

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Laws of Minnesota 2012 Accomplishment Plan

Date: October 24, 2011

Program Title: Restoration Evaluations Program

Manager's Name: Dave Wright

Title: Monitoring and Control Unit Supervisor, Division of Ecological and Water Resources

Organization: Department of Natural Resources

Telephone: 651.259.5155

Email: David.I.Wright@state.mn.us

Fax: 651.296.1811

Funds Recommended: \$45,000

Legislative Citation: **ML 2012, Ch. X, Art. X, Sec. X, Subd. 6 (b):** *(to be completed when signed by Governor)*

Abstract:

The purpose of this program is to annually evaluate a sample of Outdoor Heritage Fund habitat restoration projects and provide a report on the evaluations in accordance with state law.

Program Narrative

M.S. 97A.056, Subd. 10. Restoration evaluations. The commissioner of natural resources and the Board of Water and Soil Resources may convene a technical evaluation panel comprised of five members, including one technical representative from the Board of Water and Soil Resources, one technical representative from the Department of Natural Resources, one technical expert from the University of Minnesota or the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and two representatives with expertise in the project being evaluated. The board and the commissioner may add a technical representative from a unit of federal or local government. The members of the technical evaluation panel may not be associated with the restoration, may vary depending upon the projects being reviewed, and shall avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Each year, the board and the commissioner may assign a coordinator to identify a sample of up to ten habitat restoration projects completed with outdoor heritage funding. The coordinator shall secure the restoration plans for the projects specified and direct the technical evaluation panel to evaluate the restorations relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the restoration plan and, when applicable, to the Board of Water and Soil Resources' native vegetation establishment and enhancement guidelines. The coordinator shall summarize the findings of the panel and provide a report to the chair of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and the chairs of the respective house of representatives and senate policy and finance committees with jurisdiction over natural resources and spending from the outdoor heritage fund. The report shall determine if the restorations are meeting planned goals, any problems with the implementation of restorations, and, if necessary, recommendations on improving restorations. The report shall be focused on improving future restorations. Up to one-tenth of one percent of forecasted receipts from the outdoor heritage fund may be used for restoration evaluations under this section.

