

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Call for Funding Request – 2012 Appropriations

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (L-SOHC) is charged with making recommendations by January 15, 2011 to the Minnesota Legislature on appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). Through this Call for Funding Requests, the Council is seeking ideas on what to recommend for funding. This request is open to all who want to apply. Successful applicants will:

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***“The mission of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as specified in the state Constitution, is to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests and habitat for fish, game and wildlife.”***

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1. Read and understand L-SOHC’s vision for each L-SOHC Section and the Council’s priority actions contained in this Call for Funding Requests;
2. Develop a request addressing those priorities;
3. Complete the documents attached to the web form found at <http://www.isohc.leg.mn/FY2012/index.html> by **5 p.m., Central Standard Time, Thursday, July 15, 2010**. A Confirmation e-mail will be sent within 48 hours of the closing time;
4. Be available for a formal presentation/hearing and answer questions based on accurate completion of the details you provide;
5. Be recommended for funding by the Council; and
6. Be appropriated funds in the 2011 Minnesota Legislative Session for fiscal year 2012.

The L-SOHC will only consider funding requests that are:

- consistent with the Minnesota Constitution and state law;
- supported by the Legislature, the Governor and the public;
- sure to attain the immediate objectives of the strategic framework and plan for the Outdoor Heritage Fund; and
- priority actions identified by the Council.

The Council is currently estimating \$86 million will be available for appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) for expenditure in fiscal year 2012. This estimate will be revised in November, 2010.

**Schedule for 2010** \* *Project managers are asked to attend to provide information.*

July 15	<b>Deadline:</b> Call for Requests responses submission deadline
August 16	<b>Council Meeting:</b> review member ranking and select requests for hearing
August 24-25*	<b>Council Meeting:</b> proposal presentations
September 1*	<b>Council Meeting:</b> discuss proposals
September 15*	<b>Council Meeting:</b> allocation selection meeting
November 4*	<b>Council Meeting:</b> review draft accomplishment plans/preliminary analysis
December 6 OR 7*	<b>Council Meeting:</b> review appropriation language / final analysis
December 15*	<b>Council Meeting:</b> final bill approval/2011 recommendation for Legislature

## Guiding Principles for Outdoor Heritage Fund Recommendation Process

This request for proposals will:

1. Be transparent, understandable, and accessible by the public for input and review;
2. Protect and advance the public interest;
3. Support programs that are grounded in science and reflect “best practices” for resource management;
4. Take into account existing conservation delivery systems;
5. Encourage efficient and effective conservation solutions; and
6. Attempt to ensure conservation benefits are broadly distributed across the L-SOHC Sections

## Minimum Screening Criteria

Applicants must:

1. Have a record of successful management and implementation of project/program(s) similar in scale, scope, and complexity to the project/program(s) being requested;
2. Have demonstrated the ability to identify and establish the financial and managerial controls needed to successfully and fully implement the proposed project/program; and
3. Have an up-to-date external financial audit or its equivalent with no serious negative findings.

## Proposal Requirements

The L-SOHC will only consider funding requests that:

1. Are consistent with the uses of the OHF as specified in Article XI of the Minnesota Constitution and Minnesota Statutes and Laws, including restrictions on acquisition of lands in the public domain, as required by Minnesota Statutes 2010, Section 97A.056, Subdivision 9.
2. Have a process for ensuring transparency and access to information about the project/program in all stages of project/program implementation.
3. Demonstrate significant and enduring resource and/or habitat outcomes.
4. Clearly identify performance measures, and a plan for measuring, evaluating and publicly reporting these outcomes over time.
5. Reflect the best available science regarding resource and/or habitat enhancement, restoration, and protection.
6. Are for a minimum of \$150,000.
7. Seek funding only to supplement (not replace) customary or usual funding sources.
8. Identify funding necessary to fully implement the project/program(s), and have a plan to sustain the resource and/or habitat outcomes specified, including a plan to finance the necessary activities.
9. Limit the state's exposure for additional funding for the project.
10. Where possible and appropriate, use native plant material.
11. Restore or enhance resources only on property under permanent protection of public fee ownership or conservation easement. This includes tribal lands under federal trust arrangements.
12. Acquisitions through easement must be permanent.
13. Agree to not transfer the public interest in OHF fee and/or easement protected land without written approval.
14. Ensure that land acquired by fee with money from the OHF is open to the public taking of fish and game during the open season unless otherwise provided by law.
15. Commit to replace OHF protected resources converted to a use other than that intended in the OHF appropriation with land of at least equal market value that is in a reasonably equivalent location and reasonably equivalent useful conservation purpose.
16. Are associated with established land acquisition programs, if the request is to acquire fee simple title or a permanent conservation easement of real property.
17. Are associated with established land acquisition programs that use explicit criteria for evaluating the parcel's habitat potential, if the request is to acquire an interest in real property.
18. Commit to erect and maintain signage, consistent with Minnesota Laws 2009, Chapter 172, Article 5, Section 10, crediting the OHF with support for protected, restored, or improved resources.

