# Minnesota Valley Trust and Minnesota Valley NWR & WMD Complex

Brooke Burrows

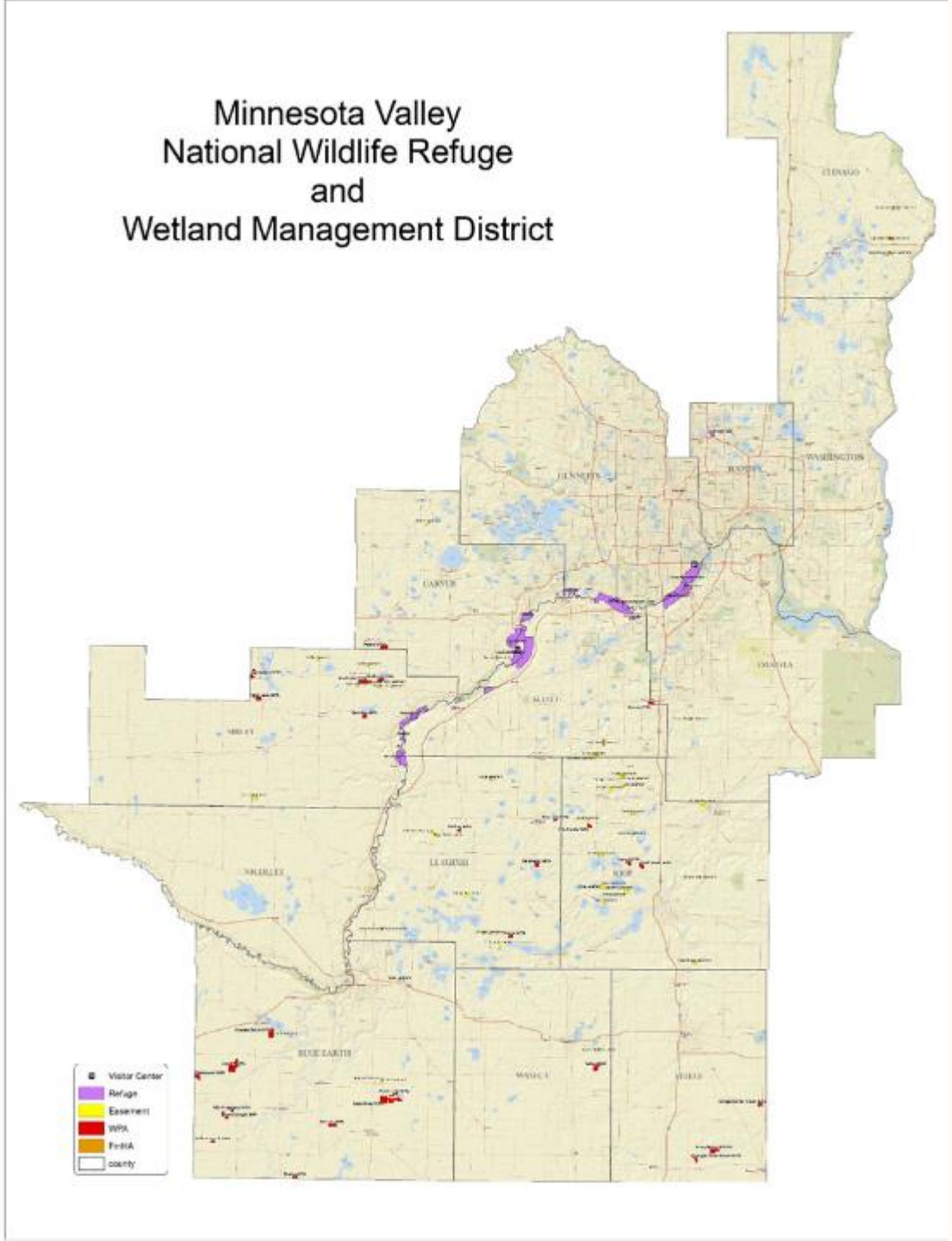
Wildlife Refuge Specialist

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# Brooke Burrows

Wildlife Refuge Specialist at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District

