

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2012 Accomplishment Plan

Program Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

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Funds Recommended: \$4,990,000

Legislative Citation: ML ML 2012, Ch. X, Art. X, Sec. X, Subd. 5 (i): *(to be completed when signed by Governor)*

Abstract:

The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program will be managed by the Department of Natural Resources to provide competitive matching grants to local, regional, state, and national non-profit organizations, including governments.

Program Narrative

Design and Scope of Work

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% match from non-state sources is required for all grants. Match may be cash or in-kind resources. All match must be identified at the time of application.

CPL Program Staff will develop a Request for Proposal that incorporate the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council's (L-SOHC) priorities, solicit applications and work with applicants to submit scorable applications, oversee the grant selection process, prepare and execute grant documents, review expenditure documentation to ensure recipients are only reimbursed for allowable expenses, make reimbursement payments, monitor grant work, assist recipients with closing out their agreements, and prepare reports as required by the L-SOHC.

MS 97a.056 Subd. 3a directed the L-SOHC to establish a conservation partners grant program to encourage and support local conservation efforts. Subsequent session law established additional guidelines and criteria for this program and authorized the DNR to administer it.

Applicants will describe the location of the work (county and ecological subsection), activity type, and habitat in their application. They will also describe how their actions will benefit habitat and fish, game and wildlife. For acquisition projects, applicants will describe their parcel selection process. All projects must address the priorities in the *Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*, and *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare*.

Funds for projects under this appropriation will be available until June 30, 2016. If a project receives federal funding, the time period of the appropriation will be extended to equal the availability of federal funding.

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

Stakeholders are involved in this proposal as applicants or reviewers (if no conflict of interest exists). There is no known stakeholder opposition to this program.

Grant Application Process

A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be posted on the CPL website in early August, 2012. These documents will contain grant program information, application requirements and scoring criteria, grant reporting requirements, and state agency contacts. The RFP, and all grant agreements will incorporate appropriate principles and criteria from the L-SOHC's *FY13 Call for Funding Requests* and associated legislation.

Applications must be submitted electronically using CPL's Online Grant Application System (OLGA). All project sites must be mapped using OLGA's mapping tool. OLGA will accept applications beginning in August, 2012, until the deadline for the first round of grants in mid-September, 2012. A simplified application process has been developed for applications requesting less than \$25,000. The application system will not accept applications during the review process.

Grants will be selected for funding up to twice a year. Any ungranted funds from the first cycle will be available for use in a following cycle, or may be distributed to current grantees to assist approved projects. DNR reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with DNR and Outdoor Heritage Fund policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available or if a grantee cannot carry out their project as planned.

Grant Selection Process

CPL 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 established criteria. These committees may include representatives from DNR, BWSR, the University of MN, state universities or private colleges, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other appropriate members from government, non-profit organizations, and private businesses. A final ranking committee made up of the Directors of the DNR Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Ecological Resources/Waters, and Forestry will consider TRC, Division and Regional DNR comments, and recommend projects and funding levels to the Commissioner of Natural Resources. The Commissioner will make the final decision on the projects funded and funding levels.

Every effort will be made to evenly distribute the selected grants by geographic location, and activity. Amounts awarded in each category may vary depending on the eligible applications received. 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, . . .

Grantees will submit annual accomplishment reports on forms provided by CPL staff, based on L-SOHC report forms. 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 final report will be required by all grantees 30 days after the project is complete.

CPL Grant Program staff will submit accomplishment reports to the L-SOHC as required. Accomplishment information will also be posted on the CPL website.

CPL Administration Budget

Grant administration costs of \$380,000 will be billed using actual costs. These costs include salary and fringe for grants staff, direct support services, travel, supplies, and expense. An internal Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be developed with DNR's Management Information Systems to update and manage the online grant application system. (This budget item is included in the Contracts line in the attached Budget Table.)

This level of staff is necessary to run an ongoing, cradle-to-grave grant program with a cumulative budget of over \$14 million (FY10 – FY12). As of October 25, 2011, the program has 83 active grants to manage (from FY10 and FY11 only). Thirty-five new grants are expected from the FY12 appropriation, and also the FY13 appropriation, for a approximate total of 150 grants to manage. Funds are included to cover the direct costs of hiring the additional .5 FTE, a computer, and other start-up costs. The travel budget has also been increased to reflect more grant monitoring and increased technical assistance for applicants and grantees.

DNR Land Acquisition Costs

Applicants will be required to budget for DNR Land Acquisition costs that are necessary to support the land acquisition process for parcels to be conveyed to the DNR. These costs will be billed to the grantees on a professional services basis.

DNR Technical Support

The Division of Fish and Wildlife staff will provide ongoing technical guidance. This technical guidance will help applicants prepare grant proposals, and help grantees meet requirements for working on state lands. Additional technical guidance will be provided for land acquisitions, program planning and management, accounting and grantee payment.

Grantee Payment

Grantees will be paid on a "for services rendered" basis. This means that payment may be made to the grantee after work has been performed or materials purchased, but before the vendor is paid by the grantee. Grantees must provide proof that the work has been completed or a purchase made in order to

receive payment. Proof that the vendor has been paid must be submitted to CPL staff before any additional grant payments will be made.

Reasonable amounts may be advanced to projects to accommodate cash flow needs, to match federal share, or for acquisitions. Advances must be specified in the final grant agreement. Partial payments will be allowed.

Grantee Match

Grantees will be required to provide a 10% match from nonstate sources. Match may be cash or in-kind resources, and must be identified at the time of application. All match must be verified before final grant payment will be made.

