Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Conservation Easement Program - Phase V

ML 2025 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/04/2024

Proposal Title: Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Conservation Easement Program - Phase V

Funds Requested: $13,800,000

Confirmed Leverage Funds: $1,200,000

Is this proposal Scalable?: Yes

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Logan Shoup
Title: Regional Biologist - NW Minnesota
Organization: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
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Location Information

County Location(s): Otter Tail, Douglas, Grant, Swift, Pope and Big Stone.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie

Activity types:

- Restore
- Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

DU and PF will help accelerate USFWS wildlife habitat easements by restoring and enhancing 4,000 acres of protected private grasslands and wetlands in Minnesota's Prairie and Transition Sections. These are "working lands" under permanent federal conservation easements that allow delayed haying and/or grazing while protecting restored wetlands and prairie grasslands for nesting ducks, pheasants, and other wildlife. By restoring and enhancing protected grassland and wetland habitat while allowing for continued landowner use of these working private lands, USFWS habitat easements buffer existing protected lands and provide important conservation easement options that complement more restrictive easements and public land.

Design and Scope of Work

Ducks Unlimited (DU) and Pheasants Forever (PF) will restore and enhance wetlands and prairie on private lands protected by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Minnesota through federal USFWS grassland habitat conservation easement. DU and PF will restore drained wetlands and cropland back to prairie grassland, and enhance existing habitats. USFWS currently has robust Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) budgets to purchase habitat conservation easements, but these funds cannot be used to restore or enhance lands protected. By restoring grasslands and wetlands for USFWS with OHF support DU and PF will accelerate the rate at which USFWS can protect grassland and wetlands in key focus landscapes in which there are also many state and federal wildlife lands owned and managed in fee-title, and other lands protected by more restrictive conservation easements. These are some of the most productive landscapes in the state for breeding waterfowl and other prairie wildlife including pheasants and many non-game grassland bird species, and these private working land conservation easements complement other federal, state, and private conservation easement options available to landowners.

USFWS habitat conservation easements not only include protection measures that prevent wetland/prairie conversion and land development/subdivision, but importantly, they also secure rights to restore wetlands and prairie grassland where feasible too - which is the primary purpose of this OHF easement program. Partnering with the USFWS, DU and PF will restore and enhance private lands eased by USFWS with technical guidance from their private lands biologists and using private contractors to seed native prairie grass, remove trees, and restore wetlands. DU engineers will survey/design larger complex wetland restorations and manage restoration contracts to private earth-moving firms. As some of these working land easements allow managed livestock grazing, some restoration and enhancement work will include paying contractors to remove old fences and install new fences to facilitate managed rotational grazing systems. Such systems protect grassland and wetland habitats, enhance wildlife habitat by limiting trees and invasive plants, and provide landowners the opportunity to actively manage/maintain their land.

USFWS Habitat Easements have been purchased in Minnesota for over three decades and are a habitat protection tool designed to complement public lands habitat complexes such as federal Waterfowl Production Areas and state Wildlife Management Areas. These easements keep privately owned restored grassland and wetland habitat intact and on county tax rolls while allowing for working use of the land. These easements provide landowners with the option of either delayed haying (after July 15) or both grazing and delayed haying, which results in adequate habitat for wetland and upland nesting birds and a working land use option that appeals to some private landowners. Importantly, these working land easements also help manage plant succession on their land, which is critical to prevent the encroachment of woody vegetation and invasive plant species. Well-managed grazing, delayed haying, and USFWS prescribed fire also benefits those grassland bird species that prefer more open prairie habitats, such as northern pintail, marbled godwit, snipe, and many other prairie species.

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

This proposal will restore/enhance wetlands and grasslands to create/expand prairie wetland habitat complexes. USFWS easements can be grazed and delay hayed, land uses which are compatible with grassland nesting birds as per scientific research. Prairies and emergent marshes are identified as critical habitats for many "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" listed in Minnesota's "Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild & Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife". Grassland nesting birds have shown the largest population decline of any of the bird groups. Specific species listed in the Action Plan as requiring prairie (page 255) include seven species of butterflies and three bird species that are native prairie specialists: chestnut-collared longspur, Sprague's pipit, and Baird's sparrow. Specific species listed in the Action Plan as requiring emergent marshes (page 267) include least bittern, American bittern, marsh wren, and Virginia rail. The Prairie Parkland has 139 species listed on the SGCN with 13 of these species being unique to the section. Grasslands are also critical to a diverse suite of declining pollinator species.

