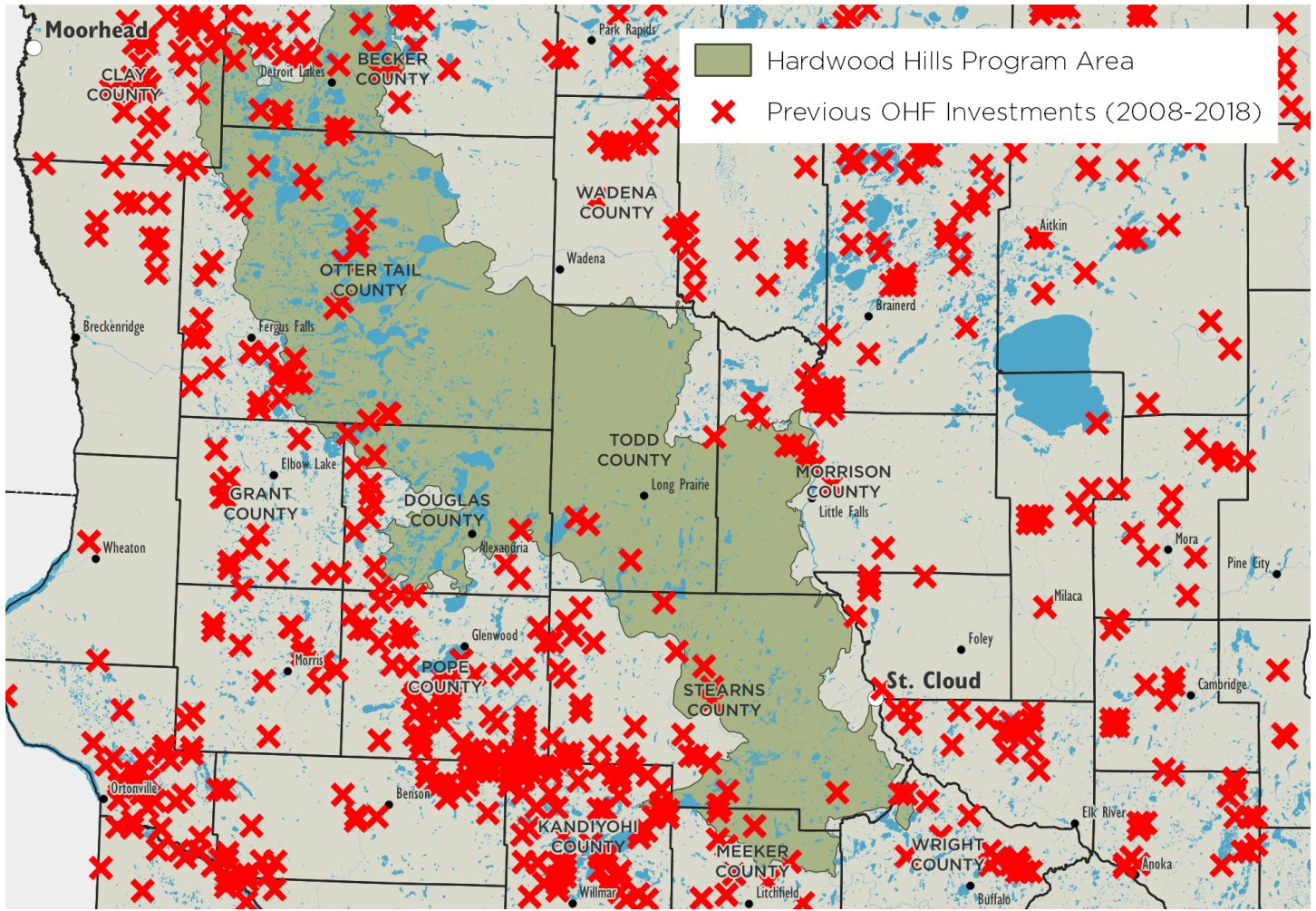




FA01: Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program Phase 1

The Hardwood Hills Program Area Fills a Hole in Prior OHF Investments



Data Source: Legacy Amendment Projects (FY2009-FY2018), Legislative Coordinating Commission - Geographic Information Service



The Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program Has Local Support




Saint John's
UNIVERSITY

Saint John's University
jgeissler001@csbsju.edu
(320) 363-3126



Minnesota Land Trust
2356 University Ave. W.
Suite 240
St. Paul, MN 55114
(651) 647-9590
mmland@mmland.org
www.mmland.org



Avon Township
16881 Queens Road, Avon, MN 56310

Memo

To: Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (100 Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd c/o Mark Johnson, Executive Director State Office Building, Room 55 St. Paul, MN 55155)
From: Avon Township Supervisors (Richard Bresnahan, LeRoy Gondringer, Rick Sanoski)
Date: August 19, 2022
Re: Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program: Phase 1 Proposal


We are writing in support of the "Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program: Phase 1" proposal that is being submitted for consideration for funding by the Minnesota Land Trust and Saint John's Outdoor University.

