

**Main Request for Funding Form**

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Fiscal Year 2013**

**Program or Project Title: Accelerating Restoration and Enhancement of Key Public Lands and Waters in the Anoka Sandplain (Phase 2)**

**Funds Requested: \$ 1,455,720**

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**County Location:**

**Ecological Planning Regions:**

- Northern Forest       Forest/Prairie Transition       Southeast Forest  
 Prairie       Metro/Urban

**Activity Type:**

- Protect - Fee       Protect - Easement       Protect - Other  
 Restore       Enhance

**Priority Resources addressed by activity:**

- Wetlands       Forests       Prairie       Habitat

**Project Abstract**

**Anoka Sandplain Partnership (Phase 2) will restore/enhance 2005 acres of priority wildlife habitat within the Sandplain and along the Rum River in the Metropolitan Urbanizing, Forest-Prairie, and Northern Forest areas.**

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**Project Narrative**

The ASP ecological region is home to some of Minnesota's crowning conservation achievements over the past century:

- **Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area** (Anoka & Chisago counties – 25,000 acres) is the largest WMA in the Twin Cities Metro Area and is composed of wetlands and oak woodland and savanna.
- **Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge** (Sherburne County – 30,700 acres) was in 1965 to protect and restore the habitats associated with the St. Francis River Valley for migratory birds and other wildlife, the focus of the Refuge is on the restoration of oak savanna, wetland and Big Woods habitat.
- **Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge** (Morrison County – 13,500 acres – only 2,000 acquired) was established in 1992 to preserve a large, natural wetland complex. The refuge is located in central Minnesota and serves as an important stop for many species of migrating birds and harbors one of the largest nesting populations of greater sandhill cranes in Minnesota. Habitats include native tallgrass prairie, oak savanna, and wetlands with stands of wild rice.
- **Rum River Wild & Scenic River** (Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Isanti and Anoka counties) was added to Minnesota's Wild & Scenic Rivers Program in 1978.
- **Sand Dunes State Forest/Uncas Dunes SNA** (Sherburne County). The Sand Dunes State Forest consists of oak savanna forest and prairie and 2,700 acres of pine plantation of rolling terrain and few hills. The 745 acres of Uncas Dunes contains a relict dunefield associated with Glacial Lake Grantsburg.
- **Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve** (Anoka & Isanti counties – 5,400 acres) is a Registered Natural Landmark, recognized as 'possessing exceptional value in illustrating our nation's natural heritage'. Superb examples of oak savanna, tamarack-black spruce forest and white cedar swamp occur throughout the Reserve.

Despite these storied successes, the future of wildlife in the ASP is far from assured. Much remains to be accomplished in order to ensure the long-term success of wildlife in this ecological region of the state:

- Oak savanna habitat that once characterized the ASP has been reduced to less than 1% of its historic extent (<12 square miles across the region), making it the single most imperiled ecological system in Minnesota. The demise of oak savanna in the ASP mirrors regional trends and is classified as a globally rare ecosystem.
- Prairie habitat in this subsection has declined from 10% coverage historically to less than .05% coverage today.
- Habitat loss and degradation has had profound impacts on the wildlife of the ASP; some 97 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in the state of Minnesota are known or predicted to occur within the ASP (*Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare*, pp. 70-71). These include 15 bird species, 9 of which have exhibited persistent rangewide declines over the past 40 years (USFWS Breeding Bird Survey 2008) – lark sparrow (-1.65% decline per year), eastern towhee (-1.61%), loggerhead shrike (-3.68%), red-headed woodpecker (-2.66%), field sparrow (-2.78%), eastern meadowlark (-2.86%), brown thrasher (-1.13%), whip-poor-will (-2.19%) and grasshopper sparrow (-3.55%).
- To date, there have existed inadequate resources to pursue protection of what is remaining in private hands, and to adequately manage/restore what occurs in

public/NGO conservation ownership. *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare:* Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, identifies maintenance, enhancement and protection of oak savannas as its first priority for this ecological subsection.

- The ASP is among the fastest growing areas in the state. Urban sprawl, coupled with invasive exotic species and woody encroachment, are placing immense pressure on remaining natural resources and threatening existing protected areas.

While there has been a tremendous loss of native habitat in the ASP, much remains on public lands and in public waters in needs of restoration and enhancement work. Public land managers over the past decades have made good investments of time and resources, but all are facing serious funding shortages. None of our partners have reached their restoration and enhancement goals despite the range of efforts over many years. As the **Anoka Sand Plain Habitat Partnership** (ASP Habitat Partnership or Partnership), we acknowledge this habitat work has to be an ongoing effort, one that is far more integrated and collaborative than what has been done in the past.

This Partnership aims, through a coordinated approach, to 1) elevate and capitalize on resources available for protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural resources in the ASP, 2) share and disseminate management and restoration expertise to public and private landowners, 3) tackle emerging research issues and use findings to guide management actions across public and private lands and waters, and 4) build strong connections to local communities through education, outreach and opportunities for volunteerism.