In addition to these specific wildlife species listed as SGCN in the Action Plan, restored prairie and wetlands in the Prairie Parkland will provide habitat of significant value for other species listed in Appendix B of the Action Plan. Restored and protected prairie will provide habitat of significant value for other SGCN including bird species: upland sandpiper, bobolink, burrowing owl, Le Conte's sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, eastern meadowlark, swamp sparrow, sharp-tailed grouse, short-eared owl, northern harrier, dickcissel, Henslow's sparrow, and Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow. Upland nesting waterfowl will also benefit including waterfowl listed as SGCN; northern pintail and lesser scaup, which have both seen declines in continental populations. Wetland associated birds such as trumpeter swan, black tern, American bittern, Wilson's phalarope, and marbled godwit will benefit from wetlands restored and buffered in the prairie landscape through the habitat easements. Mammals including northern grasshopper mouse and Richardson's ground squirrels, reptiles such as lined snake and Blanding's turtle, and amphibians such as northern cricket frog and common mudpuppy are SGCN in the Prairie Parkland.

What are the elements of this proposal that are critical from a timing perspective?

USFWS currently has a list of many landowners with thousands of acres who are very interested in protecting their grasslands and wetlands with USFWS habitat conservation easements. Increased interest has resulted through word of mouth, but USFWS needs help and funding to restore/enhance all the lands they protect.

Timing is critical for many landowners with expiring CRP contracts, business decisions related to expanding livestock operations, and sometimes estate planning or other family decisions. When USFWS is not able to move forward quickly enough, landowners may choose less ecologically desirable uses for their land that often include putting land back into row crop production, especially in the case of expiring CRP. Often, landowners cannot afford to forego annual income after CRP contracts expire, and without other options, are forced to return land to row crop production, even when doing so is not desired.

Describe how the proposal expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

USFWS biologists score and rank each grassland habitat easement proposal based on ecological site attributes and landscape juxtaposition of protected lands. This ranking process was designed to be relatively simple and evaluate the capability of the proposed easement to provide biological benefits for wetland and grassland dependent wildlife species by considering the habitat on the easement tract as well as its contribution and benefits to other protected lands in the surrounding area. Periodically, the USFWS Minnesota Wetland Acquisition Office in Fergus Falls uses these rankings to re-prioritize the proposals to assure that the USFWS is working on and purchasing the

highest ranking proposals throughout the year. DU and PF will rely on the high level of science-based expertise of the USFWS to ensure that easement opportunities are prioritized, and will work closely as a partnership to share the workload and accelerate the easement program in west-central Minnesota. Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and USFWS will work together to use science-based targeting to focus promotion of this accelerated habitat conservation easement program, with focus on tracts near existing federal WPAs, state WMAs, and other permanent private land easements. High priority tracts will be those with restorable drained wetlands and converted prairie or expiring CRP that, once fully restored, will build and expand prairie-wetland complexes for ducks, pheasants, and migratory birds in landscapes with a high density of other protected habitats. Science-based models such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) "Thunderstorm Maps" and "Restorable Wetlands Inventory" will help us determine landscape importance to breeding waterfowl, as will the state Pheasant Plan and Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan that helps guide prairie conservation efforts within Complexes, Core, and Corridor areas of western Minnesota. Finally, parcels near sites with relatively high biological diversity and significance based on the Minnesota DNR County Biological Survey (MCBS) will be a priority, and parcels with unique ecological values will be shared with other conservation easement program partners to ensure collaboration, avoid duplication of effort, and that the best conservation easement program option is offered to private landowners.

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

- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN

Explain how this proposal 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.

This proposal will address long-term climate resilience by restoring and enhancing prairie and wetland habitats within and around existing habitat complexes. USFWS easements are ranked and bought within high priority landscapes. Building off existing habitat cores within these landscapes helps to increase climate resiliency by connecting habitats and allowing for increased movement and migration of native species in response to changing climate and conditions. Additionally, having more native habitat allows for larger, more robust game, fish, and wildlife populations. More robust wildlife populations are better able to handle disturbances and long-term changes.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Forest / Prairie Transition

- 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

Prairie

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

Describe how this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife, and if not permanent outcomes, why it is important to undertake at this time:

This program will restore wetlands and grasslands on private lands under existing permanent USFWS easement protection to increase habitat patch size and functional viability as prairie-wetland habitat complexes for prairie wildlife. The goal of this work is to create permanently protected and functioning prairie-wetland complexes for breeding and migrating waterfowl and other prairie wildlife species. Therefore, our work will result in a significant and permanent conservation legacy for the public, and in the long-term will result in improved and viable functioning habitat patches and complexes for both wildlife and people alike. By allowing for grazing and delayed haying land use, these permanently protected "working lands" habitat easements produce conservation legacy that complements other publicly-funded conservation easements and public lands.