- Career Pathways Placement January 2017
- Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District
- Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge
- Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge




# Urban Refuge: Minneapolis/St. Paul

- Refuge Founded in 1976 To protect the habitat form development in the growing metropolitan area of Minnesota.
- Twin Cities Population ~3,600,000
- Headquarters and refuge Units Located close to MSP Airport

# Conflict

- Minneapolis/St.Paul Airport Runway expansion
- Encroaches on Refuge acquisition boundary causes cumulative effects of disruption to wildlife from noise pollution
- Impedes ability to use main “outdoor classroom” for interpretation and environmental education

# What Would You Do?

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# Minnesota Valley Trust
# and
# Minnesota Valley Lands Inc.

# Partnership in the Making

- Refuge Staff and local Natural Resource groups come together with a mitigation plan
- Asked for the $26million to be set aside specifically for the Refuge
- August 2001 Minnesota Valley Trust is Born
  - All the mitigation funds set aside to the 501c3 Organization

# Minnesota Valley Trust

- 5 Supporting Organizations on the Trusts Board: Audubon MN, Friends of MN Valley, Carver County Commissioner, MN DNR, MN Waterfowl Association, MN Valley Lands Inc.
- Purpose: to manage the investment and spending of the mitigation funds
- Objectives: Acquire, restore, and enhance at least 4,090 acres, construct a new visitor center, and construct other visitor access for EE and wildlife interpretation

MINNESOTA VALLEY TRUST
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.

# Minnesota Valley Lands Inc.

- Created to Protect Trust from litigation
- MN Valley Lands holds the purchased properties of the Trust
  - If a suit were to be laid against the land, the Trusts mitigation funds would be secure
- Allows for Partners for Fish and Wildlife funds and biologists to work on the restoration

# Exceeding Expectations

- By 2013 the Trust had acquired 4,977ac of land
- Due to financial investments, the Trust still had $25million
- This financial success allowed the Trust to continue supporting MN Valley NWR & WMD

# New Objectives

- The Trust created a new Objectives to continue it's mission and use the funds from the mitigation plan
  - Acquire and restore at least 3,000ac
  - Provide Financial support for MN Valley via maintenance, operations, and other subsidies for programs.

# Up to Date

- The Trust has acquired 919ac
- Many acquisitions are in progress
- 5 positions are funded via the Trust
- Maintenance projects are taken on: Addition of bathrooms in basement to Rapids Lake Visitor Center, purchasing reverse osmosis for the Rapids Lake Visitor Center
- Grant Collaborations and Matching
- Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa 11month Crews

