

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2013 Final Report



Date: July 20, 2018

Program or Project Title: Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex Phase III

Funds Recommended: \$1,780,000

Manager's Name: Robert McGillivray

Title: Senior Project Manager

Organization: The Trust for Public Land

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Legislative Citation: ML 2013, Ch. 137, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(f)

Appropriation Language: \$1,780,000 in the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Trust for Public Land to acquire and restore lands in the Cannon River watershed for wildlife management purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, or aquatic management area purposes under Minnesota Statutes, sections 86A.05, subdivision 14, and 97C.02. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

County Locations: Rice

Regions in which work was completed:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Summary of Accomplishments:

Permanently protected 496 acres (142% of our protect goal) within the Cannon River watershed; areas include wetlands, prairies, Big Woods forest, and shallow lake shoreline. This has reversed habitat loss, improved watershed function, and increased access to public lands.

Process & Methods:

The Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex Phase III program acquired 496 acres of high-quality wetland, remnant Big Woods forest, and shoreline habitat for fish, game and wildlife in the Cannon River watershed located within Rice County. Protection of four large complexes - Koester Prairie (Prairie Creek WMA), Circle Lake (Circle Lake WMA), Erin Township (Big Woods Heritage WMA), and Wells Township (Sunktokeca WMA) provide new opportunities for public hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation.

Located just south of the Twin Cities metro in an area that has seen development pressure due to the close proximity of the Twin Cities, I-35 and the Upper Cannon Lakes, the Cannon River watershed has already suffered fragmentation and habitat loss. Historically

inhabited by Big Woods, the landscape is now dominated by agricultural fields and, to a lesser extent, development. Agricultural practices and shoreline development are also the major contributors to the impaired status of stretches of the Cannon River and its associated lakes and streams.

The Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex Phase III program was designed to address the following problems: degradation and loss of quality and diversity of habitat in the prairie section of the State, degradation of water quality in the Cannon River Watershed; and lack of available public lands for hunting and angling opportunities, especially within an hour's drive for over half of the state's population.

The Phase III program is a part of a multi-year conservation effort, focusing on the Cannon River watershed, that includes acquisition, protection, and restoration of core parcels of land that will contribute to a large complex of restored prairies, grasslands, wetlands, lakeshore, and river shoreline. The Phase III acquisitions were prioritized toward protecting existing large wetland/upland complexes, rare communities (Big Woods forest, oak savanna, tamarack swamp), and shallow lakes. In addition, landowner willingness to sell and the threat of conversion were also taken into consideration. Protection of these lands provides critical habitat for game species, including migratory waterfowl (mallards, canvasback, wood ducks, hooded mergansers, pintails, lesser scaup), upland birds (dove, turkey, pheasant, and woodcock), white tail deer, and fish (northern pike, black crappies, bluegills, bullheads and walleye). Protection will also provide access for a diversity of recreational experiences including duck, pheasant, turkey and deer hunting, lake fishing, and wildlife observation. In addition, restoration work conducted by the MN DNR has been focused on the degraded portions of the lands acquired and has included restoration of agricultural fields near wetlands and lakes back to native habitat.

Four acquisitions were completed with Phase III funding:

1. Koester Prairie (Prairie Creek WMA) (Rice County)

The Trust for Public Land acquired Koester Prairie and conveyed this 460 acre property to the DNR on December 20, 2013 to be managed as a new Wildlife Management Area. This property contains approximately 327 acres of rolling grassland, prairie, and oak savanna that are associated with Prairie Creek and its tributaries and that directly buffer approximately 133 acres of rare and highly significant native prairie. Over forty native upland prairie species have been documented here as well as a number of sedge meadow and wet prairie species. The dry oak savanna found on the property is also extremely rare, with only 13 occurrences of this type documented in the state. The site is known to locals as being the biggest and best birding area in the county. Bird Species in Greatest Conservation Need utilizing this site include: Swainson's Hawk, Upland Sandpiper, Red-headed Woodpecker, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Bobolink.

The Trust for Public Land purchased this property for a total of \$1,885,000 using \$1,032,507 from Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Phase II (ML 2012 OHF; allocated acreage 200), and also \$652,493 in funds from Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Phase III (ML 2013 OHF; allocated acreage 127), and RIM funding of \$200,000 (133 acres).

2. Circle Lake (Circle Lake WMA) (Rice County)

The Trust for Public Land acquired the Circle Lake property on June 23, 2016 and conveyed the 166 acre property to the DNR on March 10, 2017 to be managed as a new Wildlife Management Area. Located directly on the north shore of Circle Lake in Rice County, this new WMA consists of high quality emergent marsh habitat as well as upland grass knolls. This site protects habitat for a wide variety of waterfowl and wildlife, specifically including colonial waterbirds and Blanding's turtles.

The Trust for Public Land purchased this property for a total of \$711,000 using \$339,316 from Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Phase III (ML 2013 OHF; allocated acreage 79), and also \$371,684 in funds from Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Phase IV (ML 2014 OHF; allocated acreage 87).

