



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Wild Rice Shoreland Protection - Phase V

Laws of Minnesota 2017 Final Report

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### General Information

**Date:** 08/17/2025

**Project Title:** Wild Rice Shoreland Protection - Phase V

**Funds Recommended:** \$750,000

**Legislative Citation:** ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 4(d)

**Appropriation Language:** \$750,000 in the first year is to the Board of Water and Soil Resources to acquire permanent conservation easements on wild rice lake shoreland habitat for native wild rice bed protection. Of this amount, up to \$59,000 is to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for establishing a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of permanent conservation easements must be provided as part of the final report by Board of Water and Soil Resources.

### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Dan Steward

**Title:** Watershed/Private Forest Management Program Coordinator

**Organization:** Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

**Address:** 1601 Minnesota Drive

**City:** Brainerd, MN 56401

**Email:** dan.steward@state.mn.us

**Office Number:** 218-828-2598

**Mobile Number:**

**Fax Number:**

**Website:** bwsr.state.mn.us

### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Crow Wing, Becker, Aitkin and Cass.

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

Northern Forest

Forest / Prairie Transition

**Activity types:**

Protect in Easement

## **Priority resources addressed by activity:**

Forest

Prairie

Wetlands

## **Narrative**

### **Summary of Accomplishments**

Four easements were recorded protecting 780 acres. We exceeded our acreage goal by 280 acres (64%). Slightly over 3 miles of shoreline was protected. This continues to be a successful program protecting an environmentally critical and culturally important resource.

### **Process & Methods**

A local technical team used the scoring and ranking sheet to decide which easements to fund. SWCD staff work with BWSR staff to complete the easement. Easements were completed in Aitkin, Becker, Cass and Crow Wing Counties. In total 3.05 miles of shoreline and 780 acres were protected. The Aitkin and Crow Wing easements are adjacent to each other and together protect approximately 90% (1 3/4 miles) of the Cartie Lake shoreline (Cartie Lake lies on the Aitkin/Crow Wing Counties border). The Becker County easement likewise protects approximately 90% (1.12 miles) of Little Cotton Lake.

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

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

These targeted SGCN are as follows:

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

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

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

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

Easement selection occurs with a goal of maximum wild rice habitat complex protection along all shoreland of a

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

SWCD generated landowner applications will be reviewed and parcels ranked by the project committee with guidance provided by the "Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Criteria Sheet" attached to this proposal. Shoreland protection for wild rice lakes and rivers enjoys widespread support from tribal interests, SWCDs, and other habitat conservation partners.

### **Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition**

There is widespread local support for this ongoing program. BWSR partners with DNR to identify wild rice lakes. DNR is also involved in the wild rice technical committee along with SWCDs. BWSR partners SWCDs and landowners to accomplish easement acquisitions.

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

This was Phase 5 of an existing program. It ran smoothly with no problems.

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

N/A

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

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for maintenance, inspection and monitoring into perpetuity. The BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry-out oversight, monitoring and inspection of its conservation easements. Easements are inspected for the first five consecutive years beginning in the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and partners' staff document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

### **Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>
First 5 years	LSOHC funded stewardship account	Annual monitoring	-	-
Every 3rd year thereafter	LSOHC funded stewardship account	Monitoring	-	-

## Budget

### Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$93,000	\$93,000	\$70,200	-	-	-	\$93,000	\$70,200
Contracts	\$18,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	-	-	-	\$18,000	\$8,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$568,400	\$610,900	\$606,100	-	-	-	\$568,400	\$606,100
Easement Stewardship	\$58,500	\$26,000	\$26,000	-	-	-	\$58,500	\$26,000
Travel	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$400	-	-	-	\$1,300	\$400
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$8,300	\$8,300	\$1,300	-	-	-	\$8,300	\$1,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$1,900	\$1,900	-	-	-	-	\$1,900	-
Supplies/Materials	\$600	\$600	-	-	-	-	\$600	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$712,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$712,000</b>

### Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Amount Spent	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.12	5.0	\$52,600	-	-	\$52,600
Easement Processing	0.12	3.0	\$17,600	-	-	\$17,600

### Direct Support Services

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

BWSR calculates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

**Explain any budget challenges or successes:**

**Total Revenue:** \$0

**Revenue Spent:** \$0

**Revenue Balance:** \$0

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

E. This is not applicable as there was no revenue generated.

## Output Tables

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

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Acres (AP)	Total Acres (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	30	0	37	500	713	0	0	500	780
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>780</b>

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

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Funding (AP)	Total Funding (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	\$27,400	-	\$33,800	\$750,000	\$650,800	-	-	\$750,000	\$712,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$27,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$33,800</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$650,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$712,000</b>

