
PROJECT APPLICATION
Dickinson County Water Quality Commission
Cover Sheet

1. Applicant Organization: Pheasants Forever, Inc.
2. Street address: 1783 Buerkle Circle
City: St. Paul
State: MN
Zip: 55110
Email: sburdick@pheasantsforever.org
Phone: 651.773.2000
Organization contact: Steven Burdick
3. Project title: Blackrock Wetlands Project
Location: Iowa Great Lakes Watershed,
Jackson County, MN; Middleton Township
3. Project Director (if different than organization contact): Same
4. Application submission date: September 30, 2016
5. Brief description (75 words or less) of project, including expected results:
The Blackrock Wetlands Project will permanently protect approximately 561.6-acres within the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed in Jackson County, MN. Land protected will become a Waterfowl Production Area owned and managed by the USFWS and open to public recreation. Wetland (26 basins for 112.2-acres) and grassland restoration (449.4-acres) will be conducted providing an estimated 85% reduction in phosphorus and nitrogen annually and a reduction of 30 tons of sediment per 2" rainfall to Big Spirit Lake.
6. Amount requested through this grant application * :\$100,000
7. Matching funds:\$3,207,500 (subject to appraisal and negotiated fee-title acquisition costs)

Hard match: \$3,207,500

Source(s): Pheasants Forever will provide this match through active and to-be-applied-for grants from the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund as well as active and to-be-applied-for grants from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). Further, local chapter dollars and potentially Build-A-Wildlife Area (BAWA) funds will be used as private funds. We currently have multiple active grants in the project area and will be applying for additional grants for this activity (annual grant cycle for both NAWCA and Outdoor Heritage Fund).

Soft match: \$100,000

Source(s): We expect an in-kind donation of local ecotype seed from Iowa's Prairie Resource Center for the restoration of the uplands on the subject tract upon acquisition. However at this point, we could not put a value on this donation.

- a. **Amount of Federal, State or other public cash match money already acquired or in process (list all and current status):** \$3,200,000
- b. **Amount of private cash match funds:** \$ 7,500

- c. **Source of public and/or private cash match (list all): Pheasants Forever (private), Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund (State), North American Wetlands Conservation Act (Federal)**

Is the project a portion of a larger, overall project to be implemented over a multi-year period?
Yes ___ No ___ **X** If yes, describe in project narrative and include in budget form as instructed.

**** The Water Quality Commission will only obligate funds for current fiscal year. Any multi-year projects will be allowed to re-apply in subsequent years***

Type of project (select all that apply):

- ___ Public education, public awareness and information dissemination
- ___ Creation or maintenance of Best Management Practices
- ___ Erection and maintenance of storm water runoff facilities
- ___ Bank stabilization Water treatment
- ___ Water monitoring
- ___ **X** Watershed protection
- ___ **X** Activities to abate and remove invasive species
- ___ **X** Any other activity which will improve, protect or enhance the quality of water in the lakes in Dickinson County

Estimated project dates:

a. Start: 10/1/2016

b. Completion: 10/1/2017

Applicant's signature. Upon signing in the space provided below, the applicant agrees to conform to the requirements pertaining to:

- **Civil Rights Assurance of Compliance:** The applicant hereby agrees that it will comply with Title VI of the Rights Act of 1964, 1873 and the age Discrimination Act of 1975 to the end that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the Applicant-Recipient receives grant funds and hereby gives assurance that it will immediately take any measures to effectuate this agreement.

This assurance is binding on the Applicant-Recipient, its successors, transferees, and assignees, and the person or person whose signature appears below are authorized to sign this assurance on behalf of the Applicant-Recipient.



Howard K. Vincent, President & CEO

9/28/2016
Date

REQUIRED BUDGET FORM

| | <u>Commission</u> | <u>Hard Match*</u> | <u>Soft Match**</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 1. Staff | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| 2. Supplies and Services | \$ _____ | \$ 7,500 | \$ _____ | \$ 7,500 |
| 3. Equipment | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| 4. Travel | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| 5. Water Monitoring | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| 5. Land Acquisition | \$ 100,000 | \$ 3,000,000 | \$ _____ | \$ 3,100,000 |
| 6. Land Development | \$ _____ | \$ 200,000 | \$ 100,000 | \$ 300,000 |
| 7. Other | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Total | \$ 100,000 | \$ 3,207,500 | \$ 100,000 | \$ 3,407,500 |

* **Hard Match is “real money spent” toward project goal.**

** **Soft Match is money indirectly spent toward project goal. (This is important but not included in the dollar amount for points).**

Please see match letters attached.