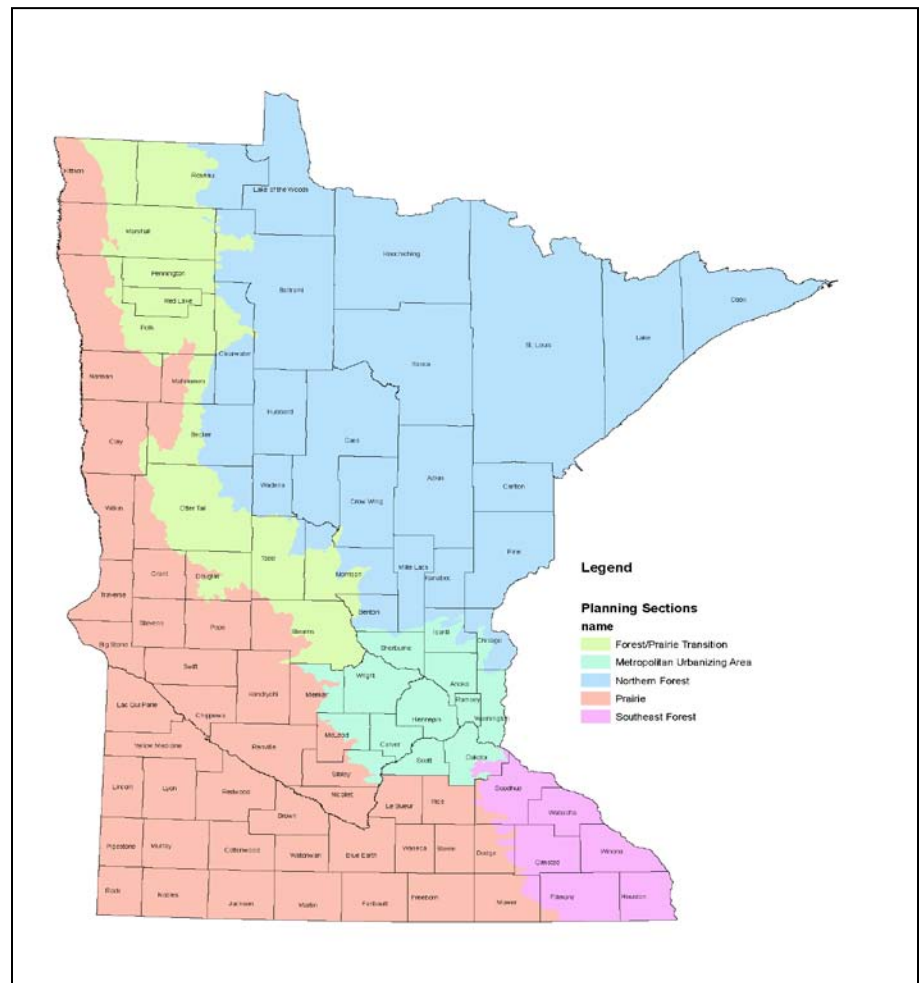
## Statewide Priority Criteria

1. Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections.
2. Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits.
3. Are able to leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation.
4. Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately equal.
5. Address conservation opportunities that will be lost if not immediately acted on.
6. Restore or enhance habitat on state-owned WMAs, AMAs, SNAs, and state forests.
7. Use a science-based strategic planning and evaluation model to guide protection, restoration and enhancement, similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation model.
8. Address wildlife species of greatest conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions.
9. Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities.
10. Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work.
11. Target unique Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife.

## L-SOHC Ecological Sections

Minnesota Law specifies, "The council shall use the regions of the state based upon the ecological regions and sub-regions developed by the Department of Natural Resources and establish objectives for each region and sub-region to achieve the purposes of the fund outlined in the state constitution."

For purposes of developing the framework that will be used to guide expenditures from the OHF over the next 25 years, the Council has identified five Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Sections (L-SOHC Sections). These are an aggregation of the state's ten Ecological Sections.



## Ecological Section Vision and Priorities

### Northern Forest Section Vision

The Council's vision for the Northern Forest Section contains clear view of the desired future condition for the section's forest lands, lakes and wetlands, and wildlife habitat.