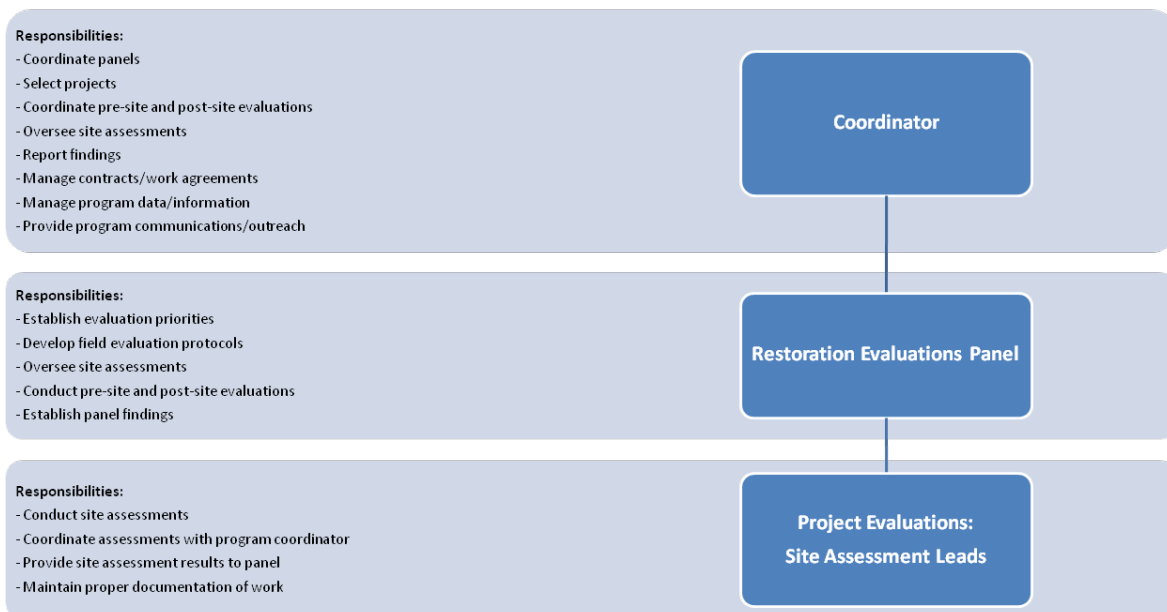
Design and Scope of Work

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) are jointly responsible for convening a restoration evaluation panel (REP) of technical experts to annually evaluate a sample of up to 10 habitat restoration projects completed with outdoor heritage funding, as provided in M.S. 97A.056, Subd. 10. The REP will evaluate the selected habitat restoration projects relative to the law, current science, stated goals and standards in the restoration plans, and applicable guidelines. The program coordinator, as statutorily required, is responsible for both identifying the sample of projects to be evaluated by the panel and providing a report to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and the legislature determining whether restorations are meeting planned goals, identifying problems with implementation of restorations and, if necessary, providing recommendations on improving restorations. As part of the restoration evaluation process, site assessments will be conducted on the selected habitat restoration projects.

This request supports a portion of the interagency Restoration Evaluations Program, which provides for the evaluation of habitat restoration projects completed with funds from the Parks and Trails Fund (M.S. 85.53), Outdoor Heritage Fund (M.S. 97A.056), and Clean Water Fund (M.S. 114D.50) as required by state law. Primary goals of this program include informing future habitat restorations in the state and providing for transparency and accountability in the use of Legacy funds.

Program Administration

As required by law, the Restoration Evaluations Program will be coordinated by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Although BWSR and DNR are jointly responsible for program administration, the two agencies will allow for the use of MOUs, contracts, or other administrative mechanisms to both successfully accomplish the work as required by M.S. 85.53, 97A.056, and 114D.50 and achieve the desired goals of delivering an efficient and effective program.



The program coordinator would be responsible for coordinating the work of the restoration evaluation panel for the Clean Water Fund, Outdoor Heritage Fund, and Parks and Trails Fund. By law, the coordinator is responsible for the following:

- Identifying a sample of up to ten habitat restoration projects completed with funding from the Parks and Trails Fund, Outdoor Heritage Fund, and Clean Water Fund;
- Securing the restoration plans for the projects selected;
- Summarizing the findings of the restoration evaluation panel or panels; and
- Providing reports to the legislature on panel findings.

The coordinator also would be responsible for program communications, data and information management, and contract management, as needed.

By the law, the restoration evaluations panel is responsible for:

- Evaluating habitat restorations relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the restoration plans; and
- Providing findings on the evaluations, determining whether restorations are meeting planned goals, identifying problems with implementation of restorations and, if necessary, providing recommendations on improving restorations.

The panel may also establish evaluation priorities each year, which could be based on a variety of factors such as predominant habitat type or geographic region. The REP would use these priorities to determine project selection and develop field evaluation protocols to guide the site assessments based on the types of projects selected. Panel membership would include technical experts that are responsible for directing the site assessments and evaluating the projects based on the results of the assessments. The panel also would be involved in both the pre-site evaluation, which involves review of the restoration plans and other project background information, and the post-site evaluation, which involves discussion with project managers on recommendations for improvement, if needed.

The site evaluations would be conducted by site assessment leads. The site assessment leads would be responsible for conducting the site evaluations and providing the results of the assessments to the panels for evaluation. The site assessment leads must be knowledgeable and trained in applying evaluation methodologies to assess the effectiveness of habitat restorations and in the evaluation of habitat functions. The site assessment leads would work closely with the coordinator in conducting the pre-site evaluation, take direction from the panel on the site evaluations, and participate in the post-site evaluation to ensure panel queries are adequately addressed. Services provided by the site assessment leads could be negotiated through the use of contracts, MOUs, or work assignments.

