b>	-	<b>\$1,727,000</b>

**Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	23	0	60	0	0	83
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	42	497	377	98	1,463	2,477
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>2,560</b>

**Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	\$45,200	-	\$77,600	-	-	\$122,800
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$84,900	\$220,200	\$380,800	\$59,900	\$858,400	\$1,604,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$130,100</b>	<b>\$220,200</b>	<b>\$458,400</b>	<b>\$59,900</b>	<b>\$858,400</b>	<b>\$1,727,000</b>

**Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)**

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	\$1,479	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	\$647	-

**Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	\$1,965	-	\$1,293	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	\$2,021	\$443	\$1,010	\$611	\$586

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles**

## Parcels

### Parcel Information

#### Sign-up Criteria?

No

#### Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

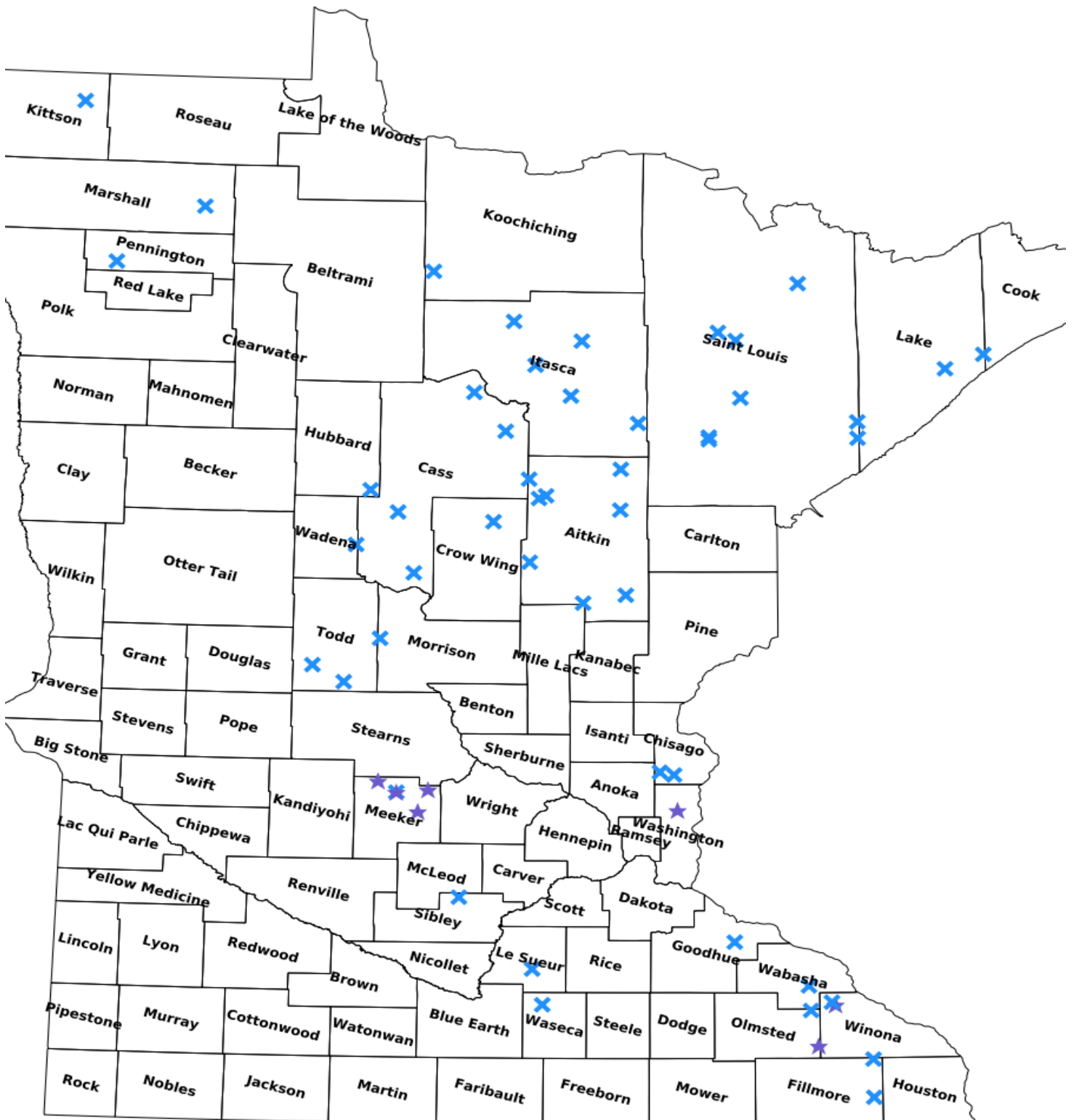
We evaluated forest habitat needs not funded through other sources, considering staff capacity from DNR Fish and Wildlife/Forestry divisions to implement and complete within grant timeline.

### Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Land O' Lakes State Forest	Aitkin	05127216	19	\$6,790	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Hill River State Forest	Aitkin	05027224	35	\$21,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Solana State Forest	Aitkin	04425236	77	\$26,950	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Solana State Forest	Aitkin	04423213	30	\$18,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Solana State Forest	Aitkin	04627216	7	\$2,760	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Savanna State Forest	Aitkin	04923211	64	\$22,400	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Savanna State Forest	Aitkin	05223226	23	\$13,800	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Hill River State Forest	Aitkin	05026217	143	\$50,015	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Bowstring State Forest	Cass	14326236	59	\$29,500	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Pillsbury State Forest	Cass	13430222	28	\$5,660	Yes	T & E Species Habitat Improvement
Foot Hills State Forest	Cass	13831236	28	\$5,680	Yes	T & E Species Habitat Improvement
Bowstring State Forest	Cass	14527221	141	\$99,163	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Carlos Avery WMA	Chisago	03321208	21	\$40,000	Yes	Invasive Species Control
Carlos Avery WMA	Chisago	03321213	30	\$88,000	Yes	Invasive Species Control
Crow Wing State Forest	Crow Wing	13726216	29	\$5,780	Yes	T & E Species Habitat Improvement
Schueler WMA	Fillmore	10408203	50	\$25,000	Yes	Invasive Species Control
Choice WMA	Fillmore	10208215	500	\$500,000	Yes	Invasive Species Control
John Murtaugh Memorial WMA	Goodhue	11215236	60	\$40,500	Yes	Tree Planting
Badoura State Forest	Hubbard	13932222	21	\$4,140	Yes	T & E Species Habitat Improvement
Golden Anniversary State Forest	Itasca	06025236	712	\$533,780	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Golden Anniversary State Forest	Itasca	05522234	134	\$40,176	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Prairie Lake Deer Yard WMA	Itasca	05625209	150	\$48,000	Yes	Browse Enhancement
Bowstring State Forest	Itasca	05827214	168	\$100,619	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Big Fork State Forest	Itasca	14925208	15	\$10,456	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Beaches Lake WMA	Kittson	16246213	500	\$150,000	Yes	Brushland Regeneration

Pine Island State Forest	Koochiching	15229209	38	\$22,782	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Finland State Forest	Lake	05906236	190	\$38,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Finland State Forest	Lake	05807230	2,157	\$1,617,375	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Chadderdon WMA	Le Sueur	11024221	204	\$102,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Eckvoll WMA	Marshall	15640222	500	\$125,000	Yes	Brushland Regeneration
Powers Lake WMA	Meeker	11930201	12	\$26,000	Yes	Direct Seeding
Teal Scurry WMA	Meeker	12131207	14	\$28,000	Yes	Direct Seeding
Manannah WMA	Meeker	12131236	40	\$155,000	Yes	Invasive Species Control
Kingston WMA	Meeker	12129228	14	\$28,000	Yes	Direct Seeding
Manannah WMA	Meeker	12131236	5	\$10,000	Yes	Direct Seeding
Little Elk WMA	Morrison	13031219	231	\$109,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Whitewater WMA	Olmsted	10711203	400	\$500,000	Yes	Invasive Species Control
Vermilya WMA	Olmsted	10511212	22	\$62,500	Yes	Direct Seeding
Higinbotham WMA	Pennington	15244204	100	\$110,000	Yes	Invasive Species Control
Proehl's Woods WMA	Sibley	11428212	63	\$31,500	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Sturgeon River State Forest	St. Louis	06017232	70	\$28,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Sturgeon River State Forest	St. Louis	06018216	21	\$4,280	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Whiteface River State Forest	St. Louis	05419236	138	\$37,950	Yes	Brushland Mowing
Cloquet Valley State Forest	St. Louis	05412236	268	\$201,300	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Cloquet Valley State Forest	St. Louis	05512236	30	\$18,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Burntside State Forest	St. Louis	06314217	400	\$100,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Cloquet Valley State Forest	St. Louis	05617216	20	\$12,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Whiteface River State Forest	St. Louis	05419225	183	\$50,325	Yes	Brushland Enhancement
Owen-Hinz WMA	Todd	12835212	27	\$21,600	Yes	Brushland Enhancement
Grey Eagle WMA	Todd	12733209	482	\$300,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest	Wabasha	10911221	160	\$96,000	Yes	Invasive Species Control
Lyons State Forest	Wadena	13633236	23	\$4,500	Yes	T & E Species Habitat Improvement
Linde WMA	Waseca	10824225	160	\$120,000	Yes	Timber Stand Improvement
Keystone Woods WMA	Washington	03120219	40	\$75,300	Yes	Direct Seeding
Whitewater WMA	Winona	10810222	225	\$225,000	Yes	Oak Enhancement
Whitewater WMA	Winona	10810226	200	\$225,000	Yes	Direct Seeding

### Parcel Map



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