

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Laws of Minnesota 2014 Accomplishment Plan

Date: December 16, 2013

Program or Project Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Metro Grant Program ML2014

Funds Recommended: \$ 4,000,000

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Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

County Locations: No Counties Listed

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Metro / Urban

Activity Type:

- Enhance
- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee
- Restore

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Forest
- Habitat
- Prairie
- Wetlands

Abstract:

The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program is managed by the Department of Natural Resources to provide competitive matching grants of up to \$400,000 to local, regional, state, and national non-profit organizations and government entities.

Design and Scope of Work:

The CPL program fulfills MS 97a.056 Subd. 3a, directing LSOHC to establish a conservation partner's grant program encouraging/supporting local conservation efforts. \$3,930,000 of the requested \$4,000,000 will be available for grants.

The CPL metro grant program will depend on support and technical advice from public land managers, habitat and acquisition specialists, and support staff. Stakeholders involved in this program include applicants, reviewers, and

land managers. No opposition is known.

Grant activities include enhancement, restoration, and protection of forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife in Minnesota's municipalities and metro areas. Applicants will describe the project location, activity type and habitat, benefit to habitat, fish, game and wildlife, and duration of benefits. A 10% match from nonstate sources is required for all grants. Match may be cash or in-kind, and must be identified at time of application.

The metro grant program will be managed alongside the traditional Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program. All personnel costs will be provided through the traditional CPL admin budget. CPL Program Staff will develop a Request for Proposal (RFP)/ Program Manual incorporating LSOHC priorities. Staff will also solicit applications, work with applicants to submit scoreable applications, oversee grant selection, prepare/execute grant documents, review expenditure documentation ensuring financial integrity, make payments, monitor grant work, assist recipients with closing out agreements, and prepare required reports. CPL staff complies with the Department of Administration-Office of Grants Management policies.

Application Process

The RFP/Program Manual will be posted on the CPL website in August 2014. The metro CPL grant cycle will have one guaranteed grant round and a second round if more than \$500,000 remains. Applications will be accepted online through mid-September for Round 1. The traditional CPL grant application system will be modified to include the metro cycle. Projects under \$25,000 will have a simplified application. After two grant rounds, the Council may recommend the transfer of remaining funds to the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program ML2014. DNR may choose to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with DNR and OHF policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available or if a grantee cannot complete a project as planned.

Grant Selection Process

Metro CPL applications will be scored and ranked using a revised evaluation criteria based on the list below. CPL Grant Program Staff will review applications for completeness. Technical Review Committees, selected by the Commissioner of Natural Resources, will evaluate applications and a final score will be given to all applications. Committees may include representatives from local or county park districts, DNR, BWSR, the University of MN, state universities or private colleges, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, or other appropriate members from government, non-profit and business organizations. A final ranking committee comprised of directors of the DNR Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Ecological and Water Resources, and Forestry will consider the TRC, Division and Regional DNR comments and recommend projects to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will make final funding decisions. CPL Grant Program staff work with grantees to complete financial reviews, grant agreements, and other paperwork. Work may not begin until grant is executed.

Application Criteria

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Amount/quality of habitat restored, enhanced, or protected

Local support

Degree of collaboration

Urgency

Multiple benefits

Habitat benefits

Consistency with current conservation science

Adjacent to protected lands

Full funding of project

Budget/cost effectiveness

Public access

Use of native plant materials

Applicants' capacity to successfully complete, sustain work

Project Reviews and Reporting

Grantees submit annual accomplishment reports on forms provided by CPL staff, based on L-SOHC report forms.

Reports account for the use of grant/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 is required by all grantees 30 days after project completion.

CPL Grant staff will submit accomplishment reports to L-SOHC as required and post reports on CPL website.

CPL Administration Budget

Grant administration costs of \$70,000 will be billed using actual costs. Costs include travel, equipment, supplies,

and professional services for outreach, monitoring, application and database maintenance, and advertising. An internal Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be developed with DNR's Management Information Systems to update/manage the online grant application system. Direct Support Services costs will be minimal as all salary costs for this program will come out of the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program ML2014 admin funds. The admin budget from the traditional CPL grant program will fund the three FTEs necessary to run this new program along with the ongoing CPL grant program with a cumulative budget of over \$20 million. As of May 2013, there are 148 active CPL grants, and an additional 42 grants have recently been completed and closed. Having 3 FTEs will ensure that the CPL program is able to effectively promote the program, monitor grants, and meet all program requirements.

DNR Land Acquisition Costs

Applicants are 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 are billed to awarded grants on a professional services basis.

DNR Technical Support

The Division of Fish and Wildlife provides ongoing technical guidance, helping applicants prepare grant proposals and meet requirements for working on state lands. Project development and oversight is provided by area managers and additional guidance is provided for land acquisitions.

Grantee Payment

Grantees are paid on a reimbursement or "for services rendered" basis, meaning payment is made to the grantee after work has been performed or materials have been purchased, but before the vendor is paid by the grantee. Grantees must provide proof that work has been completed or a purchase has been made in order to receive payment. Proof that the vendor was paid must be submitted to CPL staff before additional grant payments are made. Funds may be advanced to acquisition projects to accommodate cash flow.

