

Scaling Conservation, Restoring Nature, Shaping Tomorrow



2024 IMPACT REPORT

The Minnesota Land Trust protects and restores Minnesota's most vital natural lands to provide wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor experiences, and scenic beauty for generations to come.



Dear Friends,

The Minnesota Land Trust permanently protected its first property in 1993—an 80-acre heritage oak forest near White Bear Lake.

That first step laid the foundation for something extraordinary. Today, thanks to you—our dedicated community of donors, volunteers, landowners, and partners—there are 725 protected properties across 59 counties and over 130 restored sites, bringing endangered prairies, wetlands, and forests back to life. In fact, 2024 saw the highest number of completed conservation projects in our history: 88.

Your commitment makes this possible. The oaks from our very first project still thrive, safeguarding hundreds of plant and animal species. Across Minnesota, prairies are blooming after a century, wetlands are springing back to life, and migratory birds are returning to restored habitats sooner than anyone imagined.

Together, we are building resilient landscapes, safeguarding clean water, and inspiring the next generation of stewards.

I believe in nature—and I believe in you. With your support, we are protecting what matters most, for today and for generations to come.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.



Kris Larson
CEO



*Cover photo: Common tern having its band examined on Interstate Island.
Photo by Hansi Johnson.*

LETTER FROM THE CEO

2024 Impact



PROTECTION




Total carbon sequestered:
230,000+ metric tons*

This is equivalent to **200,000+** gasoline-powered vehicles driven for one year.†



RESTORATION



3,609
acres restored
44 projects



Our highest number of
acres & projects ever

* The Nature Conservancy Resilient Land Mapping Tool

† United States Environmental Protection Agency
Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator



WATCH YOUR IMPACT GROW

2020

2024

PROTECTION



5,436 acres protected

44 shoreline miles protected



Annual Protection Projects

23

40



Total Acres Protected

61K

82K



RESTORATION



← **161%** more acres restored compared to last year.

Our largest single project:

575 acres



Annual Restoration Projects

14

44



Total Acres Restored

1,236

9,126



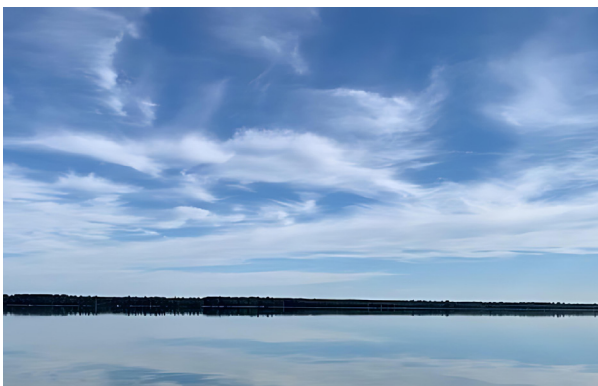
Protecting the Land & Water That Supports Us All

We're not just protecting scenic views or isolated habitats—we're safeguarding entire ecosystems with a forever promise. By connecting landscapes and supporting keystone species, we're rebuilding the conservation estate for future generations, one acre and one partnership at a time.

Resilient Waters: Preserving Minnesota's Iconic Lakes

Minnesota has more deep cold-water lakes than any other state in the lower 48, but they are at risk due to climate warming. Protecting at least 75% of the lands that filter water entering these lakes helps safeguard them against climate change and protects species like tullibee, common loons, and walleye.

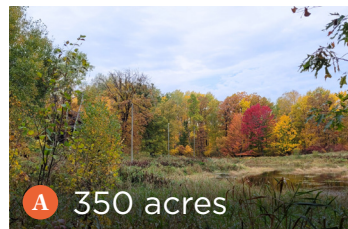
Last year, Kabekona Lake (Hubbard County) and Ten Mile Lake (Cass County) reached this critical 75% milestone through the efforts of the Land Trust and our partners.



