

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

**Request for Funding Form
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Fiscal Year 2011**

Program or Project Title: #36 Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

Date: November 2, 2009

Manager's Name: Leslie Tannahill
Title: CPL Grants Program Coordinator, MN DNR
Mailing Address: 500 Lafayette Road; St. Paul, MN 55155
Telephone: 651-259-5242
Fax: 651-297-4961
E-Mail: leslie.tannahill@state.mn.us
Web Site: www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl/index.html

Funds Requested (\$000s)	Council Funding Request	Out-Year Projections of Needs <i>For programs that may want to request OHF funds in future recommendation rounds, complete the columns below. One time requests enter zeros in all 3 fiscal years</i>		
		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Outdoor Heritage Fund	4,580	560	125	0

A. Summary

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 or in-kind match will be required from all grantees, and must be identified at the time of application.

B. Background Information

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.

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

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;

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

- 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.

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.

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. In implementing this program the DNR will comply with the Department of Administration - Office of Grants Management policies.

Match

The match requirement is 10% in nonstate cash or in-kind work, which may include verifiable equipment use, donation of materials, and donation of labor. 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.

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

Process

A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be posted on the CPL website by late summer, 2010. The RFP will contain grant program, application criteria, application and proposal requirements, state agency contacts and grant reporting requirements. The RFP 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 twice a year--in early winter, 2010, and spring, 2011. Ungranted funds from the winter cycle will be forwarded for use in the spring 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, legal description, acres affected, and on-site and adjacent habitat types.

Technical Guidance Committees, 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.

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.

Reviews and Reporting

Project reviews will be completed on an annual basis by Grant Program or other staff. Grantees will submit annual accomplishment on a CPL Annual Report Form by August 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, county, legal description, and acres affected must be included. A final report will be required by all grantees by August 1 of the year that their grant agreement ends.

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

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 October 15 of each year. Accomplishment information will also be posted on LSOHC and DNR websites.

1. What is the problem or opportunity being addressed?

The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program (CPL) allows nonprofit organizations and governments access to Outdoor Heritage Funds to benefit local, small-scale projects.

\$4 million in new grant funds are requested so that grantees can continue their efforts to improve habitat in Minnesota. There has been a high level of interest in the first round of grants, and that interest is expected to continue.

2. What action will be taken?

DNR will build on the current CPL program and initiate two more cycles of grants with the new funds.

3. Who will take action and when?

Upon notification of funding, CPL Grant Program Staff will begin work on the next round of grant opportunities including a new grant RFP, Program Manual, further refine the online application and database management system, and develop additional outreach programs.

Natural Resource Specialists grant staff will be engaged to assist applicants/grantees in identifying, developing, and implementing enhancement, restoration and protection projects, and meeting administrative and environmental requirements. These staff will also assist public land managers in developing projects for grantees.

These staff are needed to reduce the workload on agency field staff by helping applicants with the application process, performing Natural Heritage Database Reviews, and helping with project oversight, final project inspections, and reviewing restoration and management plans. These staff will lead workshops throughout the state to support new grant applicants and to provide support to existing grant recipients on project work, reporting and grant requirements.

4. How will you coordinate this program with the other Constitutional Funding?

CPL Grant Program Staff will work closely with DNR staff that are administering other LSOHC-funded projects so all programs have similar guidelines, formats, reports, and other processes.

In addition, CPL Grant Program Staff will work with other programs that receive Constitutional Funds (such as Clean Water and Parks and Trails) to understand and coordinate these programs as much as possible. This includes assisting applicants in finding the right program for their project.

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

5. What specific habitat changes will occur if this item is funded? Be specific about and list multiple benefits if they exist.

All CPL grants must meet Constitutional language to enhance, restore, or protect wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife. The grants funded by the CPL Grant Program will provide similar benefits to other LSOHC projects, just on a smaller, more local scale. As these benefits are dependent upon the applications received and grants that are funded, it is not possible to give more details at this time.

6. Will your Outdoor Heritage Fund dollar request complete the planned accomplishments?

☐ YES

☒ NO

If not, how will you finance completion?

Grantees will be required to furnish a 10% non-state match (either cash or in-kind) to complete their planned accomplishments.

7. How will you pay for the maintenance of the accomplishments?

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

8. How does this action directly restore, enhance, or protect prairies, wetlands, forests or habitat for fish, game, and wildlife?

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

9. If you are restoring or enhancing property, is the activity on permanently protected land?

☒ YES

☐ NO

This is a requirement for all funded grants. Grantees will be required to provide this information in their application.

If yes briefly describe the kind of protection.

Lands must be under permanent protection of public fee ownership, or permanent conservation easement. For this program, it will vary from project to project. Grantees will be required to describe the land they will be working on, and the kind of protection, in their application.

10. How will you ensure transparency and provide information about your work and use of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars.

The CPL Grant Program will provide regular updates to the LSOHC, and annual and other reports as required. In addition, grantees will be required to provide annual and final accomplishment reports to CPL Grant Program Staff.

11. When do you expect to see these changes?

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

Grantees should be able to start work on new projects as soon as the grant agreement is in place.

12. Why will this strategy work?

Many small organizations and local governments are aware of local projects that can be started immediately and are working on proposals. Requiring grant matches enables entities to leverage additional funds, further advancing conservation work and accelerating the protection of conservation lands through land acquisition projects.

13. Who might make decisions that assist or work against achieving the expected impact program?

LGU's, SWCD's, and local federal agencies all help make decisions on a local level.

14. If this is acquisition of land, has the local government formally approved the acquisition?

_____YES _____NO

County board approval will be required for all lands to be conveyed to DNR as WMAs or SNAs. Grantees will be required to notify the County Board of any other fee title acquisitions.

15. If this is fee simple acquisition of land, is the land free of any other permanent protection such as a conservation easement?