BUDGET NARRATIVE:

Appraisal & Closing Costs: \$ 7,500 (Hard Match)

Fee-Title Acquisition Costs: \$3,100,000 (Grant Request of \$100,000 and hard match from PF and state and federal funders of \$3,000,000)

Restoration Costs: \$ 300,000 (\$100,000 in soft match from the Iowa DNR for local ecotype seed and \$200,000 hard match for estimated contracted wetland and upland restoration costs from Pheasants Forever and granting sources.)

TASKS AND DELIVERABLES:

| Task/Deliverable | Start Date | Completion Date |
|------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Appraise | 10/1/2016 | 11/15/2016 |
| Negotiate | 11/15/2016 | 1/31/2017 |
| Acquisition* | 10/1/2017 | 10/1/2017 |
| Restoration | 10/1/2017 | 10/1/2018 |

*Our goal is to acquire the property as soon as possible ensuring that we do our due diligence and work with the sellers toward successful completion. Some things are out of our control such as potential issues related to title, contaminants, historical/archeological features, sellers desires, etc. Timeline for each task is based upon our experience with fee-title acquisition projects.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

QUALIFICATIONS OF GROUP OR AGENCY: Pheasants Forever is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to the conservation of pheasants, quail and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public awareness, education and land management policies and programs. Since forming in 1982, Pheasants Forever has protected, restored or enhanced wildlife habitat on more than 14 million acres across the United States and parts of Canada. With a network of more than 700 chapters and 145,000 members across the United States and Canada, Pheasants Forever is a grassroots organization with the ability to complete the subject project. Iowa and Minnesota are Pheasants Forever's top two states with regard to the number of local chapters and total membership. Upon acquisition by PF, we will restore all wetlands and uplands to the fullest extent possible and then donate the property to the USFWS for enrollment into the National Wildlife Refuge System as a Waterfowl Production Area. The project manager of this grant will be Steven Burdick, Minnesota Project Manager for Pheasants Forever. We will work in close consultation with our partners including Todd Luke, USFWS Project Leader for the Windom Wetland Management District, Mark Gulick, Northwest District Supervisor for Iowa DNR and Mike Hawkins, Fisheries Management Biologist, Iowa DNR.

STATEMENT OF PROJECT NEED: The Iowa Great Lakes Watershed is an area of about 88,167 acres (140 square miles) located in northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota. Approximately 76 percent of the watershed lies within Dickinson County, Iowa and the remainder within Jackson County, Minnesota. The Great Lakes Watershed is experiencing multiple concerns including tiling and draining, sedimentation impoundment, and increased turbidity. Acquisition of the Blackrock Wetlands Tract permanently protects 112-acres of restorable wetlands and 449-acres of associated uplands in Jackson County, MN within the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed (see Appendix 1, exact acres subject to survey). This project builds on both previous water quality project investments and the complex of existing permanently protected habitat (see Appendix 2). For example in a 5-mile radius surrounding the subject property there are approximately 840-acres of USFWS WPAs, 95 acres of MN RIM Easements (water quality focus), 400-acres of MN DNR WMAs, 54 acres of USFWS Habitat Easements (wetland and grassland focus), 2,085 acres of land managed by Iowa DNR, 73-acres of Iowa DNR State Park Recreation lands and 10,687 acres of open water/lakes. These total 3,547 acres of already protected lands that this project would connect with and build upon. There are also 585-acres of native plant communities and multiple rare species including 1 species listed as endangered, 1 threatened species, and 2 species of greatest concern on the MN DNR watch list. Strategic targeted conservation (i.e. connecting existing protected lands and focusing on upper watershed protected and restoration) is critical to the future of water quality, waterfowl and associated wetland birds. By protecting these strategic wetlands and associated uplands, we maximize past investments in water quality and create a connected system of productive and more resilient habitat for waterfowl and other grassland/wetland species.

