



Annual Report 2022

HALEY GOLZ



Dear Friends,

IF THERE WAS A NEW TECHNOLOGY that could store immense amounts of carbon, was already designed and built, was relatively affordable, and could address nearly one-third of the necessary reductions in greenhouse gasses, we would all be ecstatic, right?

And what if this technology also cleaned our water, supported wildlife, made us healthier and did not require upgrades and maintenance? The level of investment in this technology would be off the charts!

Well, we already have this technology. It is land conservation, the daily work of the Minnesota Land Trust. When the board of trustees passed the Climate Change Action Plan last year, we heartily acknowledged that, while we have been investing for years in natural climate solutions, we need to do more.

We need to be even more strategic in our land protection to invest in the most resilient landscapes. We need to increase the pace of our restoration program to store more carbon and connect important migratory pathways. We need to determinedly work towards climate solutions that are inclusive and equitable. And we need to amplify the story of how protecting and restoring our natural systems is essential to our future.

This past year we made great strides on these commitments. We completed 28 conservation easement projects and worked on more than sixty restoration projects. We conserved land in just about every type of habitat found in Minnesota, ranging from the northern forests along Burntside Lake near Ely to the rolling blufflands in southeastern Minnesota. These projects, in addition to over 630 projects that we have completed in previous years, not only store significant loads of carbon, but they make our state more naturally resilient in the face of climate change.

It was also a wonderful year for our partnership with camps and nature centers. We protected four more institutions, bringing our total to 20 across the state. Camps and nature centers have educated thousands of people over the years, and our partnership will ensure that thousands more have the opportunity for life-changing outdoor experiences.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to Minnesota conservation!



Kris Larson
CEO



We protect and restore Minnesota's most vital natural lands in order to provide wildlife habitat, clean water, outdoor experiences and scenic beauty for generations to come.

PROTECT:

Preserving the Minnesota places that matter most today and for future generations

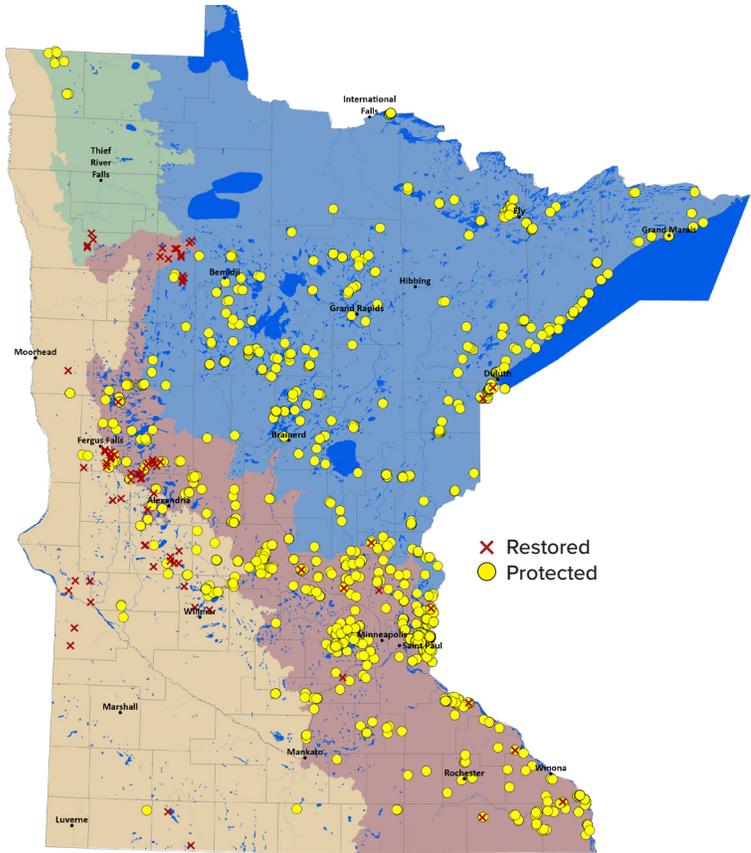
RESTORE:

Partnering with property owners and other conservation agencies to rehabilitate protected lands and water

ENGAGE:

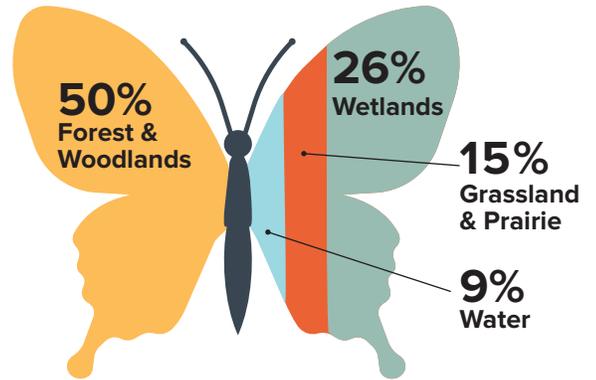
Building connections to nature and each other