Forestland should be universally accessible for forest management purposes as well as protected from development and fragmentation. Private in-holdings in public forests and key properties for habitat and stand management, adjacent to existing ownership should be acquired, with an eye toward ensuring no net loss of forestland. Of special concern is the condition of brushlands within the forestlands. These lands, along with early successional forest habitat are crucial for game species and non-game species and need restoration and enhancement work so as to ensure ample availability of this habitat type.

Lakes and wetlands supporting healthy fish populations are fundamental to the future of the Northern Forest Section. Lakes and streams with protected shoreland and restored watersheds will produce quality warm and cold-water aquatic systems. Those resources will provide the aquatic habitat required to support excellent fish populations and other aquatic organisms.

The Northern Forest Section is home to both cherished and unique Minnesota wildlife populations. It is imperative that the wildlife habitat of this Section support those populations. Healthy wild rice

wetlands and shallow lakes that provide important habitat for a wide range of game and non-game wildlife which are clearly front and center in the Council's vision. These and other key habitats are envisioned to protect habitat for endangered, threatened and species of special concern and more common.

#### Priority Actions for the Northern Forest Section

1. Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas.
2. Protect forest land through acquisition or easement, to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties.
3. Restore and enhance habitat on existing protected properties, with preference to habitat for rare, endangered or threatened species identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey.
4. Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in aerial extent in recent decades.

## Forest/Prairie Transition Section Vision

The Council's future for the Forest/Prairie Transition Section envisions diverse and productive remnant tracts of native prairie, forests grasslands, wetlands, lakes and rivers, and their associated fish and wildlife habitat.

The Council sees a future when ample grasses and other vegetation on shorelands and higher in the watershed keeps water on the land This will yield clean lakes and streams, steady lake and stream levels, and improved aquatic vegetation, providing a plentiful supply of habitat for fish, game and wildlife in the Section, especially habitat for waterfowl and upland birds.

These rivers and streams and their surrounding vegetation will provide corridors of habitat including intact areas of forest cover in the eastern reaches of the Section, and large wetland/upland complexes in the more westerly areas. These wetland/upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands and restored shallow lakes and wetlands.

### Priority Actions for the Forest/Prairie Transition Section

1. Protect, enhance and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and non-game wildlife.
2. Protect, enhance and restore rare native remnant prairie.
3. Protect, enhance and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success.

## Metro Urbanizing Vision

The Council's vision for the Metropolitan Urbanizing Section is a network of natural lands in the Section providing wildlife habitat, quality fisheries, especially cold-water fisheries and a forest land base that contributes to the habitat picture.

These natural lands in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Section include complexes of restored and perpetually protected wetlands, prairies, and forests, providing habitat benefits and access. These will have core areas with protected highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities including native prairies. Where possible, the habitats will connect, making corridors for wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation, and hold wetlands and shallow lakes open to public recreation and hunting. The Section's game lakes will be significant contributors of waterfowl, due to efforts to protect uplands adjacent to game lakes. In the corridors, the streams, rivers and lakes will be protected by vegetative buffers along riparian areas. Remnant oak savanna will be protected and its health restored, as will forests contributing to quality fisheries. As a result cold-water streams and lakes will provide high quality fisheries within an hour's drive of the majority of the state's population. Where possible, invasive species will have been permanently eradicated.

### Priority Actions for the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area

1. Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity.
2. Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain.)
3. Enhance and restore coldwater fisheries systems.
4. Protect, enhance and restore riparian and littoral habitats on lakes to benefit game and non-game fish species.

## Southeast Forest Section Vision

The Council recognizes the Southeast Forest Section of Minnesota is a unique place, largely untouched by recent glaciers that covered most of Minnesota. The underlying karst geology and overlying remnants of the Big Woods are not found elsewhere in Minnesota. The ages have left a legacy of warm and cold water streams and rivers, floodplains, hardwood forests, remnant bluffland prairies, and striking topographic relief that provides diverse habitat worthy of protection.

In the forested parts of the Southeast Forest Section the Council sees a future of restored and protected oak savanna and mixed deciduous forest lands making up large blocks of protected property, accessible for resource management purposes.

The cold and warm water streams of the region will be protected and enhanced by work in and along streams as well as work streamside to the top of the watershed to slow runoff and keep aquatic habitat clean and productive, with prolific fish, game and wildlife populations.

Southeast Forest Section wildlife habitat will be established in large corridors and complexes of restored and protected, biologically diverse habitat typical of the un-glaciated region. As a result the Section's endangered or threatened species will find habitat, such as goat prairies, in which to survive, alongside more common species of interest to Minnesotans. The Mississippi River and associated floodplain and bluffs, as well as the feeder streams will be an important part of this network of corridors and complexes.



