

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
FY 2011 Recommendation
Accomplishment Plan**

Date: 12/22/2009

Project or Program Title: Lower Mississippi River Habitat Restoration Partnership

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	Council Recommendation Funding	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Funds Recommended (\$000s)	FY 2011			
Outdoor Heritage Fund	1,000	0	0	0

Appropriation Language

Abstract

The Lower Mississippi River Habitat Restoration Partnership is a long-term effort to restore habitat connectivity and improve water quality in critical areas along the Mississippi River corridor from the Twin Cities to the Iowa border by reconnecting tributaries to their floodplains, revitalizing backwaters and channels, and protecting and restoring floodplain forests, wetlands, and prairies that are essential to sustaining the incredible diversity of plants, animals, and human uses provided by this great river. Critical areas include the lower reaches of the Root, Zumbro, Cannon, and Vermillion Rivers, and the backwaters and channels of Mississippi River Pools 2 and 3 (St. Paul to Red Wing). FY2011 funding from the LSOHC will focus on acquisition and restoration of key parcels in the Lower Root River floodplain. Acquisitions will be completed by the MN Dept of Natural Resources and restoration will be accomplished through outside contracts.

Narrative

Prompt action is needed to protect and restore habitat that has been degraded in critical areas along the Mississippi River for fish and wildlife, including 82 species listed as endangered, threatened, or special concern. Channel modifications and levees along the lower end of the Zumbro and Root Rivers continues to fragment the lower tributary floodplains at their connection to the Mississippi River, resulting in a loss of wetlands, floodplain forest, and prairie. Development along the Vermillion and Lower Cannon Rivers continues to fragment floodplain forests and impact bluff landscapes. Locks and dams combined with excessive

sediment from the Minnesota River watershed continue to degrade the river above Lake Pepin, with high turbidity and lack of a low water cycle preventing the growth of aquatic vegetation which provides critical habitat for fish and wildlife. Acting now will protect these critical areas from further degradation and provide opportunities to improve habitat connectivity and restore wetlands, forests, and prairies for fish and wildlife that live and migrate along the Mississippi River corridor.

Outdoor Heritage funding for FY2011 will focus directly on protecting 86 acres of wetlands, 135 acres of prairie, and 98 acres of forest in the Lower Root River floodplain. Of those, 20 acres of wetlands, 135 acres of prairie, and 75 acres of forest will also be restored, and 10 acres of forest will be enhanced. Most parcels that are acquired and restored will connect to existing state or federal conservation lands and increase the amount and quality of habitat for fish and wildlife along the Mississippi River.

Over 20 agencies and organizations have joined together as partners in this effort, working cooperatively to meet common goals for the Mississippi River. These partners have successfully protected and restored forests, wetlands and prairies through their individual acquisition and private lands assistance programs, and have helped reduce turbidity and sediment in the Mississippi and its tributaries through TMDL and watershed conservation efforts. Partners have the knowledge and skills to accomplish this work. Outdoor Heritage funding will allow partners to accomplish additional protection and restoration work in critical areas within the Lower Root River floodplain. Partners will leverage this program by providing staff time for restoration planning, signing, outreach and other activities.

There is general local support for these projects. As landowners accept acquisition offers these parcels will be presented to the county for approval. It is anticipated the county will continue to approve these acquisitions.

Relationship to *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and other published resource management plans.

This project helps meet the goals and objectives in the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan by focusing on the protection and restoration of conservation corridors along the Mississippi River floodplain and tributaries. This effort will restore wetlands, forests, and prairies and protect critical shorelines of major tributaries and the Mississippi River main stem.

Numerous planning efforts incorporate the scientific justification for the projects identified in this proposal. The Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee’s “A Working River and A River that Works”, the River Resources Forum’s “Environmental Pool Plans”, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Comprehensive Conservation Plan; and the Navigation Environmental Sustainability Program Feasibility Study are only a few examples of reports that outline the scientific and technical basis and need for floodplain restoration, water level management, and island construction projects along the Mississippi River corridor. These activities are considered essential to restoring the health of the Mississippi River system, and will provide benefits not only to these specific locations, but also to the entire Mississippi River from the Twin Cities to the Gulf of Mexico. Outdoor Heritage funding for FY2011 will focus on floodplain restoration.