The critical conservation need in Minnesota's prairie region is more prairie grasslands and wetlands in landscapes with existing patches of prairie-wetland habitat. Breeding ducks and pheasants require prairie-wetland complexes containing at least 20% upland nesting cover and small wetlands. Restoring and protecting viable patches of grassland with small wetlands around existing patches of habitat will create functioning prairie-wetland habitat complexes. By focusing our efforts to restore and protect grasslands and wetlands in close proximity to existing federal WPAs and state WMAs, and other private lands under restrictive conservation easements, USFWS habitat easements on working private lands will increase the amount of permanently protected grassland and wetland habitat in close proximity to prairie-wetland habitat complexes that will directly benefit breeding migratory birds, pollinators, and resident wildlife species.

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Wetland and upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands, and restored shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *USFWS habitat easements will add restored and protected grassland and small wetland acres to augment existing public lands and other permanent easements to create prairie-wetland complexes with a more diverse mix of habitats and conservation options for private landowners. The measure of success will be the number of functioning prairie wetland complexes that provide adequate wetland and grassland acres within a landscape. This is a long-term, programmatic landscape conservation effort that will take time to achieve.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Agriculture lands are converted to grasslands to sustain functioning prairie systems ~ *USFWS easements restore and enhance lands that have previously been in row crop agriculture or at threat of conversion to row crop agriculture. These protected lands are free from the threat of future conversion and, as part of the easement, are converted to native grassland. This supports functioning prairie and wetland landscapes while also providing landowners with an income stream from managed haying or grazing. This is a long-term, programmatic landscape conservation effort that will take time to achieve.*

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

- N/A

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.

This OHF funding request does not supplant or substitute for any previous funding. This new OHF funding will be used for new conservation work to accelerate USFWS conservation easement delivery in Minnesota to accelerate protection and restoration of wetlands and prairie, and provide "working land" conservation easements options for landowners.

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

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is responsible for long-term annual monitoring and enforcement. The terms of the easement allow limited delayed haying after July 15 or delayed haying and grazing, but require wetlands and grasslands to be maintained by the private landowner. The easement terms allow DU and PF, under the direction of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, to restore and help enhance wetland restorations or improve grasslands in the future when determined by the Service to be necessary for wildlife habitat management purposes. Through this proposal, DU and PF will assist USFWS in restoring and enhancing easements with state OHF grant funds after USFWS protects the land through easement acquisition with MBCF funding. Long-term habitat management and compliance with easement provisions will be the responsibility of the federal USFWS.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2020	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Annually Monitor Easements	Identify Problems, if any	Work with Private Landowners to Resolve

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

DU, PF, and USFWS conserve wetlands and prairie for wildlife and people alike. Our habitat projects restore natural infrastructure, which helps to alleviate society's climate impacts and provide clean water for BIPOC communities, who are disproportionately impacted by the effects of wetland loss and climate change. PF and DU have organizational initiatives to increase the inclusion of BIPOC and to ensure a sense of belonging among all people. USFWS purchases easements from willing sellers, including individuals that identify as BIPOC and other underserved citizens.

Wetlands recharge groundwater in aquifers, providing clean, dependable water supplies while removing pollutants and reducing downstream flooding. Generational wealth in BIPOC communities is compromised by a lack of natural infrastructure such as wetlands. BIPOC community resiliency is enhanced by the function of wetlands and adjacent grassland habitats that clean water and help absorb impacts from severe weather events.

Restoring wetlands in the Mississippi River watershed benefits BIPOC communities who draw their water from the river such as Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Cloud. Minneapolis alone draws 21 billion gallons of water a year from the Mississippi to produce 57 million gallons of drinking water/day.