STATEMENT OF PROJECT BENEFITS TO WATER QUALITY: The protection of riparian wetlands is an important management strategy for controlling stream water quality in multiuse agriculture landscapes. Pheasants Forever works very closely with our partners (USFWS, Iowa DNR, and the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission) when prioritizing project locations that maximize water quality and wildlife benefits. This project was deemed a perfect fit for

Dickinson Clean Water Alliance RFP because of its tremendous water quality benefits, its strong relationship with the goals of both the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance, and the opportunity to store and filter water through protecting and restoring wetland and grassland habitat. The main project mission of the plan is to reduce sediment and phosphorous from reaching priority areas. Restored wetlands receiving crop field drainage water are shown to lower concentrations of both nitrogen and phosphorous. Restoration of wetlands and prairie on the subject property will result in estimated reductions of 85 percent of the phosphorous and nitrogen entering Big Spirit Lake annually, and will prevent an estimated 30 tons of sediment from entering that designated Outstanding Iowa Water basin per 2" rainfall.

PUBLIC AWARENESS PLAN: The work and results of this project will be shared in a number of ways, including press releases distributed by Pheasants Forever and/or partners, print or electronic newsletters, PF's Journal of Upland Conservation, social media, or other means. Partners will also be asked to disseminate the project, results, and outreach to their respective client bases. Further, all partners and the community will be invited to dedicate the Blackrock Wetlands project at a public dedication ceremony where a sign recognizing all partners will be erected. This will provide an exemplary opportunity to highlight how clean water and wildlife habitat interests can work together with willing sellers and private landowners to improve our quality of life in the Iowa Great Lakes region.

LAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT:

Project Location: This tract is located in Jackson County. Middleton Township, 31-101-35. 9 miles Southeast of Jackson, MN. See attached map in Appendix 2.

Environmental, Economic and Social Impacts of Project (Demonstrate project impact to water quality and project need in this section): The primary impairment of the Iowa Great Lakes is excessive sediment, which brings with it excessive phosphorous. Each lake in the chain of lakes has its' own unique problems and impairments. However, the root of these lake problems is sediment. The 562-acre subject property is located ~1,100' north of Big Spirit Lake and drains via pump directly into McClelland's Slough (Big Spirit Lake). Conversion of this property from row-crop production to a prairie/wetland complex (featuring over 110 acres of restored wetlands and the elimination of a large pump system), will result in at least an 85% reduction of phosphorous and nitrogen delivered to the lake through this watershed. Additionally, sediment delivery will be reduced by nearly 100% (currently estimated to be approximately 30 tons during a 2 inch rain event).

In addition to the project being a crucial water quality enhancement project for Big Spirit Lake and downstream basins, it will add significantly to existing habitat complexes providing critical habitat for migratory waterfowl and other wildlife species. This expanded complex will also provide quality outdoor recreation and education experiences.

The Blackrock Wetlands project is the latest example of an ever-increasing effort by conservation-minded agencies, groups, and citizens to work together across state and jurisdictional lines to solve common resource problems. A recent example of this type of collaboration was the Minnesota legislature's financial contribution to the Iowa Great Lakes electric fish barrier which prevents Asian carp from entering the Iowa Great Lakes and upstream (MN) waters. The partnership and partner contributions outlined in this grant application are also important in leveraging federal dollars to continue implementing conservation that benefits

water quality, fish and wildlife populations, and people. It is hoped that the Blackrock Wetlands project will be a catalyst for other cooperative efforts that address common resource needs in Iowa and Minnesota.

Further, providing access for 562-acres of high quality wetland and grassland habitat will add to the area's allure as a tourist destination. Hunting, bird watching, and hiking can be done on this tract and will help the local economies by adding quality experiences for the public to enjoy. With over 1M visitors, the Iowa Great Lakes has a lot to offer, and this project helps to protect the lakes from sediment and nutrients while also providing significant public access to the great outdoors.

Historical, Archaeological, and Architectural Features/ Impacts/Land Acquisition, Development

Pheasants Forever, Inc. works in cooperation with the USFWS and the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure that all historical, archaeological and architectural features are evaluated and handled appropriately. This is both an internal requirement and a grant contract requirement when acquiring lands with state (Outdoor Heritage Fund) or federal (NAWCA) grant monies.