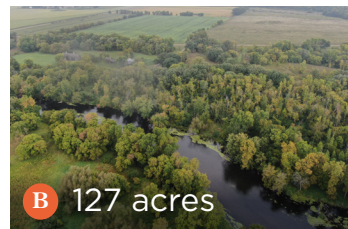
Clouds reflecting off Kabekona Lake. Photo by Catherine Holmgren.

The “conservation estate” is the total collection of lands and waters that are formally or informally protected, managed, and restored to preserve biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources.

2024 PROTECTED PROPERTIES



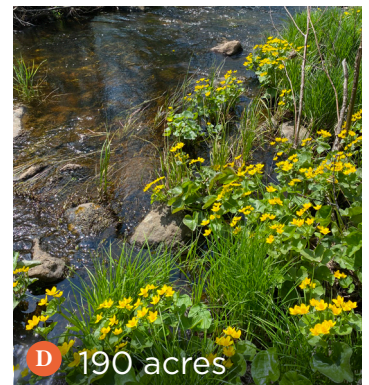
350 acres



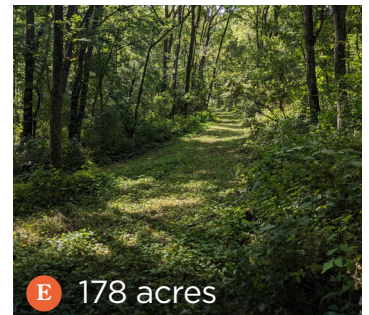
127 acres



200 acres



190 acres



178 acres



PROTECTION

Fulfilling the Land Trust's **protected forever** promise through perpetual **conservation stewardship**.



783

Properties Monitored



90

Volunteer Monitors



1,200

Volunteer Hours

Uniting Landscapes: A Safe Passage for Wildlife

In 2024, the Lourey family and the Minnesota Land Trust partnered to protect over 1,700 acres of forest and wetlands, along with 11 miles of natural shoreline in Pine County. Combined with other nearby protected lands, this creates a 6,000-acre complex of natural habitat and a critical wildlife corridor. The corridor allows safe passage between two state forests for wildlife like wolves and black bears, keystone species that help balance entire ecosystems.

See this important property and hear Becky Lourey's story.



Top — Stewardship Associate Louisa Brody measures grass height at a protected property during a site visit. Photo by Louisa Brody.

Above — At the Lourey conservation easement closing: Land Trust CEO Kris Larson, Program Manager Pat Collins, Becky Lourey, and Director of Land Protection Wayne Ostlie.

HABITAT PROTECTED IN 2024



Permanently safeguarding our natural lands, water, and wildlife.



Making Waves: The Restoration Ripple Effect

Nature's resilience is truly remarkable. Across Minnesota, restoration efforts are sparking profound transformations—from wetlands springing back to life with the return of water, to islands reborn as critical sanctuaries for wildlife. These stories illustrate an essential truth: When we reconnect land, water, and people, recovery accelerates. This powerful ripple effect infuses our mission with hope and resilience.



A Home for Terns and So Much More

From 2019 to 2023, the Minnesota Land Trust led the rebuilding of Interstate Island in the Duluth–Superior Harbor, enhancing critical habitat for its endangered common tern nesting colony. The island's size during high water increased from 2.5 to 6.7 acres, with 1,000 feet of new shoreline added.

While the restoration focused on the common tern, the improvements also benefit up to 60 species of shorebirds, waterbirds, waterfowl, and songbirds. The new shoreline and rare microhabitats—some found nowhere else in the St. Louis River Estuary—provide vital resources for these birds. Because the island is free from humans, dogs, and most predators, these safe habitats have an even greater ecological benefit.

From the arrival of ring-billed gulls in spring to the departure of the last migrating birds in late autumn, Interstate Island now supports more birds per acre than any other location in the St. Louis River Estuary. It has become a critical sanctuary for birds and a testament to Nature's resilience.



Photos on this page: Top left — Killdeer. Photo by Grayson Smith, USFWS. Bottom left — Interstate Island after restoration work was completed. Right — Common terns on Interstate Island. Photos by Hansi Johnson.