This Partnership, at present, includes the following parties:

Anoka County Parks	Minnesota DNR
Anoka Conservation District	Minnesota Forest Resources Council
Audubon Minnesota	Morrison County Parks
Benton SWCD	Morrison SWCD
BWSR	National Wild Turkey Federation
Chisago SWCD	Stearns SWCD
Friends of the Rum River	The Nature Conservancy
Great River Greening	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Isanti County Parks	University of Minnesota
Mille Lacs SWCD	Wright SWCD

This grant will help advance the effort even more significantly. We will collaborate on projects, share resources and expertise, broaden the existing funding base for this work, and outreach to public/private partners and the local community – all supported foundationally by a world class ecological research center.

Funding through the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) will be used to leverage further funding and in-kind support on all sites where we work. We will increase involvement by the public through

the combining and integrating of the volunteer programs led by Great River Greening, SWCDs, municipalities and school districts, National Wild Turkey Federation, The Nature Conservancy, USFWS, Minnesota Forest Resources Council, Isanti County Parks and others. These groups have wide recognition for volunteer development. This project will embark on that next generation of collaboration.

This grant is essential to showing the general public and landowners adjacent to the sites included in this proposal that we are actively pursuing and committed to this critical work. And we will work hard to get them to join in too – not only adjacent landowners, but students and teachers, hunters, bird watchers, and more. We will get them all involved so that we can ultimately work more effectively on private lands too.

The concept behind the ASP Habitat Partnership - integrated public and private land management – is a strategic direction of the Minnesota DNR (as stated in A Strategic Conservation Agenda 2009-2013). The ability of the DNR to administer state forests, parks, wildlife management areas, aquatic management areas, and scientific and natural areas is strongly influenced by the management of surrounding lands and waters. Through engagement in partnerships like the ASP Habitat Partnership, the DNR is pursuing integrated management for extensive interspersed public and private lands in order to build its capacity to work across ownership boundaries.

Through this proposal, the ASP Partnership is requesting \$1,455,720 to continue and broaden our collective work in restoring and enhancing priority wildlife habitat across state, federal and county lands in the program area. Backed by a slate of seasoned resource professionals (wildlife managers, ecologists, restoration experts, scientists) within an array of established conservation agencies and organizations, the Partnership is poised to begin making immediate impacts across 2005 acres of habitat.

## Design and scope of work

### Problems to be Addressed

- Native habitats have become rare and continue to be lost. Oak savanna now persists over <1% of its historic range (<12 square miles across the region), making it the single most imperiled ecological system in Minnesota; prairie habitat in this ecological region has declined from 10% coverage historically to <0.05% today. Other habitats like oak woodland and white pine forests have also greatly diminished. Due to its proximity to the Twin Cities, the ASP is among the fastest growing areas of the state, placing significant pressures on what remains.
- Degradation of oak savanna, prairie and woodland habitats on public lands due to invasive woody and non-native species encroachment threatens associated wildlife populations. Degradation of habitat has had profound impacts on wildlife in the ASP, including the 97 of Minnesota's Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) that occur within the region (*Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare*, pp. 70-71). High quality habitat for supporting game species is also sub-optimal.

- State, federal and local government agencies often lack sufficient capacity and resources for managing important public lands. Obligations over time of local, state and federal land management agencies are well above current funding levels. This program will serve to bring respective sites to a position where they can be managed effectively and efficiently with existing funding streams.
- Wild rice populations along the Rum River are a shadow of what they were historically. Significant opportunities for successful restoration of healthy populations exist in the numerous backwaters and oxbows along the river, providing important habitat and food sources for a wide variety of wildlife.

### Scope of Work

With the requested funding, and with other funds leveraged by this money and brought by other partners, the following actions and outcomes will be realized:

1. **The Anoka Sandplain Partnership will expand its ongoing restoration and enhancement efforts to 11 new project areas on public lands and waters.** Proposals for restoration work are being submitted by five organizations/agencies (Anoka Conservation District, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wild Turkey Federation, and Great River Greening) in partnership with some 20 other conservation organizations, including; Minnesota DNR, Mille Lacs SWCD, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Morrison County Parks, University of Minnesota, Minnesota Forest Resources Council, and others.
2. **An estimated 2,005 acres of oak savanna, prairie, forest and wetland habitat will be restored or enhanced across priority public lands and waters managed for wildlife and their natural resources.** Sites include 6 state WMAs, 2 state SNAs, 1 county park, 1 national wildlife refuge and 1 city park.
3. **Wild rice will be restored to an estimated 300 acres of public waters along the Rum River, a state-designated wild and scenic river, for the benefit of a wide array of wildlife species.** Funds will be used to identify and vet potential restoration sites, engage adjacent landowners, identify and procure seed, implement restoration activities, and monitor results. Restoration will occur in public waters (often backwaters and oxbows) associated with the river; adjacent private landowners will be consulted prior to seeding. A technical advisory committee of rice restoration experts has been assembled to provide insight into and otherwise guide the project. Restoration work will be conducted by a suite of project partners as a first phase of this effort.
4. **Contracts will be let to vendors to perform much of the on-the-ground restoration and enhancement work conducted on public lands and in public waters.** Activities will include woody invasive species removal, exotic species control, prescribed fire, seeding/planting, and other associated activities. These contracts will provide jobs to an array of local businesses.
5. **Where possible and practical, projects will incorporate volunteer events and other mechanisms to connect local communities, sportsman's clubs, and other groups with these important lands and waters.**