Project's Relationship to State, Local and County Plans:

The Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was initially written in 2009 in an effort to target conservation work within the watershed that would result in maximum water quality benefits. This plan was re-written in 2013 with several updates, including better defining priority Resource Management Areas that would benefit most from conservation. At present, the Blackrock Project is near the Loon Lake (MN) RMA, but not within in it. Professionals associated with the WMP agree that in future drafts, the Blackrock tract (and other nearby areas) should be included due to its proximity to Big Spirit Lake, the extensive drainage system that pumps water directly into Big Spirit Lake, and the significant sediment and nutrient reductions that could be realized by restoring wetlands and uplands in this sub-watershed.

The Iowa Wildlife Action Plan is a comprehensive 25-year plan to conserve all of Iowa's wildlife species before they become rare and more costly to protect. The Plan specifically identifies over 850 species of greatest conservation need (including threatened and endangered species) and through a research-based, multi-partner approach, prescribes corrective management actions. Acquisition and development of the Blackrock Wetlands tract will lead to a significant expansion of the large habitat complex located on both sides of the state line, and therefore will further benefit the recovery and sustainability of these species. The Blackrock tract is also within 3-miles of the regionally important 37,000-acre Cayler Prairie Bird Conservation Area and acquisition and development would benefit over 300 bird species that use this area to complete their life cycles.

Agreements and Easements/Land Acquisition/Development

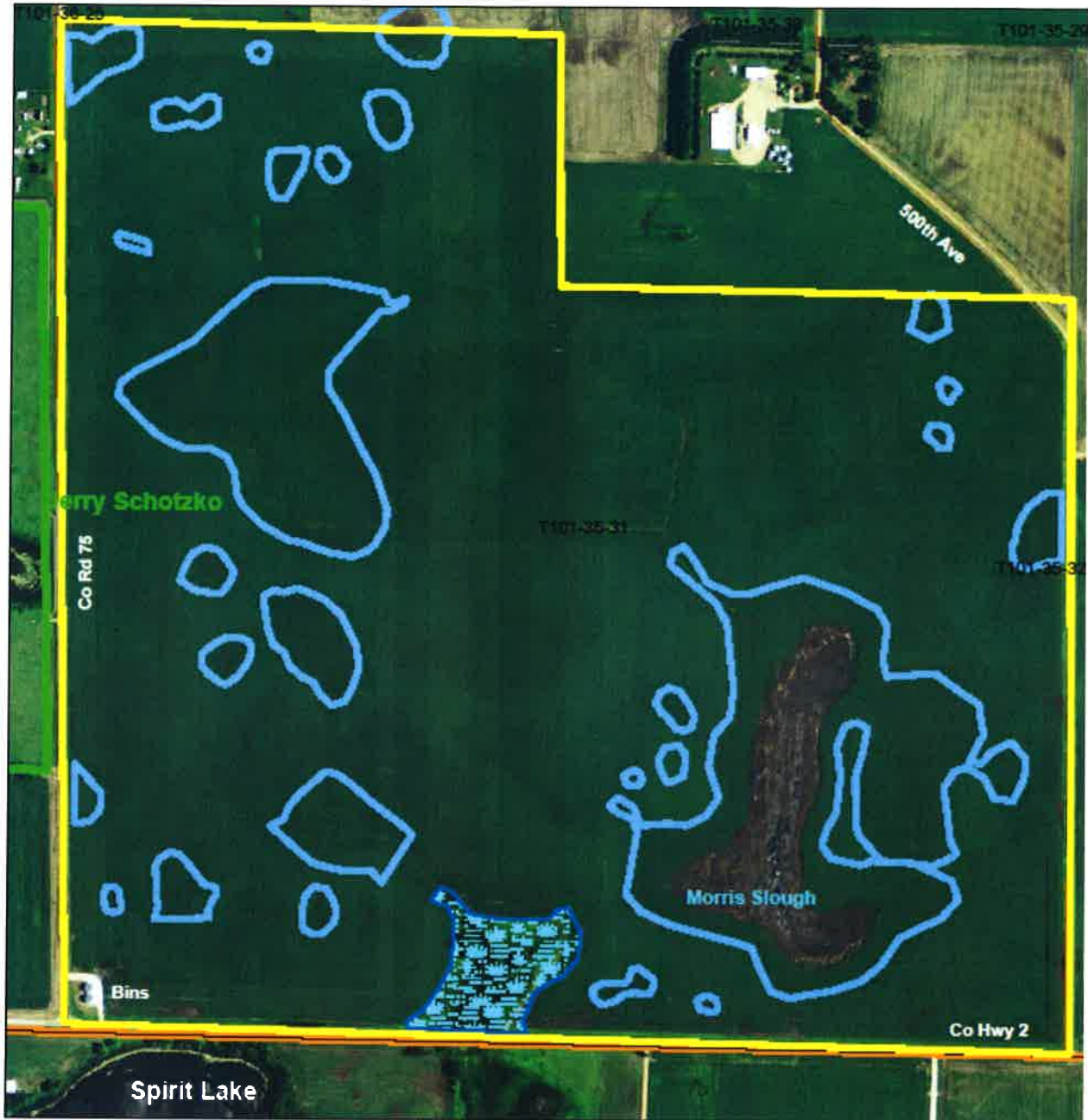
Reservations, easements, leases, mineral rights, water rights, etc. will be identified upon survey. All property rights will be secured. Land acquired will be enrolled into the National Wildlife Refuge System as a Waterfowl Production Area and protected as such.

