

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

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Project or Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

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	Council Recommendation Funding	Out-Year Projections of Needs		
		FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Funds Recommended (\$000s)				
Outdoor Heritage Fund	4,386	0	0	0

Appropriation Language

Abstract

The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program (CPL) will be managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide competitive matching grants of up to \$400,000 to local, regional, state, and national non-profit organizations, including governments. Grant activities include the enhancement, restoration, or protection of forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife in Minnesota. A 10% non-state cash match will be required from all grantees, and must be identified at the time of application.

For each of these appropriations, DNR will conduct financial reviews, prepare and execute agreement documents, review expenditure documentation, ensure recipients are only reimbursed for allowable expenses, and assist recipients with closing out their agreements.

Narrative

Applicants may apply for grants under this program to perform the following activities:

Restore: action to bring a habitat back to a former state of sustaining fish, game or wildlife, with an ultimate goal of restoring habitat to a desired conservation condition.

Protect: action to maintain the ability of habitat and related natural systems to sustain fish, game or wildlife through acquisition of fee title or conservation easements.

Enhance: action to increase the ability of habitat and related natural systems to sustain and improve fish, game or wildlife in an ecologically sound manner.

For projects that will restore and/or enhance

1. Projects will be only on lands under permanent protection of public fee ownership, or conservation easement as defined in MS 84C.01. This includes tribal lands under federal trust arrangements.
2. A conservation easement must be placed on any private land impacted before work may begin. Funding for the easement/deed restriction and associated costs may be paid for with in-kind match or grant funds.
3. Proposed projects on public lands will be approved by and coordinated with public land managers. Projects proposed for lands under permanent conservation easement will be reviewed by the easement holder. Proof of review or approval must be submitted to grant staff before the application deadline. The private landowner must agree to the project as well.
4. Grantees will be responsible for all administrative requirements such as Historic Property Review, Wetland Conservation Act, Stormwater Permits, Natural Heritage Review, DNR Waters Permits, and others as appropriate. Costs for any reviews or permits should be included in the grant application, either as in-kind match or requested from grant dollars. As specified in the grant agreement, grantees may, by letter, assign duties and associated funds back to DNR, with DNR consent.
5. The Commissioner of Natural Resources must approve all projects.
6. Vegetation and seed used in these projects will be from native materials where possible and appropriate.

For projects that will protect

1. Lands acquired in fee title will be open to the public for hunting and fishing during open seasons unless otherwise provided by law.
2. All easements must be permanent. Easements must include stewardship provisions to perpetually monitor and enforce the conditions of the easements.
3. Projects to acquire land in fee simple title or a permanent conservation easement must be associated with established land acquisition programs that use explicit criteria for evaluating a parcel's habitat potential.
4. Grantees must agree to abide by all LSOHC requirements for long-term management of any lands acquired with Outdoor Heritage Funds (OHF).
5. For fee acquisition, the final title holder and land manager must be specified. Lands that will be conveyed to a public agency must be donated.
6. For permanent easements, the following information must be provided:
 - a. What organization will monitor the easement;
 - b. Who the easement will revert to in the event the primary easement holder ceases to exist;
 - c. What easement monitoring standards will be used;
 - d. Amount, funding source, and holder of the stewardship endowment dedicated to the easement;
 - e. Any restrictions, allowed structures, allowed activities, and reserved rights.

7. Some State programs have specific statutory guidelines for determining the value of easements acquired under that program. If the easement will become part of that State program and the easement will be held by the State, any entity acquiring the easement may use that program's statutory method for the easement valuation.
8. All acquisition selection processes and related transactions costs for all parties involved in the acquisition must be reported to the LSOHC.
9. A Notice of Funding Restriction must be recorded for each acquisition.
10. An analysis of future operations and maintenance costs for any acquired lands must be provided to the LSOHC, commissioner of finance, and appropriate public agency.
11. The grantee must submit an annual report on the status of property acquired with grant funds to the LSOHC by December 1 of each year.
12. Grantees acquiring land that will be conveyed to DNR will be required to follow DNR's *Land Acquisition Procedures for Lands to be Conveyed to DNR*.
13. Grantees acquiring land that will NOT be conveyed to DNR will be required to follow DNR's *Land Acquisition Procedures for Lands NOT to be Conveyed to DNR*.