3. Erin Township (Big Woods Heritage WMA) (Rice County)

The Trust for Public Land acquired the Big Woods Heritage property on June 23, 2016 and conveyed the 130 acre property to the DNR on March 10, 2017 to be managed as a new Wildlife Management Area. Located north of Shields Lake, the headwaters of the Cannon River, this new WMA comprises both rolling upland mixed forest and wetland habitat. The native plant community of Southern Mesic Maple-Basswood Forest is found on this property and it will provide new publicly accessible outdoor experiences including ample hunting opportunities for waterfowl, deer, pheasant and turkeys.

The Trust for Public Land purchased this property for a total of \$520,000 using \$248,164 from Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Phase III (ML 2013 OHF; allocated acreage 62), and also \$271,836 in funds from Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Phase IV (ML 2014 OHF; allocated acreage 68).

4. Wells Township (Sunktokeca Creek WMA) (Rice County)

The Trust for Public Land acquired the Sunktokeca Creek property on June 23, 2016 and conveyed the 199 acre property to the DNR on

March 10, 2017 to be managed as a new Wildlife Management Area. Located just northwest of Faribault, this new WMA protects diverse, high quality emergent marsh habitat, supports a wide variety of waterfowl and wildlife, and provides new publically accessible outdoor experiences within an hour of the Twin Cities including quality hunting opportunities' for waterfowl, deer, pheasant and turkeys.

The Trust for Public Land purchased this property for a total of \$1,040,000 using \$496,327 from Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Phase III (ML 2013 OHF; allocated acreage 95), and also \$543,673 in funds from Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Phase IV (ML 2014 OHF; allocated acreage 104).

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition:

These acquisitions were supported by a number of partners, including but not limited to; the MN DNR, Rice County, Cannon River Watershed Partnership, and Carlton College. In addition to utilizing OHF, MN DNR RIM funds were also critical to the success of the Prairie Creek WMA acquisition.

Additional Comments:

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

NA

Other Funds Received:

- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)

How were the funds used to advanced the program:

These protection efforts utilized the Outdoor Heritage Fund for the significant portion of the acquisition work. The acquisition of Prairie Creek WMA utilized \$200,000 of RIM funding.

In past appropriations, matching funds have been provided from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as part of the Statewide Habitat Corridors Partnership. In addition, the Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex partners will continue to try to seek additional restoration funds from the Clean Water Fund and other sources.

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

The Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex lands have been acquired and conveyed to the DNR who has completed initial site development and restoration work. Restoration work includes hardwood seedling planting and prairie seeding at Prairie Creek WMA. Costs for this work are included in the IDPs attached to the completed parcel reports. The properties will be managed for the long term as WMAs and will be maintained by the Minnesota DNR according to their WMA guidelines.

Outcomes:

The original accomplishment plan stated the program would

Programs in prairie region:

- Core areas protected with highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities, including native prairie, Big Woods, and oak savanna
- Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected
- Improved condition of habitat on public lands
- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need
- Remnant native prairies and wetlands are permanently protected and are part of large complexes of restored prairie, grasslands, and large and small wetlands
- Water is kept on the land

How will the outcomes be measured and evaluated?

Core parcels were identified in partnership with the DNR as well as partners of the Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex. The four new WMAs protected under this phase have diverse wetland, upland, and plant communities, and have improved and increased habitat for waterfowl, upland birds and species of greatest conservation need. Specifically, the acquisition of Prairie Creek WMA has protected a large grassland area, including native prairie, which contains over 40 native upland prairie species and many bird species in greatest conservation need. The acquisition of Circle Lake WMA permanently protected habitat that was previously CRP lands set to

expire.

Budget Spreadsheet

Final Budget line item reallocations are allowed up to 10% and do not need require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

Total Amount: \$1,780,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	Request	Spent	Cash Leverage (anticipated)	Cash Leverage (received)	Leverage Source	Total (original)	Total (final)
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,736,300	\$1,736,300	\$0	\$200,000	RIM	\$1,736,300	\$1,936,300
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$0	\$0		\$7,000	\$7,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
DNR IDP	\$36,700	\$36,700	\$0	\$0		\$36,700	\$36,700
Total	\$1,780,000	\$1,780,000	\$0	\$200,000		\$1,780,000	\$1,980,000

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

Not Listed

All revenues received by the recipient that have been generated from activities on land with money from the OHF:

Total Revenue: \$0
 Revenue Spent: \$0
 Revenue Balance: \$0

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	12	0	28	0	27	0	0	0	67	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	120	61	92	354	67	67	71	14	350	496
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	132	61	120	354	94	67	71	14	417	496

Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?