**6. Project management and administrative responsibilities will be handled by respective grant recipients, ensuring ecologically sound, science-based practices and results.**

**How Priorities are Set**

The ASP Partnership uses several existing priority-setting efforts that, in line with its goals, serve to highlight areas of greatest need for conservation action. We have used MCBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance, Regionally Ecological Significant Areas (RESA), and Habitat Corridors (all developed by the MN DNR) to define priorities at the regional scale. Weighting factors as detailed below are used to define priorities:

- Presence of MCBS quality ecological system(s) and/or concentration of SGCN/T&E species (weighted heavily) – indicators of the long-term viability of species/systems (habitat condition, size and landscape context) and conservation efficiency. Weighting = High;
- Size of habitat block or managed area – one indicator of long-term viability. Weighting = High;
- Occurrence within DNR mapped habitat corridors – an indicator of potential for restoring/conserving important habitat connectivity between protected areas. Weighting = Moderate;
- Public lands or private lands with long-term easements– a predictor of conservation success and security of investment. Weighting = Moderate;
- Multiple conservation benefits to both game and non-game species and other natural resources – an indicator of conservation efficiency. Weighting = Moderate;
- Immediacy of need/action as determined by Minnesota County Biological Survey and other sources – an indicator of conservation urgency. Weighting = High.;
- Ability to effectively manage lands over the long term through established means – an indicator of conservation capability of potential partner. Weighting = Moderate.

When considering projects for restoration and enhancement action, we consider the additional following criteria: likelihood of long-term success, cost, feasibility, and long-term benefit to wildlife.

Wild rice restoration priorities along the Rum River will be set in line with the following criteria:

- Presence of preferred ecological requirements for long-term persistence
- Buy-in from adjacent private landowners

**Urgency and Opportunity of the Proposed Project/Program**

Wildlife habitat in the ASP is being impacted by a variety of threats, resulting in urgent needs for action. These include:

**Critical Imperilment of Habitat and Associated Species** - Wildlife habitats of the Anoka Sand Plain (ASP) are critically imperiled, with oak savanna and prairie being the two most imperiled habitats in Minnesota. These habitats are identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan (CWCP) and Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan as conservation priorities. Habitat loss and degradation has had profound impacts on the wildlife of the ASP; some 97 Species of Greatest

Conservation Need (SGCN) in the state are known or predicted to occur within the ASP. This decline in habitat has had major impacts on game species as well.

**Major Threats & Pressures Requiring Urgent Action** - Invasive species, coupled with lack of prescribed fire and other basic management/restoration practices have resulted in declines in recreational opportunities and the value of public lands as wildlife habitat over time. In addition, opportunities for broadening the current extents of these habitats through restoration are becoming increasingly limited. Minnesota's CWCP identifies maintenance, enhancement and protection of oak savannas as its first priority for this ecological subsection.

The ASP is among the fastest growing areas in the state. Urban sprawl is placing immense pressure on remaining natural resources and threatening existing protected areas. As the Metro grows, wildlife habitat in the ASP will face elevated pressures, accentuating the importance of enhanced habitat management on existing public lands.

**Increased Cost of Management Actions as Habitats Decline**- Insufficient funding for restoration/management activities on public lands over the years has resulted in general declines in the condition of Minnesota's most imperiled habitats, and their value as wildlife habitat. Per acre costs to restore these habitats rise every year that management is delayed.

**The Opportunity** - The ASP Habitat Partnership recognizes that a multi-pronged conservation approach of protection (fee simple and easement), restoration and enhancement of public and private lands, and education/outreach is required to significantly advance and build support for conservation of these imperiled habitats. In this proposal, we put forward a second phase of our collective work in accelerating restoration and enhancement of important wildlife habitat on public lands.

**What Habitat will be Affected?; How will the Proposed Actions Directly Restore, Enhance and/or Protect Prairies, Wetlands, Forests or Habitat?**

The partners of Anoka Sandplain Partnership propose the following projects for consideration by LSOHC for OHF funding. The Partnership has a demonstrable track record of completing the work proposed, both collaboratively and independently. These projects are listed under respective lead organizations/agencies and include:

**Anoka Conservation District**

***A. Anoka Nature Preserve (Anoka County)***

The Anoka Nature Preserve is a 200-acre parcel with over a mile of frontage on the Wild and Scenic Rum River in the City of Anoka. The Anoka Conservation District holds a conservation easement on the park. The woodland area in the Anoka Nature Preserve provides important habitat along the Rum River Corridor, in a suburban area that is highly developed.

However, significant impact from invasive woody species (buckthorn, etc.) have occurred.

**Actions:** Enhancement of 130 acres of oak woodland habitat through woody invasive species management (principally buckthorn).