# What Do You Think?

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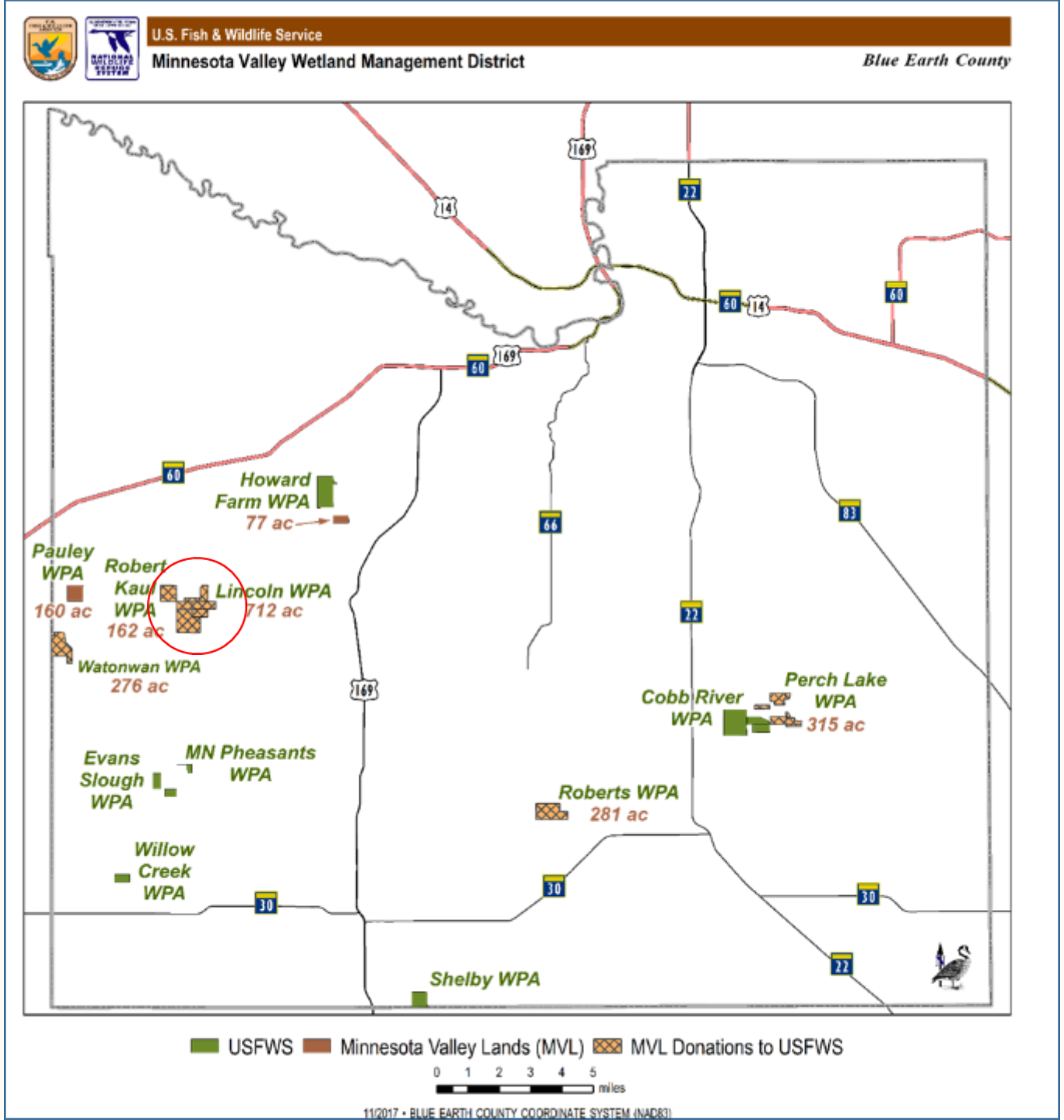