Indigenous communities may benefit from DU wetland enhancements and restorations that create suitable conditions for wild rice to proliferate. Wetlands deliver a return on investment that helps to support the health, resiliency, and well-being of BIPOC communities.

USFWS works strategically to purchase easements on lands with drained wetlands and restorable prairie that are important to waterfowl, prairie wildlife, and people. DU and PF will restore drained pothole wetlands and adjacent

uplands back to native prairie grasslands for both wildlife habitat and the public using competitively-selected contractors following state procurement guidelines, including minority and women-owned businesses. Additionally, USFWS easements are most often implemented in rural, low to middle income areas. The associated easement payments and dollars from habitat work go into these communities. Maintaining these easements as working lands can lead to more stability for the small farms and ranches that rent/own them, which in turn leads to more vibrant rural communities and higher quality of life in rural Minnesota.

Activity Details

Requirements

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?

- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

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?
Yes

Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:
Some temporary planting of non-neonicotinoid soybeans (up to 1-2 years, no corn planting) may be required as site preparation for prairie restoration on parcels where herbicides with long (18+ month) residual carryover have been used or where conversion of old fields infested with invasive plants such as smooth brome and reed canary grass may require a year of cropping with herbicides for restoration purposes. No food plots are planned through this program.

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this proposal either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Other OHF Appropriation Awards

Have you received OHF dollars through LSOHC in the past?
Yes

Are any of these past appropriations still OPEN?
Yes

Approp Year	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
2023	$4,643,320	$69,267	$4,574,053	1.49%
2021	$4,752,000	$1,702,333	$3,049,667	35.82%
2020	$3,187,000	$2,463,425	$723,575	77.3%
2018	$2,960,000	$2,644,591	$315,409	89.34%
Totals	$15,542,320	$6,879,616	$8,662,704	44.26%

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Easements closed by USFWS and restoration plans drafted.	December 2025
Some easement restoration plans finalized by DU and PF.	June 2026
Some easements restored or enhanced while other restoration plans continue being developed by DU and PF.	December 2026
Remaining easements restored or enhanced by DU and PF.	June 2030

Budget

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$990,000	$200,000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service IRA, US Fish & Wildlife Service IRA	$1,190,000
Contracts	$12,200,000	-	-	$12,200,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	$1,000,000	USFWS Migratory Bird Funds (federal Duck Stamp)	$1,000,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$114,000	-	-	$114,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$116,000	-	-	$116,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	$70,000	-	-	$70,000
Other Equipment/Tools	$130,000	-	-	$130,000
Supplies/Materials	$180,000	-	-	$180,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$13,800,000**	**$1,200,000**	**-**	**$15,000,000**

Partner: Pheasants Forever

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$330,000	$100,000	US Fish & Wildlife Service IRA	$430,000
Contracts	$4,400,000	-	-	$4,400,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$24,000	-	-	$24,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$56,000	-	-	$56,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$40,000	-	-	$40,000
Supplies/Materials	$90,000	-	-	$90,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$4,940,000**	**$100,000**	**-**	**$5,040,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Pheasants Forever Biologist, Land, and Legal Staff	1.0	3.0	$330,000	$100,000	US Fish & Wildlife Service IRA	$430,000

Partner: Ducks Unlimited

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$660,000	$100,000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service IRA	$760,000
Contracts	$7,800,000	-	-	$7,800,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	$1,000,000	USFWS Migratory Bird Funds (federal Duck Stamp)	$1,000,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$90,000	-	-	$90,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$60,000	-	-	$60,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	$70,000	-	-	$70,000
Other Equipment/Tools	$90,000	-	-	$90,000
Supplies/Materials	$90,000	-	-	$90,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$8,860,000**	**$1,100,000**	**-**	**$9,960,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Ducks Unlimited Regional Biologist to manage and administer this OHF grant	0.1	3.0	$60,000	-	-	$60,000
Ducks Unlimited Field Biologistsand Wetland Engineers	2.0	3.0	$600,000	$100,000	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service IRA	$700,000

Capital Equipment

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
ATVs and UTV for Grassland and Wetland Restoration Survey and Construction Management	$70,000	-	-	$70,000

Amount of Request: $13,800,000
Amount of Leverage: $1,200,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 8.7%
DSS + Personnel: $1,106,000
As a % of the total request: 8.01%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

Total Leverage (from above)	Amount Confirmed	% of Total Leverage	Amount Anticipated	% of Total Leverage
$1,200,000	$1,200,000	100.0%	-	0.0%

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
The USFWS will spend $1,000,000 of federal funds appropriated from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to purchase grassland and wetland easements, which DU and PF will help restore with OHF grant funds. DU and PF will each match $100,000 staff time funded by the Inflation Reduction Act.