Minnesota Land Trust's Impact



OUR PROTECTED PROPERTIES AND RESTORATION SITES

PROTECTED IN 2022



OUR IMPACT 1991-2022



What We Do

Habitat Defragmentation

51%

Properties located 1,000 feet or less from state or federally protected lands

Water Protection

72%

Properties located 1,000 feet or less from a 1-acre+ river or lake

Carbon Storage

143,325 TONS **CO₂**

Stored in Land Trust forests & woodlands in 2022, equal to annual emissions of 31,157 cars

Nature Engagement

4

New camps & nature centers protected serving thousands of youth & adults

Minnesota Land Trust's Climate Change Action Plan

Climate change impacts Minnesotans year-round in significant ways. We experience warmer nights and winters, and longer periods of drought punctuated by more severe precipitation events.

In 2022, the Minnesota Land Trust adopted a Climate Change Action Plan to further focus our existing Conservation Agenda and ensure we're promoting natural climate solutions at every opportunity.

In 50 years, Minnesota's climate is expected to resemble that of present-day Missouri, approximately 500 miles south.

With this shift, prairies will most likely remain intact while our forests are expected to shrink. Boreal forests, whose southern range is in the Arrowhead region of Minnesota, will likely disappear, changing over to broadleaf hardwood forests. With this change will come the loss of iconic species like moose. Cold-water lakes and streams will warm, changing the composition of the plants, fish, and other wildlife that they can support.

We can address these changes by building on work we're already doing in land protection and restoration. As Minnesota Land Trust CEO Kris Larson observed, "Researching and defining an organization-wide Climate Change Action Plan uncovered some areas where we can improve our focus and measure our impact differently. But the big picture is that most of our organization's work over the last 30 years has been the work of investing in natural climate solutions. We should celebrate that. And accelerate it."



Up to **37%** of the United States' climate goals outlined in the Paris Climate Accord could be met through natural climate solutions:

- Preserving species biodiversity and habitat continuity
- Improving ecological resiliency and environmental services through habitat restoration
- Protecting more carbon-storing lands from development

Protection Priorities & Land Stewardship Opportunities

In order to effectively leverage natural climate solutions, it's important to accurately identify the most critical or resilient properties and place them under protection—an effort that can take the coordination and cooperation of many people and multiple agencies, across many months (or more). As each new property adds to the growing portfolio of protected lands, our focus expands to supporting private landowners and climate-forward restoration initiatives.

The Minnesota Land Trust has placed over 75,000 acres of land into permanent conservation easements, protecting

the natural habitats on these properties as well as the wildlife that resides there. These lands will not be disturbed for large-scale development, agriculture, peat or timber harvest. And our protected lands aren't sitting passively. Not only are they filtering water and providing habitat for wildlife, but they're storing carbon and producing oxygen as well.

These protected lands will not escape the impacts of our changing climate, but we can help them better adapt to and respond to climate change through climate-forward land management and restoration initiatives. That's why part of our Climate Change Action Plan includes partnering with engaged landowners to better facilitate environmental services and adaptation to climate change on their protected properties.

Climate-Forward Restoration

Because climate change is happening at a rapid pace, our approach to ecological restoration has evolved in order to ensure that the habitats we create will thrive into the future.

Our climate-forward approach to restoration involves prioritizing sites with features that are resilient to the effects of climate change, using more southerly varieties of native plant communities that will thrive in future conditions, and identifying and prioritizing projects that help build natural land corridors to assist the movement of native species to more suitable locations.

“The goal with all our restoration work is to support habitat availability and integrity for future generations of plants, animals, and humans. In order to do that well, it is imperative that we design our projects for climate adaptation using the best available knowledge,” says Gini Breidenbach, Restoration Program Manager. “A recent example of this is our work planting trees in coastal forests that are threatened by emerald ash borer. The suite of tree species we are planting was selected based on the most recent research regarding predicted species ranges of trees with climate change.”

The Minnesota Land Trust is committed to working with restoration partners like the US Fish and Wildlife Service,

the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to double the pace of our work by 2027, deploying more climate-forward restoration initiatives to help landscapes adapt more readily and facilitate species migration.

“It’s great to see an organization that is actually integrating land protection with land restoration. Minnesota Land Trust is doing its part to repair the broken landscapes around us and rebuild their capacity for supporting our plant, insect, and animal neighbors. By doing so, it is also helping to ensure humans can thrive.”