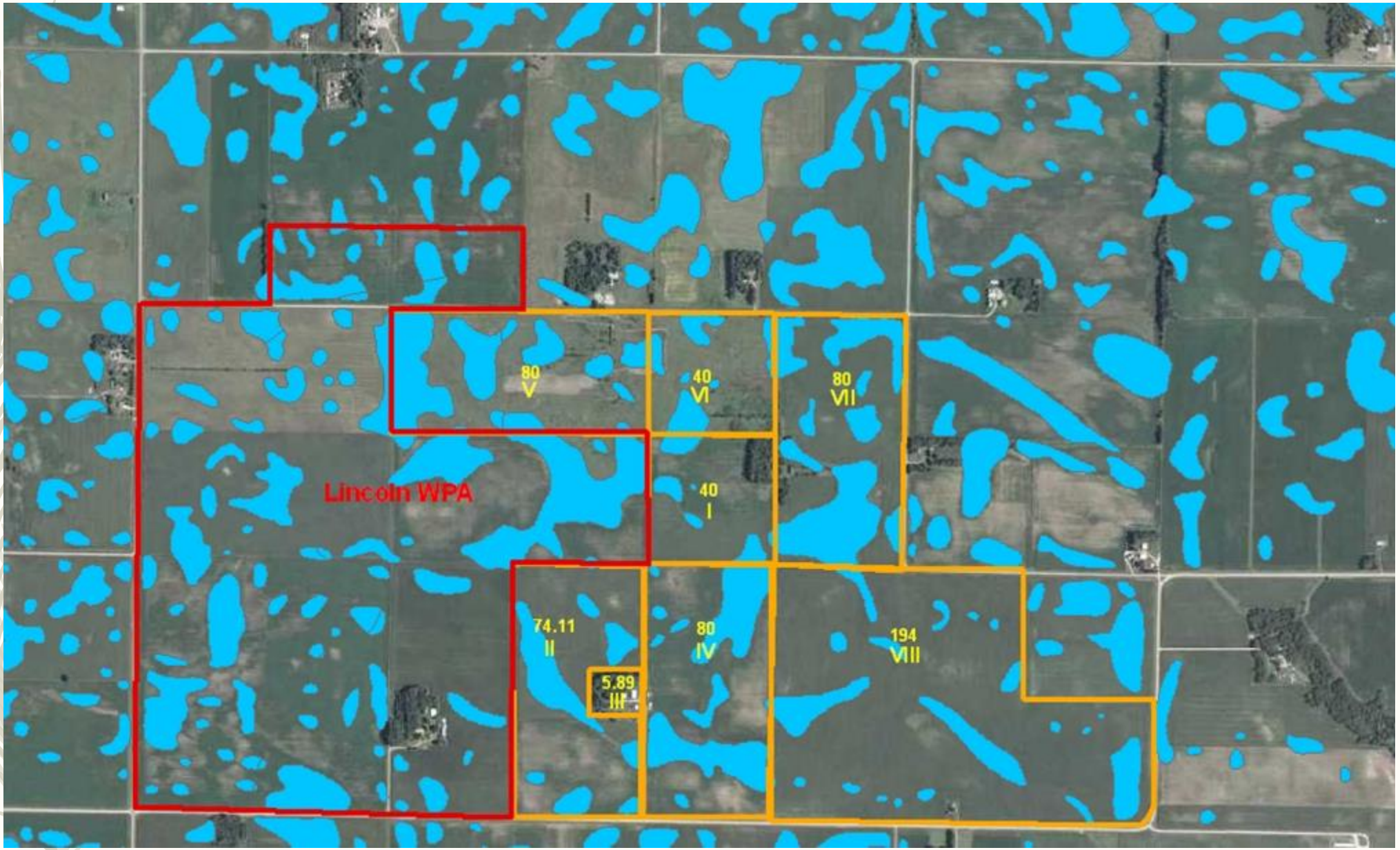
# Acquisition and Restoration Projects