Does this proposal 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?
This Phase 5 funding request will be scaled proportionately to the funding provided. Acres and Activity Outcomes would be reduced proportionately.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This Phase 5 funding request will be scaled proportionately to the funding provided. Acres and Activity Outcomes would be reduced proportionately.

If the project received 30% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This Phase 5 funding request will be scaled proportionately to the funding provided. Acres and Activity Outcomes would be reduced proportionately.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This Phase 5 funding request will be scaled proportionately to the funding provided. Acres and Activity Outcomes would be reduced proportionately.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Please explain the overlap of past and future staffing and position levels previously received and how that is coordinated over multiple years?
DU and PF strive to complete one phase of this program before starting the next, to minimize overlap. Furthermore, staff charge time to site specific easement projects with unique numbers, which are only billed to one grant or another, therefore staff charges can be spread among multiple projects funded by multiple grants.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
Contracts are for prairie and wetland restoration/enhancement work contracted to private sector firms, including activities such as field site preparation, tree removal, prairie grass and wetland seeding, old fence removal and new fence installation, ditch plugging, drain tile and sediment removal, dike and berm construction, and water control structures.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
No

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
None - all travel funding will be used for in-state mileage, meals, and lodging, as necessary.

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?
Minnesota DNR grants staff previously reviewed and approved DU accounting methodology for Direct Support Services, which are calculated and included in DU staff costs. DU Direct Support Services constitute approximately 10% of DU overall staff costs on average among DU conservation staff billing categories. DU breaks out and invoices for Direct Support Service expenses approved by DNR for reimbursement separately from Personnel expenses. In accordance with 2 CFR 200, DU uses the direct allocation method of allocating costs to programs and final cost objectives. This process of allocating costs is accomplished through the use of hourly rates. The direct cost of activities, including direct support expenses, is included in these hourly rates. The rates are comprised of costs for salaries, benefits, office space, general insurance, support staff, office supplies, and other various direct expenses incurred at the regional offices and conservation department at the home office. All costs are assigned to conservation projects (net of applicable personnel and other costs that are non-conservation related). Hourly charges represent the amount that DU charges conservation projects per hour for each staff member working on the project. These costs represent expenses that directly support the labor cost necessary for the development of a specific water/wetlands conservation project.

PF utilizes the Total Modified Direct Cost method. This methodology is annually approved by the U.S. Department

of Interior's National Business Center as the basis for the organization's Indirect Cost Rate agreement. PF's allowable direct support services cost is 3.9%. In this proposal, PF has discounted its rate to 1.5% of the sum of personnel, contracts, professional services, and travel, and will donate the difference in-kind.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
Equipment and Tools include gear used to survey and design wetland restorations such as laser levels and GPS survey devices. This may also include rent of GPS survey equipment.

Federal Funds

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

Are the funds confirmed?
Yes

- Cash : $1,000,000
- In Kind : $100,000

Is Confirmation Document attached?
Yes

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	400	900	0	0	1,300
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	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	800	1,900	0	0	2,700
Total	**1,200**	**2,800**	**0**	**0**	**4,000**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	$2,760,000	$1,840,000	-	-	$4,600,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	$5,520,000	$3,680,000	-	-	$9,200,000
Total	**$8,280,000**	**$5,520,000**	**-**	**-**	**$13,800,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	650	0	650	0	1,300
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	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	1,350	0	1,350	0	2,700
Total	**0**	**2,000**	**0**	**2,000**	**0**	**4,000**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	$2,300,000	-	$2,300,000	-	$4,600,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	$4,600,000	-	$4,600,000	-	$9,200,000
Total	**-**	**$6,900,000**	**-**	**$6,900,000**	**-**	**$13,800,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	$6,900	$2,044	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	$6,900	$1,936	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	$3,538	-	$3,538	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	$3,407	-	$3,407	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?
No