Planning:

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H4 Restore and protect shallow lakes
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams
- H7 Keep water on the landscape
- LU6 Reduce Upland and gully erosion through soil conservation practices
- LU8 Protect large blocks of forest land
- LU10 Support and expand sustainable practices on working forested lands

Plans Addressed:

- A Vision for Wildlife and Its Use -- Goals and Outcomes 2006-2012
- Driftless Area Restoration Effort
- Ducks Unlimited Living Lakes Initiative
- Grassland Bird Conservation Area
- Grassland Conservation Plan for Prairie Grouse
- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Long Range Plan for Muskellunge and Large Northern Pike Management Through 2020
- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Long Range Plan for the Wild Turkey
- Lower St. Louis River Habitat Plan
- Managing Minnesota's Shallow Lakes for Waterfowl and Wildlife
- Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership
- Minnesota DNR AMA Acquisition Plan
- Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Plans
- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda

- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Minnesota Sustainability Framework
- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- Mississippi River Headwaters Comprehensive Plan
- Moose Advisory Committee Report to the Minnesota DNR
- National Audubon Society Top 20 Common Birds in Decline
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan
- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- Northern Plains Prairie Potholes Regional Shorebird Conservation Plan
- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregion: A River and Stream Conservation Portfolio
- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area (HPA) Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- Partners in Flight Conservation Plans for States and Physiographic Regions
- Partners in Flight Grassland Bird Plan
- Red River of the North Fisheries Management Plan
- Ruffed Grouse in Minnesota: A Long-Range Plan for Management
- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Strategic Plan for Coldwater Resources Management in Southeastern Minnesota
- Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan
- The Nature Conservancy's Superior Mixed Forest Ecoregional Plan
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Habitat Conservation Model
- U.S. Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan
- Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Projects Joint Ventures Plan

LSOHC Statewide Priorities:

- Address Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife, wildlife species of greatest conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions, as well as long-term or permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species
- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Attempts to ensure conservation benefits are broadly distributed across the LSOHC sections
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work; provides the most cost-effective use of financial resources; and where possible takes into consideration the value of local outreach, education, and community engagement to sustain project outcomes
- Leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- Restore or enhance habitat on permanently protected land
- 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

LSOHC Metro Urban Section Priorities:

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

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Clean Water Fund
- Parks and Trails Fund

The CPL grant program has the potential to complement all of these other programs and projects supported with constitutional funds by allowing organizations to access Outdoor Heritage Funds for smaller, local projects. 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. Specific benefits are dependent upon projects submitted by applicants.

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

Currently, the CPL program staff is managing 148 active grants from four years of appropriations that have impacted every habitat type and every area of the State. Over 10,000 acres have been restored, enhanced or protected since the CPL program was established. Offering a metro grant cycle through the CPL program makes it possible to fund more projects that will increase the number of acres that enhance, restore, and protect Minnesota's fish, game and wildlife habitat. 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. Specific benefits are dependent upon projects submitted by applicants.

Sustainability and Maintenance:

Projects on public lands will be the responsibility of the government entity that owns or accepts the land. 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.

Government Approval:

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition? - **Yes**

Permanent Protection:

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

Hunting and Fishing Plan:

Is this land open for hunting and fishing? - **Yes**

Public access will depend upon the requirements of the title holder.

Public Use:

Will the eased land be open for public use? - **Yes**

No Description for Public Use Listed

Permanent Protection:

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

Permanent Protection:

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - **Yes (WMA, WPA, SNA, AMA, Private Land, County/Municipal, Refuge Lands, Public Waters, State Wilderness Areas, State Recreation Areas, State Forests)**

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Solicit applications: RFP/Program Manual posted online	August 2014
First round applications due	September 2014
First round grantees announced	December 2014
First round grants encumbered	February 2015
Grantees begin work	March 2015
Solicit and select round 2 applicatinos, if needed	Jan-Feb 2015
Round 2 applications due	February 2015
Round 2 grantees announced	May 2015
Round 2 grants encumbered	June 2015
Round 2 grantees start work	July 2015
Grant monitoring ongoing, per OGM policy	July 2015-2018
Annual grantee reports due	September 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
Status updates to the council	February 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
Status updates to the council	August 2015, 2016, 2017
Final report to the council	September 2018

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- All outcomes are dependent on grantee's project choices.

Budget Spreadsheet

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

Total Amount of Request: \$ 4000000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	\$3,930,000	\$393,000		\$4,323,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$10,000	\$0		\$10,000
Professional Services	\$50,000	\$0		\$50,000
Direct Support Services	\$6,000	\$0		\$6,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$2,000	\$0		\$2,000
Supplies/Materials	\$2,000	\$0		\$2,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$4,000,000	\$393,000		\$4,393,000

Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	Forest Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro Urban	Forest Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

0 miles

Parcel List

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.