Planning

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, enhancement and protection 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.

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

The CPL Grant Program will complement other programs and projects supported with constitutional funds by allowing organizations to access Outdoor Heritage Funds for smaller, local projects.

Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

In FY10, DNR received \$4 million for grants and administration of this program. These were new funds for a new program and did not supplant existing funds. In FY11, DNR received \$4.386 million for grants and administration to continue the CPL program. These funds also did not supplant existing funds. In FY12, DNR received \$5.629 million for grants and administration to continue the CPL program. These funds also did not supplant existing funds.

This program funding is of reasonable size given the scale of DNR's recent fiscal year expenditures. Though Outdoor Heritage Funds will be spread out over multiple years, below are approximate Fiscal Year 2010 expenditures from all sources, not including bonding:

All DNR expenditures - \$456 million

Ecological and Water Resources Division - \$74.6 million

Fish and Wildlife Division - \$90.3 million

Forestry Division - \$83.2 million

Applicants will be asked if these funds will supplement or supplant existing funds.

Sustainability and Maintenance

Projects on public lands will be the responsibility of the government entity that owns or accepts the land. Projects on private lands will be the responsibility of the private land owner and easement holder. Stewardship plans must identify the sources and amount of funding for monitoring and identify the parties responsible for monitoring and enforcing the easement agreement.

Because the actual projects have not been identified at this time, it is not possible to provide specific details on the cost, schedule, and sources of funding needed to sustain CPL projects.

Outcomes

Because the CPL program works statewide, in all habitat types, and with all activities, it has the potential to provide all of the outcomes listed in the Outdoor Heritage Fund Framework. Final benefits are dependent upon the projects completed by grantees.

The CPL program has already provided benefits to people and resources throughout the state of Minnesota. Local conservation clubs have taken the time to work with public land managers to apply for grants to protect, restore, and enhance habitat for fish, game and wildlife in or near their communities. Lands have been acquired that provide public access for outdoors-related recreation, provide permanent protection for sensitive features, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife. Existing habitat has been restored or enhanced to further benefit fish, game and wildlife.

More Minnesotans have become involved in conservation work. By talking about specific projects with local land managers, participating in grant writing and management, volunteering to pull buckthorn and hand-harvest prairie seed, folks are getting outside and performing conservation work.

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date
Solicit and select grant	RFP and PM posted online	Aug 2012

applications		
	First round applications due	Mid-Sept 2012
	First round FY 13 grantees announced	Mid-Nov 2012
	First round grants encumbered	Feb 2013
Grantees start work	First round grants executed	March 2013
Solicit and select second round grant applications (if necessary)	Second round applications due	Feb 2013
	Second round FY 13 grantees announced	May 2013
	Second round grants encumbered	June 2013
Grantees start work	Second round grants executed	June 2013
Grant monitoring starts	Per OGM policy	April 2013
Annual Grantee reports due	Reports received	Sept of each year
Program report to Council	Report submitted	Aug and Feb of each year

Attachments (on spreadsheet workbook – 3 separate tabs):

- A. Budget
- B. Proposed Outcome Tables
Grantees will provide this information
- C. Parcel List
Grantees will provide this information

Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet

Name of Proposal:	Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program
Date:	10/25/2011
Legal Citation / Proposal Number:	

[Link Here to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

Total Amount of Request \$ 4,990,000 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
				Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
<i>Grant Coordinator</i>	1	2	\$ 142,000			\$ 142,000
<i>Grant Spec</i>	1	2	\$ 100,000			\$ 100,000
<i>NR Spec Intermed</i>	1	2	\$ 124,000			\$ 124,000
<i>position 4</i>						\$ -
<i>position 5</i>						\$ -
<i>position 6</i>						\$ -
<i>position 7</i>						\$ -
Total	3		\$ 366,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 366,000

Budget and Cash Leverage *(All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)*

Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
		Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
Personnel - auto entered from above	\$ 366,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 366,000
Contracts	\$ 4,610,000	\$ 461,000		\$ 5,071,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 6 & 7)				\$ -
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 6 & 7)				\$ -
Easement Acquisition				\$ -
Easement Stewardship				\$ -
Travel (in-state)	\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000
Professional Services				\$ -
DNR Direct Support Services (DNR programs only)	\$ 6,500			\$ 6,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs				\$ -
Other				\$ -
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools	\$ 1,000			\$ 1,000
Supplies/Materials	\$ 1,500			\$ 1,500
	\$ 4,990,000	\$ 461,000	\$ -	\$ 5,448,500

Capital Equipment *(single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)*

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<i>Item 1 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 2 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 3 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 4 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 5 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 6 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 7 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 8 enter here</i>		
Total	0	0

Attachment B. Outcome Tables

Name of Proposal:	Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program
Date:	10/25/2011
Legal Citation / Proposal Number:	0

Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same

If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:

Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	TBD by grantees				0
Protect					0
Enhance					0
Total	0	0	0	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

0

These two cells should be the same figure.

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

0

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	TBD by grantees				\$ -
Protect					\$ -
Enhance					\$ -
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ -

These two cells should be the same figure.

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ -

Check to make sure this amount is the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	TBD by grantees					0
Protect						0
Enhance						0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

0

These three cells should be the same figure.

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

0

Total Acres from Table 1.

0

Attachment C. Parcel List

Name of Proposal: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program
Date: #####
Legal Citation / Proposal Number: 0

County	Township	Range	Direction	Section	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)	Description	Activity R=Restore P=Protect E=Enhance	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)
Parcel Name											

TBD by grantees