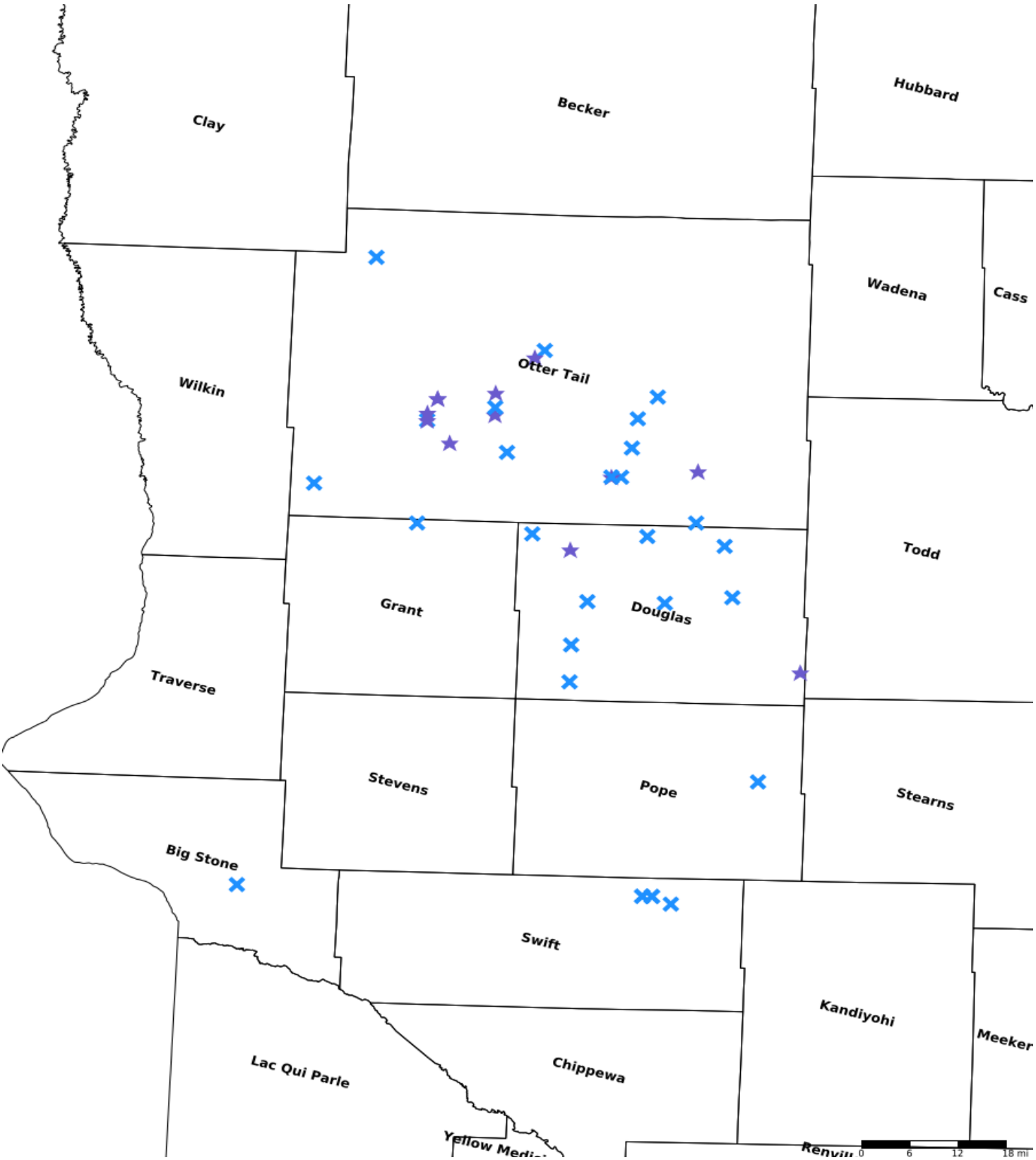
Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Easements are selected by USFWS biologists who score and rank each grassland habitat easement proposed based on ecological site attributes and landscape juxtaposition using a scoring process that is developed internally with science-based guidance from their Habitat & Population Evaluation Team science staff in Fergus Falls. This ranking process was designed to be relatively simple and evaluate the capability of the proposed easement to provide biological benefits for wetland and grassland dependent wildlife species by considering the habitat on the easement tract was well as its contribution and benefits to other protected lands in the surrounding area. Periodically through out the year, the USFWS Minnesota Wetland Acquisition Office in Fergus Falls uses these rankings to re-prioritize the proposals to assure that the USFWS is working on and purchasing the highest ranking proposals throughout the year. DU and PF will rely on the high level of science-based conservation expertise and rigorous easement selection process of the USFWS to ensure that easements acquired prioritized appropriately and therefore subsequently already prioritized for wetland and grassland habitat restoration and enhancement activities by DU and PF.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Bentsen Bay Farm Easement Enhancement	Big Stone	12245217	237	$240,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
John Herd et al. Easement Enhancement	Douglas	13038208	50	$250,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
BJ Bjorge S Easement Enhancement	Douglas	12937223	80	$140,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Joel Kangas Easement Enhancement	Douglas	12840225	6	$25,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Keith Wilson Easement Enhancement	Douglas	12938227	40	$250,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Ed Coons Easement Enhancement	Douglas	12740224	80	$225,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Craig Haaseman Easement Enhancement	Douglas	12939229	30	$150,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Tim Zunker Easement Enhancement	Douglas	13037215	45	$70,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Dan and Justin Evavold Easement Restoration	Douglas	13040224	65	$125,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
City of Herman Easement Restoration	Grant	12736212	185	$462,500	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Randy Anderson Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13440204	40	$175,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Harold Busko Jr. Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13342228	50	$300,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Todd Kvern Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13342221	18	$60,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Tim Hawthorne Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13237230	55	$100,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Steve Misegades Easement Enhancement - Part 2	Otter Tail	13338219	275	$325,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Scott Korkowski Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13137231	140	$140,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.