Lincoln WPA Example




# Blue Earth Co.

- 12 Waterfowl Production Areas
- 5 Purchased, restored, and donated via the Trust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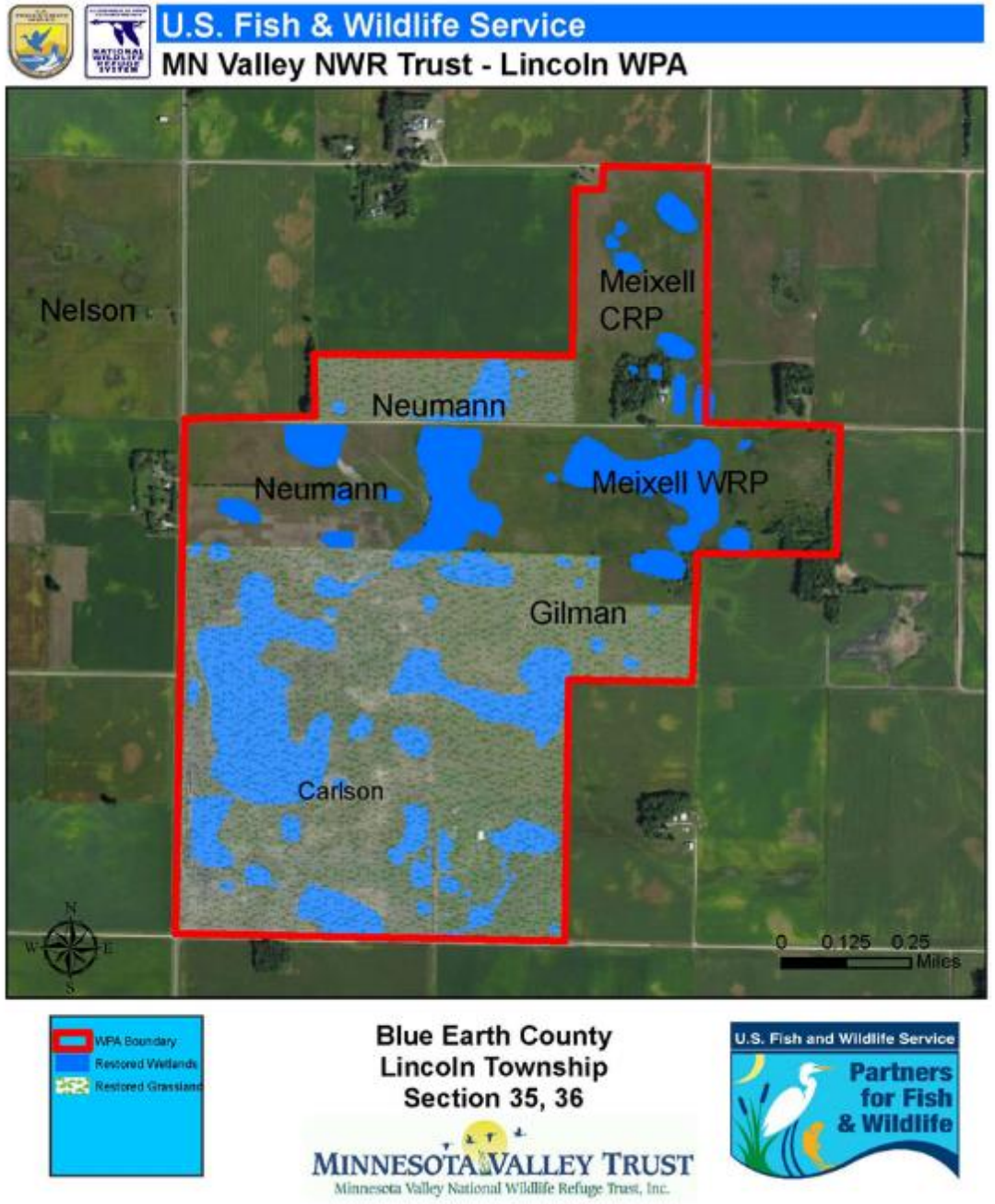


Habitat

- >620 acres restored since 2011
- 80 wetlands totaling 160 acres
- 70 acre brood basin supports > 15 waterfowl broods now
- 500+ acres upland planted to diverse prairie

Benefits

- Over 10,000 birds migrate through
- Many rare plant and animal species
- Good for water quality
  - Head of 2 County ditch systems
- Local use and increase in landowner interest
- Ecotourism
- Many Studies being undertaken
  - Monarchs, pollinators, grassland birds, waterfowl, seed mixes

# The Trust and Managing By Network Lesson Connections

# Lessons from MbN

- 4Rs: Recognize, Respond, Resolve, Reflect
- Succession Planning and Management
- Collaborative Leadership
- Shared Goals and Priorities
- Risk Treatment Options:
  - Avoidance, Reduction, Sharing, Retention
- Partner Life Cycle
  - Partner Cultures, Goals, Hierarchy

# Questions?