Gabe Ericksen,
Minnesota Land Trust supporter
and restoration partner

HALEY GOLZ



Left: An oak savanna restoration project using a mower to remove woody vegetation and invasive buckthorn from a Southeast Minnesota bluff; Lower-left: Pine County restoration converting 40 acres of crop fields to a mix of diverse native prairies and meadows with three different wetlands; Below: Community Action Duluth Stream Corps performs tree planting as part of a coastal wetland forest restoration project in the St. Louis River Estuary.

HALEY GOLZ



Climate Change Impacts All, but Unequally

The effects of climate change are not evenly distributed and have a disproportionate impact on historically and presently underserved communities, including low-income Minnesotans, people with disabilities and chronic health conditions, seniors and the very young, Indigenous communities and people of color. Not only are the effects on these groups greater, but the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing inequitable social conditions.

Because of this, a core tenet of our Climate Change Action Plan alongside our diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) framework is to seek and build meaningful relationships with underserved communities in our state.

We will not only amplify the voices of those who have historically been shut out of conservation and forcibly

removed or excluded from natural spaces, but we will also engage in restorative climate justice practices like connecting underserved communities with funding for conservation and restoration projects that directly benefit them.



“One of the easiest decisions I’ve ever made was to put this land in a conservation easement to protect it forever so that future generations can benefit.”

Ann Bancroft,
polar explorer and landowner

KANATI LAND MANAGEMENT



Above: Aerial photo of a protected property in Minnesota’s “Duck Factory,” providing important habitat for migrating and resident waterfowl and birds;
Above right: Lady’s slipper orchids; Lower right: This Stearns County protected property preserves 148 acres and significant shoreline on Little Watab Lake.



HANSI JOHNSON



KATELIN GOEBEL

We are grateful to our donors, partners, and the generous landowners who protect their land forever. And finally, 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.



Financial Summary

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

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022

Assets	2022	2021
Cash, Pledges & Investments	\$14,355,969	\$15,818,347
Net Furniture & Equipment	\$19,105	\$28,544
Land Held for Resale/Conservation	\$163,260	\$192,760
Beneficial Interest in Real Property	\$811,200	\$811,200
Total Assets	\$15,349,534	\$16,850,851
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$429,656	\$675,149
Deferred Revenue	\$286,348	-
Net Assets	14,633,530	\$16,175,702
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$15,349,534	\$16,850,851

FUNDRAISING & REVENUE

Charitable support from individuals	\$1,662,960
Charitable support from foundations, corporations & organizations	\$219,997
State of Minnesota:	
Conservation easement acquisition & restoration programs	\$8,876,598
Other public funding	\$1,294,693
*Investment & interest income	(\$1,677,446)
Other revenue	\$18,205
Total Support & Revenue	\$10,395,007

*Includes Unrealized Gains (Loss)

EXPENSE ALLOCATION:

Program	\$10,740,935
Fundraising	\$369,771
Management	826,473
Total Expenses	11,937,179



Senior Leadership Staff

- Claire Colliander** | Director of Finance & Operations
- Hansi Johnson** | Director of Conservation Engagement
- Kris Larson** | Chief Executive Officer
- Wayne Ostlie** | Director of Land Protection
- Daryl Peterson** | Director of Restoration Programs
- Jennifer Scholl** | Director of Development & Communications
- Sue Steinwall** | Director of Conservation Stewardship
- Jocelyn Walters-Hird** | Sr. Staff Attorney



Staff group photo at St. Croix State Park, 2022.

Board of Directors

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
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| Austin Damiani | Jane Kingston | Menaka Mohan | Fay Simer | Elizabeth Winton Secretary |
| Liz Dillon | John Knapp | Jim Payne | Rick Snyder | Jane Wyatt Treasurer |
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| Brandon Haugh | Bridget Levin Chair | Todd Reubold | Jim Stark | |
| Jeff Hayward | Alexis Ludwig-Vogen | Rick Rosvold | Peter Vorbrich Vice Chair | |



From left: Volunteer of the Year award recipient Nona Goertz and Andrew Moe, Treasured Places 2022; Minnesota Made Gala 2022; Senior staff and board members tour sites near Duluth during Treasured Places 2022.

Supporters

Use the QR code or go to mmland.org/2022-annual-report to view names of supporters, including landowners, volunteers, donors, and individuals who have been lovingly memorialized with a gift to the Land Trust.



www.mmland.org | 651-647-9590 | Toll Free: 1-877-MLT-LAND

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