Photo on the opposite page: Blue-winged teal in a wetland habitat restored by the Land Trust and USFWS. Photo by Grayson Smith, USFWS.

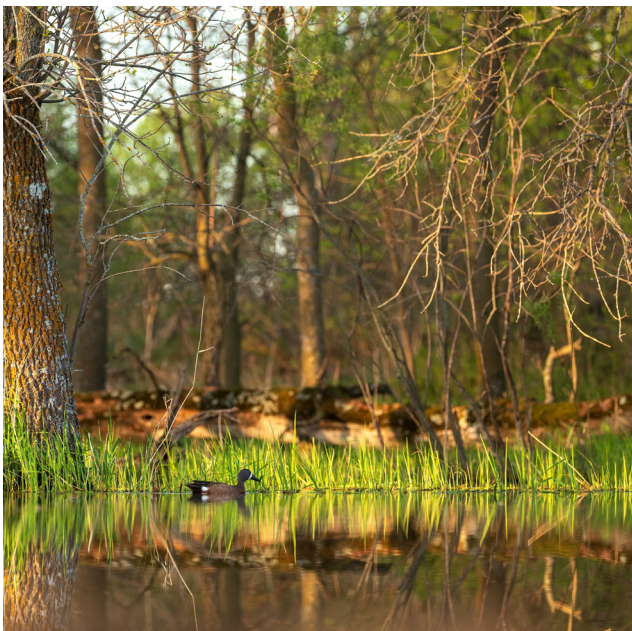


When Water Returns, Life Follows: Reviving Prairie Wetlands

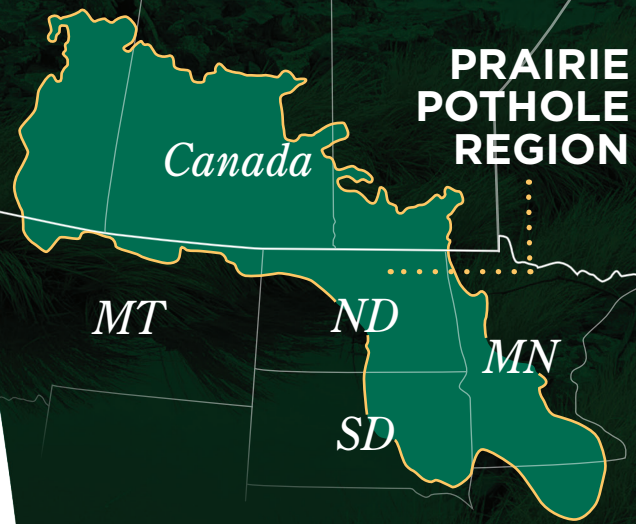
After decades of being drained for agriculture, prairie pothole wetlands in western Minnesota have been severely compromised. Yet, with a helping hand, these resilient habitats can recover quickly—thanks in part to native smartweeds.

These specialized plants are highly adaptable, capable of thriving in challenging conditions and lying dormant as seeds for up to 30 years, waiting for the right conditions to germinate. When we restore water to prairie potholes by removing drain tile and plugging ditches, we unlock the potential within these seeds—but that's only the beginning.

As water returns, the landscape undergoes a dramatic transformation. Native plants quickly repopulate the wetlands, their lush growth inviting insects back, followed by birds, small mammals, and eventually birds of prey. The entire ecosystem re-establishes itself when we just add water.



PRAIRIE POTHOLE REGION



We're leading the way for prairie pothole restoration in Minnesota with the help of our partners.

Minnesota Land Trust has partnered with USFWS since **2016** to restore habitat in western Minnesota.

Today, over **14,000** acres are completed, in progress, or queued for restoration. That's an area about half the size of Itasca State Park.

The prairie pothole region supports over **50%** of North America's migratory waterfowl population.

In North America, we have lost nearly **3 billion** birds since 1970, with grassland species that rely on the prairie pothole region significantly impacted.