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

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	50	343	0	0	0	0	450	437	500	780
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>780</b>

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

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	\$75,000	\$71,200	-	-	-	-	\$675,000	\$640,800	\$750,000	\$712,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$71,200</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>\$675,000</b>	<b>\$640,800</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$712,000</b>

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

## Explain the success/shortage of acre goals

### Outcomes

#### Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Improved aquatic habitat vegetation ~ *We use number of miles of shoreline and number of acres protected.*

#### Programs in the northern forest region:

Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ~ *We use number of miles of shoreline and number of acres protected.*

## Parcels

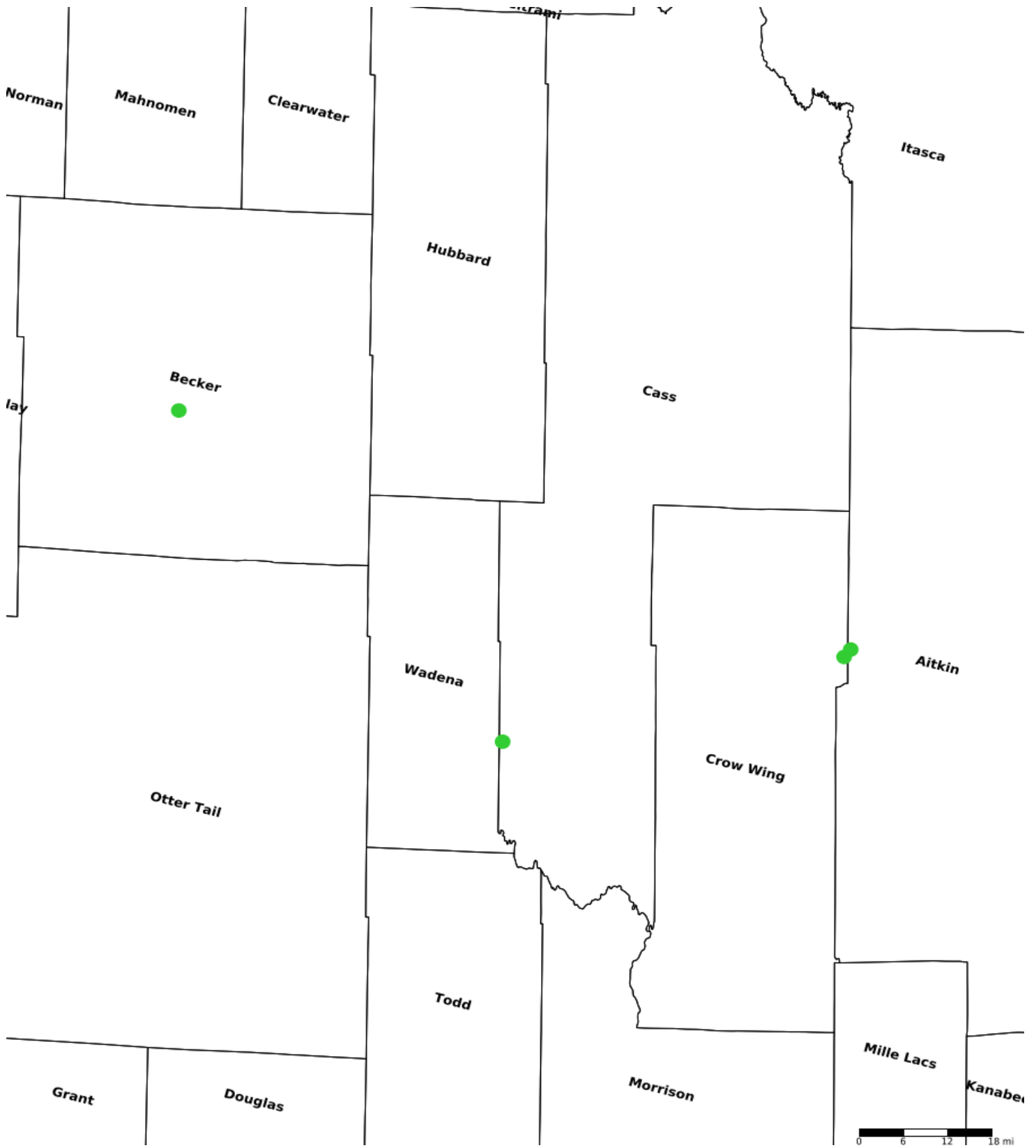
### Sign-up Criteria?

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

### Easement Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
01-10-17-13- -	Aitkin	04827221	118	\$86,900	No
03-02-18-13- -	Becker	14040234	343	\$291,000	No
11-06-19-13- -	Cass	13532218	156	\$119,800	No
18-09-17-13- -	Crow Wing	13625201	163	\$101,800	No

## Parcel Map



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