Project managers are expected to participate in the restoration evaluation process.

Project Selection Process

The project selection process is a critical part of the Restoration Evaluations Program and requires coordination beyond selecting the projects to be evaluated. There are three essential steps to the project selection process, which include:

- Determination of eligible projects. The coordinator will need to establish the pool of habitat restoration projects from each funding source eligible to be evaluated under the Restoration Evaluations Program.

- Establishment of evaluation priorities. The restoration evaluations panel may be provided the option to establish annual evaluation priorities.
- Project selection. By law, the coordinator is responsible for identifying a sample of up to ten habitat restoration projects. It is recommended that a stratified random sampling of projects be used based on suggested criteria (such as project type, project stage, project complexity, project location, and project proposer) for stratifying the projects.

Project Evaluation Process

The project evaluation process is divided in to three primary steps.

- Pre-site evaluation: The pre-site evaluation allows for the coordinator to secure the restoration plans for projects selected for evaluation and to assess project compliance with law, as required by law, and also allows for the panel to review selected projects and recommend evaluation methods to the site assessment leads, if needed.
- Site evaluation: The site evaluation allows the site assessment leads to conduct field visits to project sites to evaluate project implementation and assess effectiveness of the project to date.
- Post-site evaluation: The post-site evaluation provides for a review and discussion of the site evaluations and results in final panel determinations and recommendations for improvement to projects, if needed, as required by law.

Report on Findings

As required by M.S. 85.53, 97A.056, and 114D.50, the coordinator shall summarize the findings of the panel and provide a report to both the legislature and other governing bodies, if applicable. It is recommended that the report also complement web-based learning opportunities related to legacy-funded habitat restoration projects to ensure public accessibility to the information.

Planning

As described in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (U.S. FWS) *Strategic Habitat Conservation* (July 2006), the elements of strategic habitat conservation involve planning, conservation design and delivery, and evaluation, with evaluation serving as a critical component to the success of strategic habitat conservation. As described in the first chapter of the U.S. FWS report, strategic habitat conservation allows for the evaluation of management outcomes to protect, manage, and restore, "rather than simply delivering 'more'" (2006:9). Likewise, the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan recommends, as part of the major habitat recommendations, the evaluation of habitat restorations. Depending on the habitat restoration projects selected for evaluation and whether these restorations were implemented as part of the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan or other published resource management plans in the state, the evaluations may inform the relative outcomes of habitat restorations and whether the restorations, as implemented, are likely to meet planned goals. As part of this evaluation process, site assessments will be conducted using of a variety of science-based evaluation tools.

Once seated, the REP may establish annual evaluation priorities for the Restoration Evaluations Program, which may influence which LSOHC sections are addressed by this proposal. Regardless of the LSOHC section, however, the LSHOC section priorities addressed by this proposal involve the evaluation of priority habitat restorations, such as native prairie or wetland restorations in the LSOHC Prairie Section.

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

State law requires restoration evaluations be conducted on habitat restoration projects completed with funds from the Clean Water Fund (M.S. 114D.50), Outdoor Heritage Fund (M.S. 97A.056), and Parks and Trails Fund (M.S. 85.53). As provided by law, BWSR is the responsible agency for Clean Water Fund restoration evaluations; DNR is the responsible agency for Parks and Trails Fund restoration evaluations; and DNR and BWSR are jointly responsible for Outdoor Heritage Fund restoration evaluations.

Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

DNR and BWSR are the responsible administering agencies for this program. As provided by state law, up to one-tenth of one percent of forecasted receipts from the Outdoor Heritage Fund may be used for restoration evaluations. This program provides funding for the coordination, staffing, and travel required to conduct Outdoor Heritage Fund restoration evaluations. The agencies may use professional/technical contracts to conduct the site assessments. There are no other funds available for these program activities, and this work would not otherwise exist without the requested program funding. All staff time spent on this program will be coded to ensure no substitution of traditional funds occurs.