## River Greening

### **B. Dalbo WMA (Isanti County)**

This 3000-acre WMA consists of a diversity of upland/lowland forests (conifer, birch, ash), brushlands, grasslands, and wetlands (including a 200-acre wild rice lake). Proposed enhancement work will benefit an array of game species including: deer, bear, small game, forest game birds, pheasant, waterfowl, and turkeys. **Actions:** Enhancement of 200 acres of conifer/birch/ash woodlands and sedge meadow habitat through woody invasive species management (glossy buckthorn).

### **C. Carlos Avery WMA (Anoka County)**

This 25,000-acre WMA is the largest in the Twin Cities Metro Area and is one of the iconic WMAs in the state of Minnesota. The site is composed principally of wetlands and oak woodland and savanna. **Actions:** Enhancement work will be completed at two different locations within the WMA: 1) woody invasive species (black locust) control over 200 acres, within oak woodland classified as being of High and Outstanding MCBS quality, 2) woody invasive species control (buckthorn) over 40 acres, within oak woodland classified as being of High MCBS quality, and 3) prescribed burns over two oak savanna remnants totaling 19 acres.

### **D. Twin Lakes SNA (Isanti County)**

This 50-acre Scientific and Natural Area protects a high quality white pine-hardwood forest remnant on the shores of Horseshoe Lake. The SNA is part of a 3,500-acre high-quality natural area complex consisting of large expanse of high quality, diverse wetlands, and maple-basswood, oak, and white pine-hardwood forests. The SNA protects populations of 6 rare plant and 2 rare animal species. The SNA will be open for archery hunting beginning in fall 2011. **Actions:** White pine-hardwood forest restoration will take place over 3 acres of agricultural field, complemented by woody invasive species management over 47 acres of mature forest.

### **E. Rice Lake SNA (Sherburne County)**

Glacial meltwaters deposited their outwash sands across this large plain, providing the basis for an open, grassy landscape dotted with bur and pin oak--a classic savanna. Rice Lake Savanna SNA contains examples of oak savanna and oak woodland communities, with a first phase of enhancement and restoration work funded by the OHF in 2010. This proposal represents a second phase of action at the site using OHF funds. **Actions:** Oak woodland woody invasive species control and prescribed burning over 23 acres of the site.

### **F. Belle Prairie County Park (Morrison County)**

The 143-acre park flanks the east bank of the Mississippi River, and is a site of statewide high biodiversity significance. Found here are high quality remnants of dry sand-gravel prairie, oak woodland, black ash-silver maple terrace forest, and oak savanna. Populations of three rare plants species occur in the park. **Actions:** Enhancement of 35 acres of oak



savanna and prairie habitat through woody invasive species control, prescribed fire; restoration of 4 acres of native prairie.

**G. *Wild Rice Restoration Program – Rum River (Mille Lacs, Isanti & Anoka counties)***

Wild rice is used by a diverse array of wildlife species and is under-utilized as a restoration tool. Nowhere is wild rice as important a resource for wildlife as in Minnesota, and the Rum River watershed was historically near the center of its range. It continues to hold some significant populations, and holds great potential through restoration as an important wild rice locale. **Actions:** As an initial phase of this project, partners will restore 200 acres of wild rice to public waters along the Rum River (backwaters, oxbows) through hand seeding over a 3-year period.

**Wild Turkey Federation**

**H. *Ereaux WMA (Morrison County)***

This 527-acre WMA is a diverse mosaic of wetlands, and high-quality oak-aspen forest and prairie that provides habitat for a diverse assemblage of game and non-game wildlife. Some 17 SGCN species are associated with the WMA, directly benefitting from the proposed actions. **Actions:** Enhancement of 178 acres of high quality oak woodland and prairie through woody invasive species management (buckthorn, honeysuckle and Siberian elm).

**I. *Sartell WMA (Benton County)***

This 368-acre WMA is bisected by Little Rock Creek, and contains significant oak savanna, oak woodland and prairie in various stages of restoration/enhancement. Approximately 30 SGCN species will benefit from the proposed actions, along with a host of game species, including turkey, pheasant, waterfowl, deer and others. **Actions:** Enhancement of 112 acres of oak-brush savanna, oak woodland and prairie through exotic and native woody species control.

**J. *McDougall WMA (Morrison County)***

This 228-acre WMA occurs along the Mississippi River and is characterized by high-quality floodplain forest and oak woodland, with restored prairie. The WMA now includes a former preserve of The Nature Conservancy. Some 30 SGCN species will benefit from the proposed actions along with an array of game species. **Actions:** Enhancement of 200 acres of oak woodland, deciduous woodland, oak savanna and grassland through control of exotic and native woody invasive species.

**.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**K. *Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge (Sherburne County)***

This 30,700-acre refuge was in 1965 to protect and restore the habitats associated with the St. Francis River Valley for migratory birds and other wildlife. The focus of the Refuge is restoration of oak savanna, wetland and Big Woods habitat. **Actions:** Prescribed fire will be introduced into two new burn units at the refuge (220 acres in total); 10 acres of land will be seeded with native prairie seed to aid restoration of oak savanna habitat; 300 acres of

overgrown oak savanna habitat will be mechanically thinned to aid oak savanna restoration efforts.