This proposal provides a mechanism to preserve high-quality forests in the Avon Hills, an area that partly occurs in our central Minnesota township. Among other things, our Township is dedicated to preserving the rural and agricultural nature of the landscape. This proposal will provide a tool towards achieving this goal.

The Avon Hills Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) is a particularly high-quality habitat within Avon Township and is a testament to the care and respect shown toward the land by past and current Avon Township residents. As Supervisors, we support any endeavor that preserves our natural forests while still maintaining landowner rights. The proposal will provide an incentive for residents who own outstanding forested landscapes to protect their land from further development. We fully support this proposal that helps to maintain the integrity of the Avon Hills and complements the overall goals of Avon Township.

If questions, please contact any one of us.

Avon Township Supervisors	LeRoy Gondringer 18093 340 th St. Alberta, MN 56307 320-845-4380	Richard Bresnahan 17009 Summit Road Avon, MN 56310 320-828-0973	Rich Sanoski 18574 Co Rd 54 Alberta, MN 56307 320-260-1025
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West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District
508 Western Ave N Fergus Falls, MN, 56537
www.wotswcd.org Phone: (218)998-5300

August 23, 2022

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Attn: Mark Johnson, Executive Director
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 55
St. Paul, MN 55155


To Whom it May Concern,


West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) would like to express our support for the Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program: Phase 1 proposal. This proposal will protect the remaining high-quality forest systems and their associated biota within the Hardwood Hills ecological section, which includes a large portion of Otter Tail County.

This proposal will complement the work that the SWCD and its partners. Through the comprehensive watershed management planning process for the Otter Tail River Watershed, partners are also completing a forest landscape stewardship plan that will highlight the importance of protecting large blocks of forest within the watershed. The goal of the draft plan is to protect 50% of forest within the watershed. Currently only 35.7% is protected. This program would provide another easement option for landowners interested in preserving their forest and assist the SWCD with meeting its proposed protection goals.

West Otter Tail SWCD is very active in on-the-ground conservation efforts in the county and has worked with Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) in the past on protection efforts. We have seen significant landowner interest in protecting their land with conservation easements as well as strong community support for their land with conservation easements as conservation easements is an important tool to have to conserve high-quality habitat in the unique and threatened hardwood hills subsection.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to conservation and for your consideration of the Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program: Phase 1 proposal.

Sincerely,

Aaron Jensen, Project Manager
West Otter Tail SWCD



**MINNESOTA
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

DOUGLAS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
900 Robert Street
Suite 102
Alexandria, Minnesota 56208
Telephone (320) 763-3191

August 23, 2022


Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Attn: Mark Johnson, Executive Director
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 55
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,


The Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) wishes to express our support for the Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program proposal. This proposal will protect the ecological section, which includes a large portion of Douglas County.

Douglas SWCD is very active in on-the-ground conservation efforts within the County. We know that there is high-quality habitat in this subsection that is important to protect now to reduce further fragmentation. We also know that there are landowners interested in participating in conservation efforts, including permanent conservation easements. Douglas SWCD hopes to see increased conservation efforts in the Hardwood Hills ecological section, so that this unique and threatened forest system can be conserved.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to conservation and for your consideration of the Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program proposal.

Sincerely,

Jerry Haggenmiller
District Coordinator

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



STEARNS COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Stearns County SWCD
110 2nd Street South - Suite 128
Wadena Park, MN 56387

Tel: (320) 251-7900 ext. 3
Fax: (855) 205-6907
www.StearnsCountySWCD.net

August 17, 2022


Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Attn: Mark Johnson, Executive Director
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 55
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council,

The Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) wishes to formally express our support for the Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program: Phase 1 proposal. This proposal will protect the remaining high-quality forest systems and their associated biota within the Hardwood Hills ecological section.

The focus for this proposal is in the Avon Hills portion of this program area, which is completely located within Stearns County. Stearns County SWCD has been actively engaged in protection and restoration efforts over the years in this geography and has worked closely with Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) and St. John's University on previous conservation efforts. There has been significant and impactful work done to date with tremendous community support. The Stearns SWCD hopes to see these conservation efforts continue, so that this unique and threatened forest system will be permanently protected.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to conservation and for your consideration of the Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program: Phase 1 proposal.

Sincerely,

Dennis Fuchs
Administrator

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