Itemized Cost Estimate Land Acquisition/Development

List all items and their costs to be included in the acquisition and/or development of the proposed project. Include types of construction, dimensions, lengths, capacities, etc., whenever possible and applicable. Engineering and appraisal fees may also be included. The itemized cost listing will be the basis for determining what items are eligible for assistance when funds are distributed to applicants. Items not listed will not be considered for assistance under this agreement.

1. Appraisal and Closing Costs - \$7,500 Match
2. Fee title Acquisition – 100,000 Grant and \$3.1M Match
3. Restoration - \$100,000 Soft Match from Iowa DNR and \$200,000 Match from PF and funding partners for items that may be required for restoration including but not limited to engineering, surveying, site preparation, permitting, excavation, seeding, clipping, dike building, etc. Restoration plans are to be developed in collaboration with the USFWS, Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund, Iowa DNR and potentially others as needed.

Appendix 1: Blackrock Wetlands Project site map and wetland delineation.



Blackrock Farms Fee Acquisition Proposal Map
Middleton Twp (101-35) - Section 31
Jackson County, MN
561.6 acres
26 restorable wetlands - 111.2 acres

Windom WMD

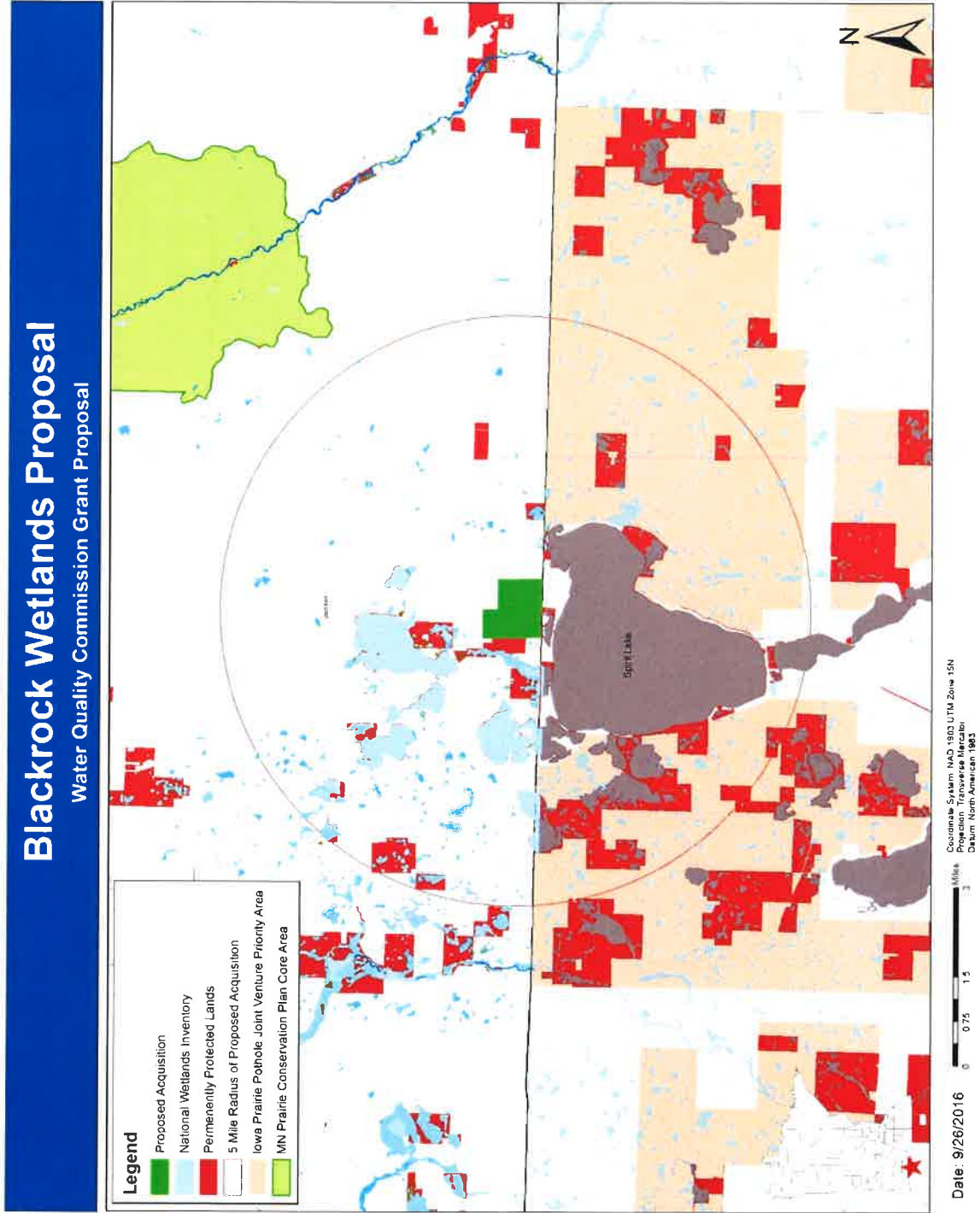
Jackson

Legend

- Blackrock Farms
- USFWS WPA
- IA state Line
- Drained wetlands
- Intact wetland

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Appendix 2: Map of subject property and 5-mile radius showing investments in water quality and habitat.





PHEASANTS

forever

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
1783 Buerkle Circle
St. Paul, Minnesota 55110
(651) 773-2000
(651) 773-5500 FAX
(877) 773-2070 TOLL-FREE
www.PheasantsForever.org

September 27, 2016

Mr. John H. Wills
Dickinson County SWCD
3302 18th St.
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

Dear Mr. Wills,