### **Duration of Benefits**

All restoration and enhancement actions will be occurring on public lands where respective land management agencies have committed to maintaining the investment put forward through OHF funds over time. In addition, the ASP partners are committed to further elevating the protection, restoration and enhancement of the region's natural resources, and will work to ensure this investment is maintained and added upon.

### **Stand-Alone Program or Part of a Larger Scale Solution?**

This proposal is put forward by the Anoka Sandplain Partnership, a collaborative of 20 conservation organizations and land management agencies to protect, enhance and restore the natural resources of the region. The Partnership collaborates around an array of ongoing conservation efforts ranging from public to private lands, and terrestrial to aquatic habitats. We are building toward a large-scale, multi-faceted solution to the natural resource challenges before us.

### **Return on Investment**

The State of Minnesota (and in some cases federal and local governments) has spent considerable resources procuring the conservation lands that appear in this proposal for the benefit of the state's wildlife resources. These areas often contain state- and at times globally-imperiled habitats, are highly treasured for their recreational opportunities, and offer critical habitats for both game and nongame species alike. Their inherent value to the State of Minnesota cannot be measured merely by stated land values. The Anoka Sandplain Partnership is working to ensure that the State's investment in these important lands is maintained indefinitely.

Accomplishing this goal requires that funds are brought to bear from a wide variety of sources, that we build connections to local communities as a means of building long-term support for these lands, and that we use resources effectively and efficiently. In many of the sites appearing in this proposal, invasive species are just now beginning to make a demonstrable impact on the health of these habitats. Addressing the problem head-on as the problems arise is the most effective and cost-efficient mechanism for ensuring long-term success.

### **Level of Stakeholder Opposition to and Involvement in this Proposal**

The ASP Partnership has been working to build connections to and engage local stakeholders not only in the development of the proposal, but in the work that is underway. We are reaching out to local chapters of the various hunting groups that use many of these lands, asking for their input in shaping these proposals and the direction of the Partnership. We are engaging local community volunteers in the performance of aspects of this work. We are meeting with local organizations, city councils, and other local groups to inform them of the work underway. We believe the public stakeholder is generally highly supportive of these efforts to improve the condition of habitat on existing public lands. Prior to embarking upon wild rice restoration

along the Rum River, and In line with DNR protocol, we will gain approval from landowners immediately adjacent to proposed restoration sites.

## **Planning**

Projects put forward in this proposal are informed by a science-based strategic planning and evaluation model that is discussed in the above section, “How Priorities are Set.” The actions highlighted by this proposal are prominently featured in the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan and an array of other published resource management plans, as detailed below:

### **Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan**

Oak savanna habitat is specifically detailed as a protection priority (as is prairie) in the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan (Habitat Recommendation 1; page 66). Habitat Recommendation 3 (pages 74-78) identifies the improvement of connectivity and access to outdoor recreation. Habitat Recommendation 5 (pages 80-81) identifies restoration of land, water and wetland-associated watersheds as priorities for conservation. Since oak savanna was identified as a statewide protection priority, it naturally follows that it is a restoration priority as well, as is prairie. Habitat recommendation 9 (pages 88-89) identifies overall research on land and aquatic habitat as a priority need, emphasizing our relationship to Cedar Creek ESR as a critical element to that end. Habitat Recommendation 13 (habitat and landscape conservation and training programs for all citizens) links to our efforts to engage local communities in the implementation of restoration/enhancement activities through appropriate volunteer activities.

### **Minnesota Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy**

Several habitat types (oak savanna, prairie, grassland and dune systems) occurring within the ASP are identified as a statewide conservation priorities in *Tomorrow’s Habitat for the Wild and Rare: Minnesota’s Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife; pages 81-86)*. The Action Plan identifies maintenance, enhancement and protection of oak savannas as the state’s highest priority for the ASP ecological subsection.

### **Minnesota Forest Resources Council**

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC), a state agency responsible for implementing the Minnesota Sustainable Forest Resources Act (SFRA) of 1995, serves as the chief advisors to the Governor and Legislature on sustainable forestry matters. In 2005, the MFRC approved the East Central Forest Resource Management Plan as developed by its East Central regional landscape committee. The plan envisions healthy and sustained forests across the region in an ecologically appropriate manner, and provides a framework of goal and strategies for four ECS subsections including the ASP. The Anoka Sand Plain Habitat Partnership project is supported by the East Central Committee as one of its pilot projects to promote sustainable forestry in the region.

Specific pertinent Visions and Goals for the East Central Landscape include:

4. Enhanced Wildlife Habitat and Wildlife Populations (page 12)

Goal: Monitor and promote increased populations of fish and wildlife

Goal: Improve habitat through vegetation management

8. Diversity of forests, plants, ecosystems (page 16)

Goal: Protecting and enhancing biological and structural diversity

Goal: To restore areas to native prairie and wetlands

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council**

This proposal addresses all of the identified statewide priorities and several ecological section conservation priorities of L-SOHC for FY2012 as outlined below:

Metro Section

1. Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity.

Prairie Forest Border

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.

Northern Forests:

1. 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.
2. Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in aerial extent in recent decades.

**Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda**

Restoration and enhancement of imperiled resources through conservation partnerships is captured as explicit goals of the Minnesota DNR in its Strategic Conservation Agenda (2009-2013):

Goals:

- A. Minnesota's natural lands and habitats will be conserved and enhanced
  - a. *Remaining natural ecosystems are conserved* - Healthy habitats are connected by natural corridors. Native prairies are protected, and grasslands and riparian forest are restored. We are responsible stewards of DNR-administered lands and good neighbors to adjacent landowners. Uncommon and rare habitats are protected.
  - b. *Degraded habitats are restored* - Grasslands and forests have been restored.
  - c. *Natural resources thrive in the context of human influences. Urban and developing areas support a diversity of plant and animal communities and offer*

*diverse recreational opportunities* - Local decisions are supported by public-private partnerships, with DNR providing technical assistance and coordination.

- B. Minnesota's fish and wildlife populations will be healthy and provide great recreation opportunities
  - a. *Fish and wildlife populations and the habitats that support them are healthy* - Habitat types in jeopardy, such as prairies, wetlands, and shallow lakes, are restored. Endangered and threatened species are protected.
  - b. *Conservation partnerships and stewardship ethics are strong* - Public- and private-sector partners work together to support Minnesota's resources and promote conservation.

### **DNR Wild Rice Study submitted to the Minnesota Legislature, 2008**

Recommendation 6: Increase intensive natural wild rice lake management efforts and accelerate the restoration of wild rice stands within its historic range (page 38).

#### **Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds**

Although the ASP Partnership is using and pursuing funds available through other constitutional funds (Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund and Clean Water Fund, specifically) to achieve its goals in the Anoka Sandplain, none of those funds are being tapped to simultaneously address the habitat restoration and enhancement needs proposed here.

This proposal to LSOHC for Outdoor Heritage Fund support does not supplant any other sources of funds. In all cases, this proposal and the projects to be completed accelerate habitat work in the Anoka Sandplain.

#### **Relationship to Current Organizational Budget**

The OHF grant funds will be used exclusively to complete the proposed project activities, thereby accelerating the protection, restoration and enhancement of high priority habitat in the Anoka Sandplain region. The grant funds are in addition to the organizational operating budget of each partner and other funds secured for habitat work. These grant funds will not substitute for or supplant other funding sources.

#### **Sustainability and Maintenance**

Management plans (if not already in place) will be developed for each site to guide effective long-term management. Land managers associated with sites included in this proposal have committed to the long-term maintenance of these habitat improvements in line with prescribed actions. A principle goal of this proposal is accelerate enhancement/restoration of respective sites and bring them to a point where on-going management costs are diminished and the resource can be effectively maintained over time.

In addition, the ASP Partnership is committed to working with respective land management agencies (local, state and federal) and conservation organizations in an on-going basis to identify and procure financial resources for maintaining these improvements as needed, bring

volunteers to bear, and otherwise assist in reducing the financial and capacity burden in the face of fiscal constraints.

### **State Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs)**

SNA field staff will monitor project sites and take any necessary actions to sustain the habitat improvements as part of their public land management responsibilities. Maintenance work will be carried out by existing staff, CCM crews, temporary project staffing or through vendor contracting. Periodic enhancements (beyond routine management) will be funded through annual funding requests from a variety of funding sources, including Bonding, Gifts, Federal Sources, Environmental Trust, and Outdoor Heritage Fund.

### **State Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)**

Wildlife field staff will monitor project sites and take any necessary actions to sustain the habitat improvements as part of their public land management responsibilities. Maintenance work will be carried out by existing staff, CCM crews, temporary project staffing or through vendor contracting. Periodic enhancements (beyond routine management) will be funded through annual funding requests from a variety of funding sources, including Dedicated Wildlife Funding (Pheasant, Deer, Dee/Bear, Turkey, Surcharge, Heritage), Bonding, Gifts, Federal Sources, Environmental Trust, and Outdoor Heritage Fund.

### **Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge**

Land Management at Sherburne NWR is guided by its 2005 Comprehensive Conservation Plan. One of the major goals of habitat management at the refuge is to restore the oak savanna habitat to pre-European settlement conditions. Oak savanna habitat is considered globally imperiled, and restoration of this land type involves prescribed burning, forest thinning, invasive species work, and planting of native local ecotype seeds. National Wildlife Refuges are purchased in perpetuity and the Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to conserving National Wildlife Refuges for the American public and the future generation of the United States of America.

### **Anoka Nature Preserve**

Long-term management of buckthorn is critical to a successful project. By implementing several waves of treatment over a couple years, the Anoka Conservation District and City of Anoka will exhaust the existing seed bank and reduce the chances of buckthorn re-growth. Anoka Conservation District will use the initial project to train volunteers on proper buckthorn treatment methods, and use the existing partnership between the City of Anoka, the Friends of the Anoka Nature Preserve, and volunteer sources to ensure long term maintenance activities are carried out.

### **Rum River Public Waters**

The partners collaborating on wild rice restoration along the Rum River will monitor the success of initial establishment efforts to gauge the long-term potential for expansion of this program throughout the watershed.