_____YES _____NO

Grantees will be required to provide this information in their application. Lands already protected by a permanent conservation easement will not be eligible for fee acquisition with CPL funds; however, lands under an easement that doesn't meet MS 84C.01 may be acquired in fee in order to provide more permanent protection for natural resource values. These lands may be ranked lower during the application evaluation.

16. If this is an easement acquisition, will the eased land be open for public use? If so what kind of use?

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

17. If easement acquisition, will the easement be a permanent conservation easements as described in MS 2009, Chapter 84C.01, specifically protecting the natural resource values of real property forever?

___X___YES _____NO

This is a requirement of the program. Grantees will be required to provide this information in their application.

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

18. If you are proposing funding for a new or ongoing program how long into the future do you expect this program to operate?

_____24_____ Years

19. Which planning sections will you work in? Check all that apply in the list below.

☒ Northern Forest

☒ Forest/Prairie Transition

☒ Southeast Forest

☒ Prairie

☒ Metropolitan Urbanizing Area

20. Does the request address an urgent conservation opportunity that will be lost if not immediately funded?

_____YES

_____NO

If yes, please explain.

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

21. Does the request restore and/or enhance habitat on existing state-owned Wildlife or Aquatic Management Areas or Scientific and Natural Areas?

_____YES

_____NO

If Yes, list the names of the WMAs and/or SNAs and the acres to be restored and/or enhanced.

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

22. Is this request based on assessment through a science based strategic planning and evaluation model similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation model?

_____YES

_____NO

If yes explain the model briefly.

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

23. Explain the scientific foundation for your project, and the benefits it will produce.

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

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

24. How do you set priorities? (Be sure to list the criteria you use and the weight you give each one.)

CPL grants will be scored using the criteria outlined by the LSOHC in *LSOHC's 2010 Call for Funding Requests*. Additional criteria and weights may be added based on experience in scoring the 2010 CPL grant applications.

C. Relationship to the *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.

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

D. Budget

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12	Fiscal Year 13
Personnel	480	560	125
Contracts			
Equipment/Tools/Supplies			
Fee Acquisition			
Easement Acquisition			
Easement Stewardship			
Professional Services*	100	100	
Travel			
Grants	4,000		
TOTAL	4,580	660	125

*Professional services include contracted costs for shared services activities including DNR Office of Management and Budget Services, Human Resources, Management Resources and Information & Education base level services. It also includes funding for supplemental agreements to enhance the webpage, streamline the application and reporting database/systems and additional PR/marketing.

E. Personnel Details

Title	Name	Amount.
Grant Coordinator	Leslie Tannahill	\$60/hour
Grant Specialist	Jamie Gangaware	\$60/hour
NR Specialist (2 FTE)	TBD	\$60/hour
1 – OAS (.5 FTE)	TBD	\$60/hour

Grant 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 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.

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

DNR is researching the ability to extend a blanket insurance policy to grant recipients, however, cost information for this type of policy is not available at this time. Therefore, the cost for this type of policy is not included in this proposal.

F. All Leverage In the table below list the sources and amounts of leverage you anticipate by fiscal year you anticipate receiving it. Include state and non-state leverage.

Source of Leverage	Fiscal Year 10	Fiscal Year 11	Fiscal Year 12
Grantees' match funds	10% spread out over grant period		
FAW	\$70,000	\$70,000	
Technical Guidance			
TOTAL	\$470,000	\$70,000	

This proposal 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.

G. Outcomes:

Specific accomplishments are dependent upon projects submitted by grantees.

Table 1 Accomplish- ments	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				

Table 2 Sections Impacted and Impact Quantifier	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

Table 3 Recommend Fund Allocation	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				

Table 4 Leverage \$	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats for Fish, Game and Wildlife
Restore				
Protect				
Enhance				

Table 5 Acquisition 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				

H. Accomplishment Time Table

Milestone	Date	Measure
FY11 RFP issued	July, 2010	
First round FY11 grant applications due	October, 2010	
Quarterly progress report to Council	October 2010 Council Meeting	
First round FY11 grantees/projects selected	December, 2010	
Second round FY11 grant applications due	February 1, 2011	
First round FY11 grants executed	February 16, 2011	
Quarterly progress report to Council	March, 2011 Council Meeting	
Second round FY11 grantees/projects selected	April, 2011	
Quarterly progress report to Council	June 2011 Council Meeting	
Second round FY11 grants executed	June 25, 2011	

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

Annual grantee reports due	August 1, 2011
Quarterly progress report to Council	September 2011 Council Meeting
Annual program report to LSOHC due	October 15, 2011
Quarterly progress report to Council	December 2011 Council Meeting
Quarterly progress report to Council	March 2012 Council Meeting
Quarterly progress report to Council	June 2012 Council Meeting
Annual grantee reports due	August 1, 2012
Annual program report to LSOHC due	October 15, 2012
Grants end (non-acquisition)	June 30, 2012
Annual/Final grantee reports due	August 1, 2012
Quarterly progress report to Council	September 2012 Council Meeting
Annual program report submitted	October 15, 2012
Quarterly progress report to Council	December 2012 Council Meeting
Quarterly progress report to Council	March 2013 Council Meeting
All grants end	June 30, 2013
Annual grantee reports due	August 1, 2013
Quarterly progress report to Council	September 2013 Council Meeting
FINAL program report submitted	October 15, 2013

I. Relationship to Your Current Budget

Last year 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. Additional funds are requested in this proposal for FY 2011 to provide additional grant opportunities and additional staff to assist applicants/grantees and field staff.

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

J. How Will the Habitat Improvements Be Sustained?

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

K. Attach a list of your projects listing their county location and edit the map of Minnesota on the next page to show each project as a symbol.

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

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