Pheasants Forever Inc. (PF) is excited to submit and support the Blackrock Wetlands Project proposal to the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission. We believe the proposed project brings tremendous value to water quality in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed as well as providing high quality wetland and prairie habitat and public access. This will accentuate and add value to the high quality experience provided by the Iowa Great Lakes Region to the more than 1 million visitors to the area annually. As outlined in the proposal, our organization commits to \$3,207,500 in funding to acquire and fully restore the wetlands and uplands on the 562-acre subject property. The amount committed is subject to appraisal and successful negotiations with the seller. As with most projects, PF will not do this alone and significant portions of this funding will come from state (Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Fund) and federal (North American Wetlands Conservation Act) grants. We currently have grants in hand and in process that will cover this amount.

Thank you for your work to improve the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed and we look forward to working with you on this and future projects that benefit water, wildlife and people.

Sincerely,



Richard E. Young, Assistant Secretary
Pheasants Forever, Inc.



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CHUCK GIPP, DIRECTOR

Mr. Steven Burdick
Pheasants Forever, Inc.
1783 Buerkle Circle
St. Paul, MN 55110

9/28/16

Dear Mr. Burdick,

As outlined in our partner support letter, the IADNR strongly supports the acquisition and development of the 562-acre Blackrock property in the Minnesota portion of the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed. This project will significantly reduce nutrient and sediment loading to Big Spirit Lake, as well as provide excellent wildlife habitat and public recreation opportunities.

The Iowa DNR agrees to provide local ecotype seed produced at the state's Prairie Resource Unit to seed down the approximate 450 acres of upland soils. Due to production limitations and other Iowa public land development needs, seed availability for this project may take 2-3 years. The value of this seed is estimated to be about \$100,000, based on current market value.

The DNR thanks Pheasants Forever and other partners for using an innovative multi-partner approach to acquire this critical tract and looks forward to partnering with you on other common-interest projects.


Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Gulick".

Mark Gulick
NW Region Wildlife Supervisor, IADNR
122 252nd Avenue
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

712-330-2565

cc. Todd Bishop
Bill Johnson



United to keep our lakes alive!

DICKINSON COUNTY CLEAN WATER ALLIANCE

27 September 2016

Brad Jones
3302 18th St.
Spirit Lake, IA 51360

Dear Mr. Jones,

The Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance fully supports the work the Minnesota Pheasants Forever is doing on the Iowa and Minnesota Border. This project has the potential to improve the water quality of Big Spirit Lake and its watershed.

The Clean Water Alliance 4 goals are to coordinate, educate, communicate, and fund water quality projects within the county. This project is a worthy project that meets each of those four goals.

The acquisition of this site specifically is critical for the following reasons:

- 1) The property is within the 1000 feet priority area outlined in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Management Plan. The Plan states "This zone is critical to the ecosystem as the water from this area has almost instant access to the lakes in a storm and will have the least amount of time to filter out contaminants.
- 2) With proper management it will contain 110 acres of wetland that will serve as a natural catch basin for runoff that currently runs unabated through a tile and pump system directly into McClellan's Slough and Big Spirit Lake.
- 3) The additional upland acres (which will be returned to native forbs and grasses) will increase the filtering capacity of the area and magnify the overall water quality impact of the project.
- 4) Big Spirit Lake is designated as an Outstanding Iowa Waterbody and as such is considered to have among the best water quality in the State of Iowa.

When looking at the Iowa Great Lakes Management Plan, we further see the Loon Lake Resource Management Area (RMA) is a priority RMA with a large amount of sediment and Phosphorous moving toward Big Spirit Lake each year. This property sits at the bottom edge of the Loon Lake RMA and promotes an opportunity to form strong partnerships and bonds with those conservation workers in Minnesota

Unfortunately, modeling and data are only available for about 40% of this property. However, the modeling that has been completed indicates a successful project would reduce pollutant loading to Big Spirit Lake from this area by over 85%. In the modeled areas alone, this represents an 85 pound reduction in phosphorus delivery to the lake. To put that in perspective – under ideal conditions, that is enough phosphorus to grow and maintain 42,500 pounds (21 tons) of algae each year.

The Clean Water Alliance will support this project with technical assistance, coordination, education, and communication.

Sincerely,

John H. Wills
Coordinator, Clean Water Alliance

September 26, 2016

Mr. John Wills
Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District
3302 18th Street
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

Dear Mr. Wills,

As President of the Spirit Lake Protective Association (SLPA) and on behalf of our Board and over 300 members, I am writing to you in strong support of the multi-partner effort to acquire and develop a key tract of land in the Minnesota portion of the Great Lakes Watershed. This land has been a priority for our Association for years. In fact, if our Association was not already committed to spear heading the effort to raise the funds needed to obtain key watershed land east of Spirit Lake, we would be leading the effort to raise funds for this property.

This acquisition is critical for the following reasons:

1. This property is within 1000 feet of the high water mark of Spirit Lake. In referring to this lakeshore border, the Iowa Great Lakes Water Management Plan states "This zone is critical to the ecosystem as the water from this area has almost instant access to the lakes in a storm and will have the least amount of time to filter out contaminants"¹.
2. With proper management, it will contain 110 acres of wetland that will serve as a natural catch basin for runoff that currently runs unabated through a tile and pump system directly into McClellan's Slough and Spirit Lake.
3. The additional upland acres (which would be returned to native forbs and grasses) will increase the filtering capacity of the area and magnify the overall water quality impact of the project.

Protecting the watershed and improving the water quality of Spirit Lake is important. Some reasons include:

1. As part of the Iowa Great Lakes, it offers recreational opportunities to thousands of residents and visitors each year.
2. The lake provides drinking water for a large portion of the region's population (including the cities of Spirit Lake and Orleans).
3. A recently conducted aquatic vegetation survey (done by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources) found that Spirit Lake provides a critical food for migratory ducks. Specifically, wild celery was found in 44% of the sites surveyed in Anglers Bay. This property offers the last opportunity to reduce sediment coming towards the fragile celery beds found in the study.
4. Spirit Lake and the Iowa Great Lakes in general are an economic engine for the entire region. That engine runs on clean water.