## Outcomes

### Short-term and Intermediate Outcomes:

- Significantly enhanced habitat conditions (measured by percent reduction in invasive species, diversity of flora, occupation of and diversity of animal species) across 824 acres of oak woodland, 691 acres of native prairie and oak savanna, and 200 acres of wetland habitat.
- >95% reduction in woody invasive exotic species (Siberian elm, buckthorn, honeysuckle, etc.) in project focal areas.
- Enhanced diversity and structure in native prairie, oak savanna, oak woodland habitats stemming from invasive species control and prescribed fire (relative to MCBS benchmarks).
- Restoration of 3 acres of oak/white pine woodland and 4 acres prairie, providing habitat in areas currently in other uses and reducing impacts from edge effect within important public lands.

### Long-term Outcomes:

- Significantly enhanced habitat conditions across XX acres of oak woodland, XX acres of native prairie and oak savanna, and XX wet meadow habitat, providing a key habitat core within the Mississippi River corridor of the Twin Cities.
- Sustained >95% reduction in woody invasive exotic species (Siberian elm, buckthorn, honeysuckle, etc.) and 80% reduction in seed bank over first 10 years.
- Increased usage of forest/savanna/prairie habitat by migratory and breeding birds during respective seasons.
- Increased populations of SGCN reptile and mammal species resulting from improvements in habitat condition.
- Establishment of primary grounds for strong public educational program tied to the value of high quality habitat in maintaining wildlife populations.

This project will result in the enhancement of a highly desirable habitat on a permanently protected property. Increased diversity of native vegetation, improved habitat quality and additional wildlife food resources will be more prevalent, creating a valuable wildlife hub in the Rum River corridor. The project will also increase public awareness about the fragility of our natural ecosystems and the important role they play in our enjoyment of outdoor recreational activities.

## Activity Type Detail

### Fee Acquisition Projects

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition?

- Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

### Easement Acquisition Projects

Will the eased land be open for public use?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Will the conservation easement be permanent?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

### Restoration and Enhancement Projects

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Does the activity take place on an Aquatic Management Area (AMA), Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Wildlife Management Area (WMA), or State Forests?

Yes, which ones                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If so, please indicate which ones: Activities will occur across 5 Wildlife Management Areas (Dalbo WMA, Carlos Avery WMA, Ereaux WMA, McDougall WMA, Sartell WMA) and 3 Scientific and Natural Areas (Twin Lakes SNA, Rice Lake SNA and Boot Lake SNA).

In addition, activities will occur across other public lands, which are nonetheless important for their ecological significance. These include: Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Anoka Nature Preserve, and Belle Prairie (Morrison) County Park.

Finally, the proposal targets wild rice restoration on public waters associated with the Rum River, a state-designated wild and scenic river.



## Past Outdoor Heritage Fund Appropriations Received for this program

ML 2009	ML 2010	ML 2011
\$	\$ 750,000	\$

## Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date
Development of natural resource management plans where needed	Natural Resource management plans completed	1/1/2013
Enhancement work underway	Enhancement actions initiated at 7 sites	6/30/13
Enhancement work underway	Enhancement actions initiated at 11 sites	6/30/14
Wild Rice seeding site identification	3 seeding sites approved for restoration	9/1/12
Wild rice seeding	Seeding completed at 3 sites	6/1/2015
Enhancement work completed	All restoration and enhancement projects completed	6/1/2015

### Attachments:

- A. Budget
- B. Proposed Output Tables 1-5
- C. Parcel List

**Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet**

Name of Proposal:

Accelerating Restoration and Enhancement of Key Public Lands in the Anoka Sandplain
11-Jul-11

Date:

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

**Total Amount of Request**      \$      1,455,720 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

**Personnel**

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Cash Leverage Source	Total
				Leverage	Leverage		
<i>Manager of Programs (ACD)</i>	0.01	3	\$ 3,000				\$ 3,000
<i>Project Manager/Ecologist (Greening)</i>	0.13	3	\$ 51,000	\$ 51,000		ounty, Greening, NFWF	\$ 102,000
<i>Dir. Cons. Programs (Greening)</i>	0.06	3	\$ 40,020				\$ 40,020
<i>Finance (Greening)</i>	0.05	3	\$ 19,200				\$ 19,200
<i>Volunteer Coordinator/Crew (Greening)</i>	0.05	3	\$ 18,500	\$ 18,500		son County, Greening	\$ 37,000
<i>Burn Crew (FWS)</i>	0.05	3	\$ 17,000				\$ 17,000
<i>Finance (NWTF)</i>	0.05	3	\$ 25,000				\$ 25,000
<i>Seeding Crew (Various)</i>	0.02	3	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000			\$ 15,000
<i>Project Manager (NWTF)</i>	0.02	3	\$ 11,000	\$ 10,000			\$ 21,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$ 194,720</b>	<b>\$ 84,500</b>		<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 279,220</b>