Melanie Cole Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13341203	37	$75,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
John Olesen Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13239234	80	$140,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Leigh Barry Easement Restoration - Amor Tract	Otter Tail	13440208	42	$70,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Mark Jacobs Trust Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13342228	20	$60,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Gary and Susan Clambey Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13342210	14	$30,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Abby Volden Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13239234	85	$140,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Joseph Borgos Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13242211	24	$60,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Tom Haugrud Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13643204	40	$100,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Doug Bjorkland Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13338204	61	$152,500	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Kevin Oehler Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13144209	120	$300,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Lon Berg Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13341222	140	$350,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Eli Pachel Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13241214	17	$100,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Paul Jaros Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13042205	33	$82,500	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Jim Burkett Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13040208	15	$100,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Jeremy Schmidgall Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13239212	22	$150,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Dan Stenoien Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13341215	50	$125,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Clambey/Truax Easement Restoration	Otter Tail	13342210	170	$250,000	Yes	Habitat restoration on a USFWS easement.
Michael and Jasson Mickelson Easement Enhancement	Otter Tail	13239235	170	$450,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Carlson Easement Enhancement	Pope	12536229	331	$400,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Chippewa River Ranch Easement Enhancement - Part 2	Swift	12238216	31	$50,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Chippewa River Ranch Easement Enhancement - Part 1	Swift	12238223	182	$275,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Kerkeide Easement Enhancement	Swift	12238217	40	$60,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Pritchett Easement Enhancement	Swift	12238216	39	$60,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.
Skarsten Easement Enhancement	Swift	12238217	40	$60,000	Yes	Habitat enhancement on a USFWS easement.

Parcel Map


Clay
Becker
Hubbard
Wadena
Cass
Wilkin
Otter Tail
Todd
Grant
Douglas
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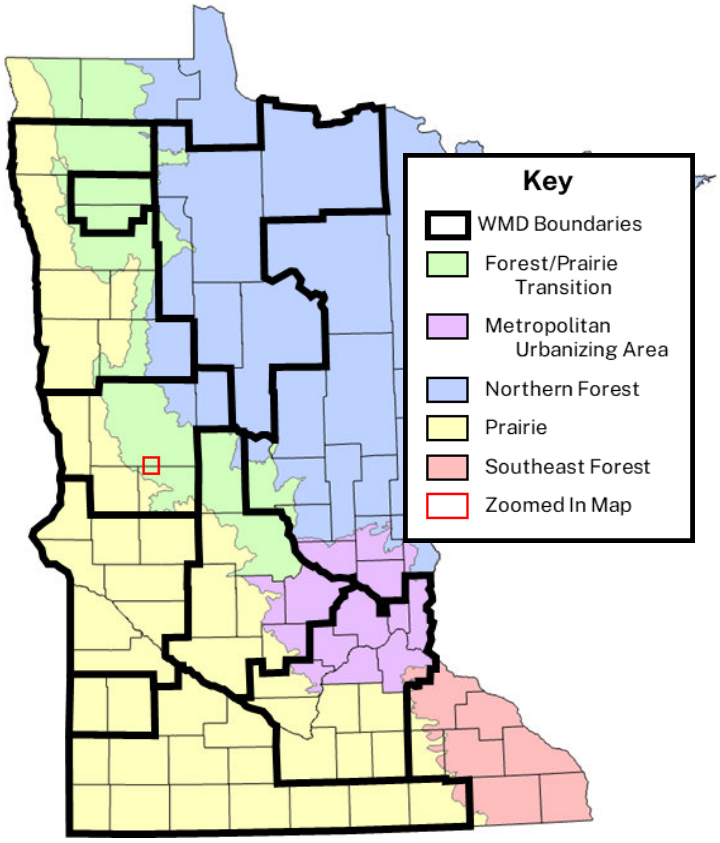
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Easement Program—Phase V