Type	Native Prairie (original)	Native Prairie (final)
Restore	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0
Enhance	0	0
Total	0	0

Table 2. Total Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands (original)	Wetlands (final)	Prairies (original)	Prairies (final)	Forest (original)	Forest (final)	Habitats (original)	Habitats (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$6,500	\$0	\$15,200	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$36,700	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$595,000	\$213,600	\$458,300	\$1,263,800	\$334,000	\$249,200	\$356,000	\$53,400	\$1,743,300	\$1,780,000
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$601,500	\$213,600	\$473,500	\$1,263,800	\$349,000	\$249,200	\$356,000	\$53,400	\$1,780,000	\$1,780,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	ForestPrairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SEForest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	0	0	0	67	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	350	496	0	0	350	496
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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	417	496	0	0	417	496

Table 4. Total Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban (original)	Metro Urban (final)	ForestPrairie (original)	Forest Prairie (final)	SE Forest (original)	SE Forest (final)	Prairie (original)	Prairie (final)	N Forest (original)	N Forest (final)	Total (original)	Total (final)
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$36,700	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$36,700	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,743,300	\$1,780,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,743,300	\$1,780,000
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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,780,000	\$1,780,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,780,000	\$1,780,000

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles (original)

0.7

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles (final)

.88

Explain the success/shortage of acre goals:

The 67 acres originally listed under "Restore" was incorrectly stated. Per LSOHC staff guidelines, we should not count "Restore" acres on lands that are protected using OHF funds. We exceeded our "Protect in Fee w/ PILT" goal by 142%.

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

Rice

Name	TRDS	Acres	OHF Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?	Description
Big Woods Heritage WMA	11122W23	62	\$248,164	No	Full	Full	fee title acquisition
Circle Lake WMA	11121W09	79	\$339,316	No	Full	Full	fee title acquisition
Koester Prairie WMA	11119W26	260	\$652,493	N	Y	Y	fee title acquisition
Sunktokeca Creek WMA	11021W11	95	\$496,327	No	Full	Full	fee title acquisition

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Completed Parcel: Big Woods Heritage WMA

# of Total Acres:	62
County:	Rice
Township:	111
Range:	22
Direction:	W
Section:	23
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	16
# of Acres: Forest:	16
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	30
Amount of Shoreline:	0 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	MN DNR
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Jeanine Vorland
Annual Reporting Address:	19499 780th Avenue
Annual Reporting City:	Albert Lea
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	55060
Annual Reporting Email:	jeanine.vorland@state.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	507-379-3401
Purchase Date:	June 23, 2016
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$520,000
Appraised Value:	\$520,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$31,861
Assessed Value:	\$379,800
Total Project Cost:	\$520,000
Fees Received:	\$52,006
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	DNR - Wildlife Management Area -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Jeanine Vorland

Completed Parcel: Circle Lake WMA

# of Total Acres:	79
County:	Rice
Township:	111
Range:	21
Direction:	W
Section:	09
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	26
# of Acres: Forest:	20
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	33
Amount of Shoreline:	3148 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	MN DNR
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Jeanine Vorland
Annual Reporting Address:	19499 780th Avenue
Annual Reporting City:	Albert Lea
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	55060
Annual Reporting Email:	jeanine.vorland@state.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	507-379-3401
Purchase Date:	June 23, 2016
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$711,000
Appraised Value:	\$711,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$43,547
Assessed Value:	\$531,501
Total Project Cost:	\$711,000
Fees Received:	\$71,082
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	DNR - Wildlife Management Area -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Jeanine Vorland

Completed Parcel: Koester Prairie WMA

# of Total Acres:	260
County:	Rice
Township:	111
Range:	19
Direction:	W
Section:	26
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	
# of Acres: Forest:	
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	260
Amount of Shoreline:	
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	MN DNR
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Pat Rivers (Jeanine Vorland)
Annual Reporting Address:	19499 780th Avenue
Annual Reporting City:	Albert Lea
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	55060
Annual Reporting Email:	jeanine.vorland@state.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	507-379-3401
Purchase Date:	December 20, 2013
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$1,885,000
Appraised Value:	\$1,885,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$118,644
Assessed Value:	\$1,836,000
Total Project Cost:	\$1,885,000
Fees Received:	\$188,500
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	DNR - Wildlife Management Area -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Jeanine Vorland

Completed Parcel: Sunktokeca Creek WMA

# of Total Acres:	95
County:	Rice
Township:	110
Range:	21
Direction:	W
Section:	11
# of Acres: Wetlands/Upland:	19
# of Acres: Forest:	31
# of Acres: Prairie/Grassland:	31
Amount of Shoreline:	1520 (Linear Feet)
Name of Adjacent Body of Water (if applicable):	
Has there been signage erected at the site:	Yes
Annual Reporting Organization Name:	MN DNR
Annual Reporting Manager Name:	Jeanine Vorland
Annual Reporting Address:	19499 780th Avenue
Annual Reporting City:	Albert Lea
Annual Reporting State:	MN
Annual Reporting Zip:	55060
Annual Reporting Email:	jeanine.vorland@state.mn.us
Annual Reporting Phone:	507-379-3401
Purchase Date:	June 23, 2016
Acquisition Title:	
Purchase Price:	\$1,040,000
Appraised Value:	\$1,040,000
Professional Service Costs:	\$63,721
Assessed Value:	\$753,600
Total Project Cost:	\$1,040,000
Fees Received:	\$104,012
Donations:	\$0
Related Parties:	
Property Managed By:	DNR - Wildlife Management Area -
Name of the unit area or location government unit or land manager:	Jeanine Vorland

Parcel Map

Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex Phase III