General Program Requirements

This appropriation will be available until June 30, 2012. For acquisition projects, funds are available until June 30, 2013. If a project receives federal funds, the time period of the appropriation is extended to equal the availability of federal funding. Grantees must submit a final progress report by August 1, 2012, unless the funds have previously been extended as described above.

All grant projects must conform to the terms set out in the *LSOHC's 2010 Call for Funding Requests*, and address the priorities in the *Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*, and *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare*. Capital expenditures and indirect costs will not be allowed. In administering this program the DNR will comply with the Department of Administration - Office of Grants Management policies.

Grantee Match

The match requirement is 10% in nonstate cash. The amount and source of the match must be identified at the time of application. Proof of all required and pledged grantee match must be provided before the final payment is made.

Grantee Payment

Grantees will be paid on a "for services rendered" basis, under MS 84.026. Partial payments will be allowed. Advances will be available for acquisition projects only, on a limited basis, and must be specified in the grantee's application and final work program.

Grant Process

A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be posted on the CPL website in July, 2010. The RFP will contain grant program information, application criteria, application requirements, state agency contacts and grant reporting requirements. The RFP, Program Manual, and all grant agreements will incorporate appropriate principles and criteria from the *LSOHC's 2010 Call for Funding Requests* and associated legislation.

Applications will be accepted electronically year-round, with grants selected for funding up to twice a year. Any ungranted funds from the first cycle will be available for use in a following cycle.

Applications must be submitted electronically using DNR's Online Grant Application System (OLGA). Maps and aerial photos showing the location of proposed projects are required, and must include the name of the public land unit or private landowner, county, and show on-site and adjacent habitat types.

DNR Grant Program Staff will review applications to make sure they are complete and meet grant program requirements. Technical Review Committee(s), selected by the Commissioner of Natural Resources will review and score applications based on criteria established by the LSOHC, MN State Legislature and DNR. These committees may include representatives from DNR, BWSR, the University of MN, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other appropriate members. A final ranking committee made up of the Chief Financial Officer, and Directors of the DNR Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Ecological Resources/Waters, and Forestry will recommend projects and funding levels to the Commissioner of Natural Resources. The Commissioner will make the final decision on projects funded, and funding levels. Projects may be fully or partially funded.

Every effort will be made to evenly distribute the selected grants by geographic location, activity, and funding level, with an objective of granting 50% of the funds to projects above and below \$125,000.

Once grant applications are selected, CPL Grant Program staff will work with grantees to ensure financial reviews, grant agreements, and any other necessary paperwork are completed. Work may not begin until the grant is executed.

Project Reviews and Reporting

Project reviews will be completed as required by Office of Grants Management Policy 08-10, [Grant Monitoring](#). Grantees will report annual accomplishments on a CPL Annual Report Form by October 1 of each year. These reports will be based on work completed during the previous fiscal year. Reports must account for the use of grant and match funds, and outcomes in measures of wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat restored, enhanced, and protected. The report must include an evaluation of these results. A map and aerial photo showing the location of the project and including the name of the public land unit or private landowner, and county affected must be included. A final report will be required by all grantees by October 1 of the year that their grant agreement ends.

CPL Grant Program staff will compile grantee reports and submit an annual accomplishment report to the LSOHC, Legislative Coordinating Commission, and Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) on February 15 of each year. This report will contain information on the number of agreements made, number and amount of reimbursements paid to grantees, number and status of remaining open agreements, and administrative costs. The LSOHC may request interim accomplishment status reports. Accomplishment information will also be posted on LSOHC and DNR websites.