From Engagement to Action— Growing Our Conservation Movement

Conservation isn't just about connecting land—it's about connecting people to nature and to one other. Whether we're fostering a love of the outdoors in kids, building inclusive spaces to welcome traditionally excluded groups, or strengthening partnerships that drive our mission forward, every relationship is a step toward rebuilding the conservation estate. This is growth in action, rooted in trust and inspired by the shared vision of a healthier future for Minnesota.

Growing Together: Community & Connection at the Summit

As a founding member of the Duluth Area Outdoor Alliance (DAOA) and sponsor of the Great Lakes Outdoor Summit, we're proud to share that this year's event grew and saw greater participation from BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities. This progress was driven by Sam Armacost, founder of BIPOC Outdoors Twin Ports and a partner in our Engagement programs.

Sam led four outreach sessions across Minnesota to gather input from diverse communities, helping to create a more inclusive and welcoming event. Organizers improved communication, addressed barriers like cost and transportation, and ensured sessions resonated with a broader audience.

Thanks to these efforts, more voices from BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities are shaping the growing movement advocating for Minnesota's outdoors.



Photos on this page: Top — Keynote speaker Connor Ryan speaks to attendees after his speech at the Great Lakes Outdoor Summit. Middle — Summit attendees visited Hartley Nature Center in Duluth. Photos by Megan Zabel. Bottom — Hansi Johnson and Sam Armacost at the Summit. Photo by Adam Breining.

Photos on the opposite page: Top — Nature-based learning at Avon Hills Folk School, where 58 acres have been permanently protected. Photo by Avon Hills Folk School. Bottom — Program participants paddling at Camp Hiawatha, where 66 acres have been protected forever. Photo by Camp Hiawatha, part of Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry.



Investing in the Future—Nurturing the Next Generation of Nature Stewards

Last year, the Minnesota Land Trust protected the Avon Hills Folk School in Stearns County and Camp Hiawatha in Itasca County. Ensuring that kids can participate in meaningful outdoor experiences today is a vital part of the Land Trust's mission that dramatically extends the reach and impact of our work.

The child who learns to paddle a canoe at Camp Hiawatha or discovers nature through play at Avon Hills Folk School might one day become a conservation leader or a community advocate. While we can't predict the future, we know this: protecting more places where children can grow, learn, and connect with nature is an investment in their potential—and in the future of our planet.



YOUR IMPACT FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

Camps, nature centers
& ELCs protected:

17  

Acres protected:

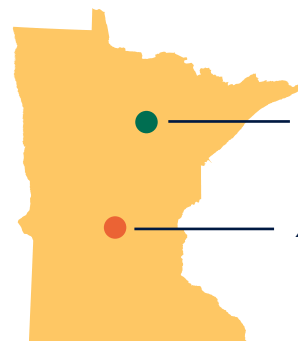
5,100
acres 

Shoreline preserved:

36 miles 

10K+ families served

Millions
of memories made



Camp Hiawatha

Avon Hills Folk School



Leadership Support

Our work is made possible through the generous financial support of our donors. Thank you to the individuals and groups that donated between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, named below, as well as the many people who contributed up to \$999.

\$50,000–\$99,999

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Maureen Wiegner
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\$1,000–\$4,999

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 Virginia Klenk
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 Linda Kriel
 Peggy Ladner and Clif Brittain
 Kris and Christine Larson
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 Steph Lee
 Richard Leppert
 Douglas H. Lewis
 Hans and Louise Liao
 Erik Lindseth and Kristin Benson
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 Helen Mairs
 Kari and David Marsch
 Bob and Siri Marshall
 Mary Maurice and Sandra Sedo
 Daniel May
 McKesson Matching Gifts Program
 Medtronic Matching Gift Program
 Bill and Sue Metzger



Supporters show why conservation matters to them at the 2024 Minnesota Made Gala. Photo by Tom Sullivan.