Sustainability and Maintenance

This program will be administered according to state law. However, program outcomes will not be sustained after the period of funding has ended since there are no additional funds available for program activities.

Outcomes

The anticipated long-term outcomes of this program are the increased success of habitat restorations and an increased awareness among practitioners and decision-makers of common challenges associated with habitat restorations and recommended management options to improve future restorations.

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date completed
Project selection	Projects selected by coordinator	Fall-Winter 2012
Project evaluation	Projects evaluated by REP	Spring-Summer 2013
Report on Findings	Report submitted to L-SOHC and legislature	Fall-Winter 2013

Table B-2. Other Outcome Table

Goal	Activity P/R/E	Measure	Impact	Ecological Type
Evaluate effectiveness of habitat restoration projects	N/A	Number of projects evaluated annually	Improved understanding of complexities associated with restoration projects	All
Improve future restorations	N/A	Number of projects that have implemented recommended improvements	Improved quality of habitat	All

Attachments: A. Budget

Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet

Name of Proposal:	Restoration Evaluations Program
Legislative Citation:	
Date:	24-Oct-11

Total Amount of Request \$ 45,000 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
	<i>Program coordination</i>	0.25	1	\$ 25,600		\$
					\$	-
					\$	-
					\$	-
					\$	-
					\$	-
Total	0.25		\$ 25,600	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,600

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 Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel - <i>auto entered from above</i>	\$ 25,600	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,600
Contracts	\$ 17,200			\$ 17,200
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT <i>(breakout in table 7)</i>				\$ -
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT <i>(breakout in table 7)</i>				\$ -
Easement Acquisition				\$ -
Easement Stewardship				\$ -
Travel (in-state)	\$ 2,200			\$ 2,200
Professional Services				\$ -
Direct Support Services				\$ -
DNR Land Acquisition Costs				\$ -
Other				\$ -
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>				\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools				\$ -
Supplies/Materials				\$ -
	\$ 45,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 45,000

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

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
Total	-	-

Attachment B. Output Tables

Name of Proposal:
 Legislative Citation:
 Date:

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			500		500
Protect Fee		380			380
Protect Easement					0
Protect Other					0
Enhance				590	590
Total	0	380	500	590	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)
 Total Acres (sum of Total row)

1470
 1470

These two cells should be the same figure.

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$ 1,000,000				\$ 1,000,000
Protect Fee					\$ -
Protect Easement					\$ -
Protect Other		\$ 1,500,000			\$ 1,500,000
Enhance				\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Total	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 2,600,000
 \$ 2,600,000

These two cells should be the same figure.

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		400	25			425
Protect Fee		100		500		600
Protect Easement			100			100
Protect Other			100		80	180
Enhance		250		250	90	590
Total	0	750	225	750	170	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)
 Total Acres (sum of Total row)
 Total Acres from Table 1.

1895
 1895
 1470

These three cells should be the same figure.

Attachment B. Output Tables

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore		\$ 500,000		\$ 500,000		\$ 1,000,000
Protect Fee						
Protect Easement						
Protect Other		\$ 1,500,000				\$ 1,500,000
Enhance					\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Total	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ 100,000	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column) \$ 2,600,000 *These two cells should be the same figure.*
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row) \$ 2,600,000
 Check to make sure these amounts are the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		380			380
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement PILT Liability	<i>NO State</i>				0
	0	380	0	0	

Table 7. Estimated Value of Land Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total	
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		\$ 160,000			\$ 160,000	\$ -
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					\$ -	\$ -
Permanent Easement PILT Liability	<i>NO State</i>	\$ 300,000	\$ 1,000,000		\$ 1,300,000	\$ -
	\$ 300,000	\$ 1,160,000	\$ -	\$ -		

FYI: should match total in budget table that is auto entered below