Proposal Request: $13,800,000

Proposal Abstract: This Phase 5 request for Ducks Unlimited (DU), Pheasants Forever (PF), and the US Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) program to accelerate habitat work on USFWS easements will enhance or restore 4,000 acres of wetland and prairie habitat. DU and PF will remove sediment and reverse drainage of wetlands, plant cropland and non-native pasture back to native prairie mixes, and remove woody vegetation from prairies and wetlands to support grassland nesting birds and prairie wildlife. The projects will be designed by DU and PF in coordination with USFWS private lands biologists and then hired out to private contractors to implement any restoration or enhancement activities. These projects within USFWS Wetland Management Districts (WMD) will improve wildlife habitat at a landscape level while supporting rural economies by keeping these properties as active working lands.

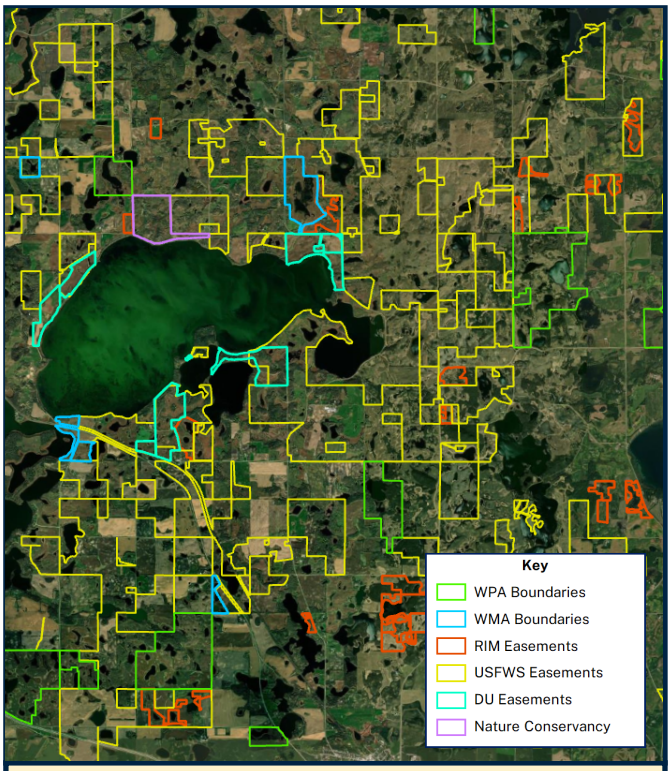

Lillie Smith


Blake Mitchell


Blake Mitchell


Shawn Papon


Emily Jonassen



USFWS easements serve as the connecting pieces between many other permanently protected habitats.

Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Easement Program—Phase V (con't)

Many projects in this grant proposal involve significant wetland restoration and enhancement including ditch fills, sediment scraping, tile removal, cattail scrapes, and spillway/ berm construction. These actions are done with the goals of restoring hydrology, reducing invasive species, regaining ecosystem function, and supporting a wide array of native wildlife.

The USFWS Easement program frequently works with cattle producers to protect, restore, and enhance grazing lands. In addition to wetland work on these easements, this grant funds planting cropland back to native prairie, converting non-native pasture to native pasture, and protecting remnant prairie on these grazing lands.

This program will restore and enhance native prairie wetland complexes on USFWS easements. This will contribute to existing landscape level habitat complexes and bolster the ability of native species to persist in Minnesota's prairie and transition zones in the face of widespread habitat loss and climate change.