**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		Cash Leverage Source	Total
		Leverage	Leverage		
Personnel - <i>auto entered from above</i>	\$ 194,720	\$ 84,500	\$ -		\$ 279,220
Contracts	\$ 1,109,000				\$ 1,109,000
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)	\$ 22,000				\$ 22,000
Professional Services					\$ -
Direct Support Services					\$ -
DNR Land Acquisition Costs (\$3,500 per acquisition)					\$ -
Other					\$ 130,000
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>	\$ -	\$ -			\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools	\$ 20,000				\$ 20,000
Supplies/Materials	\$ 110,000				\$ 110,000
	\$ 1,455,720	\$ 84,500	\$ -		\$ 1,540,220

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

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<b>Total</b>	-	-

## Attachment B. Output Tables

<b>Name of Proposal:</b>	Accelerating Restoration and Enhancement of Key Public Lands in the Anoka Sandplain
<b>Date:</b>	11-Jul-11

*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		14		3	17
Protect Fee					0
Protect Easement					0
Protect Other					0
Enhance	500	677	811		1988
<b>Total</b>	500	691	814	0	

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

2005  
2005

*These two cells should be the same figure.*

**Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore		\$ 23,100	\$ 46,725		\$ 69,825
Protect Fee					\$ -
Protect Easement					\$ -
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance	\$ 279,300	\$ 236,460	\$ 864,360		\$ 1,380,120
<b>Total</b>	\$ 279,300	\$ 259,560	\$ 911,085	\$ -	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)  
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.

\$ 1,449,945  
\$ 1,449,945

*These two cells should be the same figure.*

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	13	4				17
Protect Fee						0
Protect Easement						0
Protect Other						0
Enhance	1129	509			350	1988
<b>Total</b>	1142	513	0	0	350	

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

2005  
2005  
2005

*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	\$ 58,275	\$ 11,550				\$ 69,825
Protect Fee						\$ -
Protect Easement						\$ -
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance	\$ 540,120	\$ 613,200			\$ 226,800	\$ 1,380,120
<b>Total</b>	\$ 598,395	\$ 624,750	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 226,800	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)      \$ 1,449,945 *These two cells should be the same figure.*  
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row)      \$ 1,449,945  
 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					0
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement <i>NO State PILT Liability</i>					0
	0	0	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					\$ -	\$ -
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					\$ -	\$ -
Permanent Easement <i>NO State PILT Liability</i>					\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		

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

**Attachment C. Parcel List**

Name of Proposal:

Date:

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County	Township (25-258)	Range (01-51)	Direction most parcels are 2 with the exception of some areas of Cook County which is 1	Section (01 thru 36)	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 PF=Protect Fee PE=Protect Easement PO=Protect Other R=Restore E=Enhance	If Easement, what is the easement cost as a % of the fee acquisition?	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)	
Dalbo WMA	Isanti	42	22	2	9	4222209	200	\$175,350	Enhancement of conifer/birch/ash woodlands and sedge meadow habitat through woody invasive species management (glossy buckthorn).	E	NA	Yes	Yes
Carlos Avery WMA	Anoka/Chisagc	33	21	2	16	3321216	259	\$276,150	Woody invasive species management across 240 acres of oak woodland classified as being of High and Exceptional MCBS quality; prescribed fire over 19 acres of high MCBS quality oak savanna.	E	NA	Yes	Yes
McDougall WMA	Morrison	39	28	2	29	3928229	200	\$150,150	Enhancement of oak woodland, deciduous woodland, oak savanna and grassland through control of exotic and native woody invasive species.	E	NA	Yes	Yes
Sartell WMA	Benton	38	29	2	15	3829215	112	\$207,900	Enhancement of oak-brush savanna, oak woodland and prairie through exotic and native woody species control.	E	NA	Yes	Yes
Ereaux WMA	Morrison	41	31	2	30	4131230	178	\$193,200	Enhancement of high quality oak woodland and prairie through woody invasive species management.	E	NA	Yes	Yes
Twin Lakes SNA	Isanti	34	22	2	11	3422211	50	\$66,150	White pine-hardwood forest restoration over 3 acres of agricultural field; woody invasive management.	R, E	NA	Yes	Yes
Rice Lake SNA (Phase 2)	Sherburne	35	29	2	11	3529211	23	\$36,750	Prescribed fire and woody invasive removal across oak woodland and savanna habitat.	E	NA	Yes	No
Anoka Nature Preserve	Anoka	32	25	2	25	3225225	130	\$104,370	Invasive species treatment/removal across oak woodland habitat	E	NA	Yes	No
Belle Prairie County Park	Morrison	41	14	2	32	4114232	39	\$81,900	Woody invasive removal in oak savanna and prairie habitats; prescribed fire; prairie restoration.	R,E	NA	Yes	No

**Attachment C. Parcel List**

Sherburne NWR	Sherburne	35	28	2	16	3528216	520	\$60,900	Prescribed fire added to two new burn units totalling 220 acres; 10 acres seeded for oak savanna restoration; thinning of overgrown oak savanna across 300 acres to aid restoration efforts.	R, E	NA	Yes	Yes
Rum River Wild Rice	Anoka, Isanti, I	36	24	2	24	3624224	300	\$102,900	Wild rice restoration in backwaters and oxbows along the Rum River.	E	NA	Yes	Yes