¹Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance. (2010). *Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Management Plan*. Spirit Lake, Ia.

Currently during rain events, this high priority 568-acre tract frequently floods as can be seen in this picture. The picture was taken in November of 2015 looking northwest from 700th Street which forms the Minnesota/Iowa border.



Through conversion of this tract from row crop production with periodic ponding to a large prairie/wetland complex, an estimated 85 pounds of phosphorus per year and over 30 tons of sediment per 2" rainfall will be prevented from entering Spirit Lake.

The total cost of this project is estimated to be over \$3,000,000. Pheasants Forever (MN) is taking the lead on acquiring and developing this property using a variety of funding sources. Once acquired, the property will be managed as a Waterfowl Production Area by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The SLPA recognizes this project as an exceptional water quality enhancement opportunity. We encourage the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance to approve this grant request.

Sincerely,

Kirk Huisenga
President
Spirit Lake Protective Association



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CHUCK GIPP, DIRECTOR

Mr. John Wills
Dickinson Soil and water Conservation District
3302 18th Street
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

Dear Mr. Wills,

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IADNR) supports the multi-partner effort to acquire and develop a key tract of land in the Minnesota portion of the Great Lakes Watershed. This high priority 568-acre tract features over 110 acres of restorable wetlands which drain directly into the McClelland Slough portion of Big Spirit Lake via a pump system. Conversion of this tract from row crop production to a large prairie/wetland complex will result in the reduction of an estimated 85 pounds of phosphorus per year and the reduction of over 30 tons of sediment per 2" rainfall being delivered to Big Spirit Lake. Additional project benefits include the restoration of a large habitat complex critical to resident and migrant wildlife species; a premier public recreation/education area that will be used by citizens from many states; and a continued effort by a new and diverse group of partners to address common conservation needs without regards to political boundaries.

The total cost of this project is estimated to be over \$3,000,000. Pheasants Forever (MN) is taking the lead on acquiring and developing this property using a variety of funding sources. Once acquired, the property will be managed as a Waterfowl Production Area by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The IADNR recognizes this project as an exceptional water quality enhancement opportunity and as a means to further build innovative partnerships that address common environmental problems. The IADNR appreciates the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance's consideration to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale L. Garner".

Dale L. Garner, Ph.D.
Wildlife Bureau Chief



September 29, 2016

Mr. Brad Jones
Dickinson Soil and water Conservation District
3302 18th Street
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360

Dear Mr. Jones,

Ducks Unlimited (DU) supports the Blackrock Wetlands Project proposal submitted to the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission by Pheasant Forever. This project will acquire and restore a high priority 568-acre tract within the Minnesota portion of the Spirit Lake Watershed. The project will provide tremendous water quality benefits to Spirit Lake, including reducing nitrogen and phosphorus inflows by an estimated 85%. Acquisition and restoration of this tract will also enhance an existing wetland complex within Dickinson County, providing valuable habitat to breeding and migratory waterfowl. The Blackrock Project complements an extensive number of completed and on-going wetland restoration projects in Dickinson County, including DCWQC-funded projects such as the Marble-Hottes Project, Little Swan Lake and Garlock Slough.

The Blackrock Wetlands Project is an excellent example of the collaborative, cross-state efforts necessary to properly address water quality and habitat needs within the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed. Ducks Unlimited appreciate the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance's consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Michael Shannon
Regional Biologist, Iowa
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.



Iowa
Natural Heritage
Foundation

505 5th Avenue, Suite 444
Des Moines, IA 50309-2321

www.inhf.org
E-mail: info@inhf.org
Phone: 515.288.1846
Toll Free: 800.475.1846
Fax: 515.288.0137

Mr. Brad Jones
Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District
3302 18th Street
Spirit Lake, IA 51360

Dear Mr. Jones,

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation supports the multi-partner effort to acquire and develop a key tract of land in the Minnesota portion of the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed. Water and landscape features do not follow human-created boundaries. Partnerships across political boundaries are key in achieving significant conservation results. Not only is the partnership important, but a sizeable area of wetlands and uplands will be restored benefitting both water quality and wildlife.

INHF is pleased to support a partnership across political boundaries to achieve common conservation needs and hope the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance's will do the same.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heather Jobst".

Heather Jobst
Senior Land Conservation Director