### Priority Actions for the Southeast Forest Section

1. Protect forest habitat through acquisition in fee or easement, to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties.
2. Protect, enhance and restore habitat for fish, game and non-game wildlife in rivers, cold water streams and associated upland habitat.
3. Protect, enhance and restore remnant goat prairies.
4. Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in aerial extent in recent decades.

## Prairie Section Vision

The Council sees the future of the Prairie Region as vital to the future of waterfowl, grassland birds and other wildlife dependent on native and restored prairies, shallow lakes, wetlands, and grasslands. The prairie region of Minnesota was once home to some of the largest herds of grazing animals the world has ever known. It also contains within its borders, a portion of the Prairie Pothole Region the birthplace of 70 percent of North America's waterfowl. Unique components of this section are the prairie rivers, large and small, from the Red and Minnesota Rivers to their tributaries in adjacent watersheds. This section also contains some of the largest freshwater marshes in North America.

The Prairie Section of Minnesota is now one of the most altered rural landscapes in the world, with 90 percent of its native prairie and wetlands now under plow. The native prairie and wetlands that remain should be perpetually protected. Where possible these remnant native prairies should be part of large complexes with a goal of nine square mile parcels. These parcels should include restored prairies, grasslands, large and small wetlands that will create buffers to the native prairie and provide the density of habitat needed by fish, game and wildlife. Key core parcels should be set aside as areas managed for game species as well as refuges for fish, game or wildlife, and endangered or threatened species. Special emphasis should be put on extremely uncommon Minnesota species with unique or specific habitat requirements.

The Prairie Section waters, affected by agricultural practices which increase run off over natural levels, will have benefitted from revitalized and expanded shoreland buffers and work to enhance shallow lake productivity for a variety of shorebirds and waterfowl. As a result of concentrated work of this type, combined with restored and enhanced upland habitat, historically significant resources for migratory waterfowl, such as the Heron Lake and Swan Lake Watersheds will once again be important landscapes for many species of migrating birds. Likewise the Red River Valley will provide abundant wildlife habitat while simultaneously keeping water on the land to reduce flood potential.

The Prairie Section is the home to a critical portion of the state's wildlife-related lands. The Council sees these being increasingly productive in the future, as the result of restoration and enhancement of native prairie, grassland and associated watershed, including the shallow lakes of this section. In the southeastern part of the Section there are precious remnants of the Big Woods and oak savanna they will also be targeted for protection.



### Priority Actions for the Prairie Section

1. Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes.
2. Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna.
3. Convert agricultural land to wetland/upland to protect, enhance, or restore existing habitat complexes, such as existing WMA's.
4. Restore or enhance habitat on public lands.
5. Protect, restore and enhance shallow lakes.
6. Protect expiring Conservations Reserve Program (CRP) lands.
7. Protect, enhance and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success.

## Request Format

Your Request for Funding will be combined with all others received, so it is important you follow these instructions.

1. The Main Request for Funding Form attached to the web must be used. Only electronic submissions will be accepted and only the designated spreadsheets will be accepted.
2. For the Narrative, use a 12 pt font with 1" page margins; project title must be clearly marked on top of each page; page numbers must be centered in the footer of each page.
3. Absolutely no organization logos, trademarks or similar graphics may be inserted or embedded in the request.
4. Applicants must use the state map base supplied in the Request for Funding Form or other reasonable facsimile if it shows the L-SOHC sections.

## Terms of the Funding

### Payment

For non-state entities, payment is reimbursement for expenses paid. The expenses must be direct to and necessary for the program or project, as determined by the state's fiscal agent, and must protect, enhance or restore prairies, wetlands, forests or habitat for fish, game and wildlife. The funds may not be used for general organization support or seeking funding from any source. They may be used for planning and evaluating habitat programs or projects paid for with the OHF; however, the evaluation and planning expenses must be direct to and necessary for the program or project, as presented to the Council.

### Timing

Reimbursable expenses may be incurred on or after July 1, 2011 or the date on which the L-SOHC approves the accomplishment plan. Unless otherwise provided by the legislature during the appropriations process, the funds are available until June 30, 2014, when projects must be completed and final accomplishments reported. Funds for restoration or enhancement are available until June 30, 2016, or four years after the acquisition, whichever is later, in order to complete the restoration and enhancement work. If a project receives federal funds, the time period of the appropriation is extended to equal the availability of federal funding.

<b>For more information:</b>	<b>LSOHC Staff</b>
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*The photos are courtesy of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Thank you.*