Project Design and Evaluation

Describe the scope of the project in appropriate measures (i.e. ,acreage numbers of lakes, miles of shoreline)

Project Scope	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife (Include Description in Footnote)
Restore	20	135	75	*
Protect	86	135	98	
Enhance			10	

* All acres listed for restoration and protection for wetlands, prairies, and forests will provide habitats for fish, game, and wildlife.

Counties in which activities will take place	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	Houston	Houston	Houston	
Protect	Houston		Houston	
Enhance			Houston	

Acres Within Each Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore			230		
Protect			79		
Enhance			10		

Funding Per Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore			\$742,900		
Protect			\$228,200		
Enhance			\$28,900		

Indicate what is being funded

Funding Resource Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	\$7,500	\$44,300	\$26,600	*
Protect	\$246,000	\$386,200	\$289,400	
Enhance				

* All costs listed for restoration and protection for wetlands, prairies, and forests will provide habitats for fish, game, and wildlife.

Acquisition and Tax Data	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	86	135	98	*
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability				
Permanent Easement				

* All acres listed for restoration and protection for wetlands, prairies, and forests will provide habitats for fish, game, and wildlife.

Budget

Please describe how you intend to spend the recommended funds

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel			
Contracts	\$78,400		
Equipment/Tools			
Materials/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition	\$921,600		
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Travel			
Additional Budget Items			
TOTAL	\$1,000,000		

Relationship to Current Budget

Indicate the percentage of this project in relation to your organization/agency's total budget.

Demonstrate how this funding and activity will supplement your current budget.

If existing staff will be reassigned to this project, indicate what current projects or duties will be affected.

This project is 0.002% of the DNR budget. These acquisitions and restorations will be in addition to normal activities and will supplement existing budgets. DNR Area Wildlife Staff and partners (The Nature Conservancy) will complete many of the additional activities associated with these projects including landowner coordination, restoration planning, signing, outreach, etc.

Personnel

List the positions, name (if known) and anticipated program funds to be paid by this recommendation

Position	Name	Amount

Leverage

List the sources and amounts of leverage you have in hand or anticipate by fiscal year.

SOURCE	FY 11		FY 12		FY 13	
	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated
State						
Non state						
In-kind/Volunteer	\$15,000			\$15,000		\$15,000
TOTAL	\$15,000			\$15,000		\$15,000

Indicate how the leverage will be used

Leverage	State				Non-State			
	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife	Wetlands and Wetland Systems	Prairies and Prairie Systems	Forests and Forest Systems	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore	\$2,100	\$12,900	\$7,300		\$1,000	\$6,500	\$3,700	*
Protect	\$5,700		\$1,200		\$2,800		\$600	
Enhance			\$800				\$400	

Leverage represents FY11-FY13 total.

** All costs listed for restoration and protection for wetlands, prairies, and forests will provide habitats for fish, game, and wildlife.

Accomplishment Timeline

Milestones	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Budgetary Expenditure
<i>Initiate acquisition process</i>	XX			
<i>Develop site restoration plans</i>	XX	XX		
<i>Complete acquisitions</i>		XX	XX	\$921,600
<i>Complete restorations</i>		XX	XX	\$78,400

Maintenance and Sustainability

Please describe how lasting improvement will be maintained/ sustained. For easement acquisitions and fee acquisitions, explain how maintenance and sustaining costs will be paid.

Parcels acquired and restored will become part of the State Wildlife Management Area system and will be maintained by Area Field Managers and partners through normal operating budgets. Parcels will be maintained following standard management practices for prairie, wetland, and forest habitats. Parcels proposed for acquisition and subsequent restoration are listed below:

Parcel	Wetland acres protected	Wetland acres restored	Prairie acres restored	Forest acres protected	Forest acres restored	Forest acres enhanced	Acquisition cost	Restoration cost
A	46		40	10	60	10	\$479,600	\$37,500
B			15	3			\$52,000	\$4,500
C		20	50				\$202,200	\$21,000
D	20		30		15		\$187,800	\$15,400

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