Leadership Support (continued)

\$1,000–\$4,999

Clint and Patty Miller

Nicholas Miller

Charles Misner

Lucy Mitchell – The
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Muster

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Eric and Jessica Rhyner

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Tim Krueger

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Zumbusch

Jennie and Andy Zumbusch



Land Trust CEO Kris Larson, former board member Carolyn Kohrs, and grandson, Quinn, at Gale Woods Farm. Photo by Adam Breining.

Planned Gifts

We are deeply grateful to the individuals and families who have included the Minnesota Land Trust in their estate plans, leaving a lasting legacy for the places they love.

*We honor the memory of those who have passed, noted with *.*

Anonymous
Arthur Thomas Alm Trust*
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If you'd like to learn more about including the Minnesota Land Trust in your estate plans, contact us at 651-647-9590 or mnland@mnland.org.

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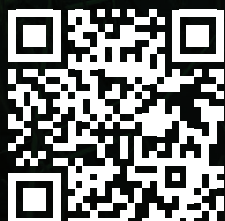
For a staff list, visit mnland.org/staff.



The USFWS presents the Minnesota Land Trust with the 2024 Partner award. Photo by Ned Phillips.



The Minnesota Land Trust team tours Avon Hills Folk School. Photo by John Geissler.



Get the digital annual report and full lists of landowners, volunteers, donors, and individuals who have been lovingly memorialized with a gift to the Minnesota Land Trust at mnland.org/2024-annual-report.

Financial Summary

Balance Sheet for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

Assets	2024	2023
Cash, Pledges & Investments	\$18,767,200	\$15,559,714
Net Furniture, Equipment & Operating Lease	\$250,321	\$287,888
Land Held for Resale/Conservation	\$134,000	\$163,260
Beneficial Interest in Real Property	\$29,260	\$811,200
Total Assets	\$19,180,781	\$16,822,062

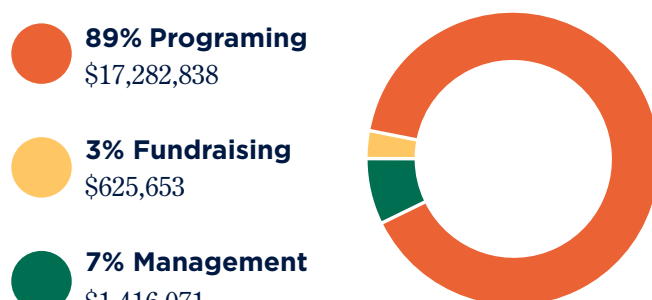
Liabilities & Net Assets	2024	2023
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$742,616	\$668,084
Other Liabilities	\$262,819	\$294,251
Net Assets: Without Donor Restrictions	\$8,166,124	\$5,452,181
Net Assets: With Donor Restrictions	\$10,009,222	10,407,546
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$19,180,781	\$16,822,062

The Minnesota Land Trust is committed to strong fiscal health and transparency. This financial summary is based on a complete financial audit, which was conducted by Redpath and Company, Ltd. Their full report is available online at mnland.org/trust-transparency or by calling the Minnesota Land Trust at 651-647-9590.

Fundraising & Revenue	2024
Charitable Support from Individuals	\$1,762,734
Charitable Support from Foundations, Corporations & Organizations	\$495,724
State of Minnesota: Conservation Easement Acquisition & Restoration Programs	\$15,916,776
Other Public Funding	\$1,679,601
Investment & Interest Income*	\$1,750,692
Other Revenue	\$34,654
Total Support & Revenue	\$21,640,181

**Includes Unrealized Gains (Loss)*

Expense Allocation	2024
89% Programing	\$17,282,838
3% Fundraising	\$625,653
7% Management	\$1,416,071
Total Expenses:	\$19,324,562





Paddlers on the St. Louis River National Water Trail. Photo by Hansi Johnson.



We are grateful to our donors, our partners, and the generous landowners who protect their land forever. Many of these projects would not be possible without funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature and recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and the Minnesota Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.



**MINNESOTA
LAND TRUST**

Main Office: 2356 University Ave.
W. #240, Saint Paul, MN 55114

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