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

This program will provide additional funds to enhance, restore, and protect habitat in Minnesota. All published resource management and species plans—including the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan*—recognize that habitat is critical for the success of Minnesota's fish and wildlife species. Lack of funding is consistently listed in many plans as one of the largest issues limiting the amount of habitat work and protection that is completed each year.

In the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan*, habitat restoration and enhancement is specified in the following priorities:

H1: Protect priority land habitats (pg 63)

H2: Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes (pg 67)

H4: Restore and protect shallow lakes (pg 78)

H5: Restore land, wetlands, and associated wetlands (pg 80)

H7: Keep water on the landscape (pg 84)

LU 8: Protect large blocks of forested land (pg 130)

L10: Support and expand sustainable practices on working forested lands (pg 131)

Other plans that list habitat restoration, enhancement and protection as priorities include:

- *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare* (Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy), which identifies habitat loss and degradation as the primary problem facing species in greatest conservation need in Minnesota.
- The *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Strategies #1 and 2*.
- The DNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife has several key plans identifying acquisition and habitat goals for fish and wildlife populations. Habitat goals are also addressed through more focused plans and programs that can be found on the DNR's website.
- National plans include the *North American Wetland Management Plan*, various Joint Venture Plans, *National Fish Habitat Initiative*, and all the *Bird Conservation Plans*.
- Non-governmental conservation agencies such as Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and Audubon Minnesota have developed their own conservation plans that list habitat restoration, enhancement and protection as a priority.

Project Design and Evaluation

Specific accomplishments are dependent upon projects submitted by grantees.

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				
Protect				
Enhance				

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				
Protect				
Enhance				

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

Funding Per Ecological Section	Metropolitan-Urbanizing Area	Forest-Prairie Transition	Southeast Forest	Prairie Region	Northern Forest
Restore					
Protect					
Enhance					

Funding Resource Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				

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

Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel	175,440		
Contracts			
Equipment/Tools			
Materials/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition			
Easement Acquisition			

Easement Stewardship			
Travel			
Additional Budget Items			
Grants	4,210,560		
TOTAL	4,386,000		

Relationship to Current Budget

In FY 10, DNR received \$4 million for grants and administration of this program. These were new funds for a new program and did not supplement existing funds.

Grant applicants will be asked to document the impact of LSOHC grant funds to their current budget, and if these funds will supplement or supplant existing funds, in their grant application

Personnel

Position	Name	Amount
Grant Management staff	1.4 FTEs	\$175,440

Grant management staff costs will be billed using a professional services rate of \$60.00/hour. The hourly rate includes salary and fringe for grants staff, computers, communications, travel, supplies contract management, accounts payable, rent, and expense.

DNR Real Estate Management Services will be billed on a professional services basis and will be a cost that is covered by the grant recipient.

Leverage

SOURCE	FY 11		FY 12		FY 13	
	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated	In hand	Anticipated
State						
Existing state funds	70,000			70,000		
Non state						
10% Grantee cash match (over the life of the grants)	438,600					
In-kind/Volunteer						
TOTAL	508,600			70,000		

This accomplishment plan does not include costs for activities necessary for DNR to receive donated land and technical guidance. These costs will be leveraged with DNR Operating funds.

Grantee leverage will vary depending on projects submitted.

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								
Protect								
Enhance								

Accomplishment Timeline

Milestones	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Budgetary Expenditure
FY 11 RFP issued	July, 2010			
First round FY 11 grant applications due	September 2010			
First round FY 11 grantees selected	December 2010			
First round FY 11 grants executed	February 2011			4,210,560 in grants encumbered
Annual grantee reports due		October 1, 2011		
Annual program report to Council		February 15, 2012		
Annual grantee reports due			October 1, 2012	
Annual program report to Council			February 15, 2013	
Grant work ends			June 30, 2013	
Final grantee reports due			October 1, 2013	
Final program report to Council			February 15, 2014	

Maintenance and Sustainability

Grantees will be required to provide this information in their application.

Map

Grantees will be required to provide a map with their application.

