

# Request for Funding

## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fiscal Year 2015 / ML 2014

**Program or Project Title:** Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Phase II

**Funds Requested:** \$1,499,000

**Manager's Name:** Scott Kuiti

**Title:** Vice President

**Organization:** Lake Superior Steelhead Association

**Street Address:** PO Box 16034

**City:** Duluth, MN 55816-0034

**Telephone:** 218-727-1492

**E-Mail:** skuiti@hotmail.com

**Organization Web Site:** www.steelheaders.org

**County Locations:** Lake, and St. Louis.

### Ecological Planning Regions:

- Northern Forest

### Activity Type:

- Restore
- Enhance

### Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Habitat

## Abstract:

Degradation to trout habitat in the Knife River Watershed has occurred from past clear-cut forestry practices resulting in uncontrolled beaver colonization. This project will continue work on the West Branch and begin work on other affected Knife River tributaries.

## Design and Scope of Work:

### Introduction

The Knife River once held one of the largest populations of natural reproducing steelhead in the Great Lakes and provided spawning habitat in its upper watershed to thousands of steelhead each spring. Since the late 1970's, the Knife River steelhead population has seen a dramatic decrease. Once thousands of steelhead traveled upstream to spawn, now on average five hundred make this same journey. One of the primary reasons for the decrease in the Knife River's steelhead population is the degradation to the upper Knife River watershed riparian habitat.

## Habitat Degradation and its Results to the Upper Knife River Watershed

The historic forest composition within the Knife River watershed was old growth coniferous trees. Extensive clear-

cut logging removed the old growth coniferous trees throughout the Knife River watershed and were replaced by large stands of second growth aspen. This large-scale forest alteration attracted unprecedented beaver populations to the watershed because of the new food source. Once beavers colonized this area, dams were built blocking the stream flow and flooding the riparian tree cover. The flooded trees and shrubs along the riparian zone quickly died resulting in open water ponds. The impoundment of shallow water and lack of tree cover associated with the beaver pond caused the water temperature to quickly warm and has led to an increase in evaporation. This increase in beaver activity has resulted in 30 plus years of habitat degradation to the upper Knife River watershed.

## **DNR Habitat Work and Studies Conducted in the Upper Knife River Watershed**

Recognizing the threat to the upper river, the DNR started performing limited stream studies. These studies have determined that habitat degradation to the upper watershed has resulted in poor rearing conditions for juvenile trout during the summer months. These poor rearing conditions (increase in water temperature, increase in evaporation and decrease in stream flows) are the direct result of beaver activity/habitat degradation in the Knife River watershed.

### **Stream Restoration**

The LSSA proposes to use existing aerial data to locate and assess the beaver impacted areas on the upper Knife River and its tributaries. The LSSA will discuss and rank the locations for rehabilitation. The area of focus will be spawning tributaries within the Knife River watershed, which include the upper Main Knife River, Stanley Creek, McCarthy Creek, Little West Branch, Captain Jacobson, Little Knife River and little East Branch of the Knife River. Only stream sections located on public lands and private lands with DNR easements will be considered for this project. There will not be any work performed on any private land unless a DNR easement is currently in place with an accompanying Stewardship Plan.

A field reconnaissance will be conducted to determine the stream's condition and to design the rehabilitation project. The assessment data that will be collected may include:

- Review aerial photo and GIS maps of beaver impacted areas.
- Mark GPS location of habitat degradation.
- Determine proximity to access points.
- Measure the area of impacted stream.
- Survey the depth of sediment deposition.
- Determine length and thickness of remnant dam(s).
- Survey the stream elevations.
- Quantify the amount of large and small woody debris.
- Calculate the percent of shade covering various stream sections.
- Monitor water temperature.
- Document evidence of juvenile fish through shocking and adult spawning activity visually.
- Identify collapsed banks or erosion areas.
- Construct cross-section diagrams.

The assessment will enable the LSSA to design the rehabilitation construction/tree planting projects. A draft of the proposed stream rehabilitation project design will be provided to project stakeholders and DNR Fisheries for input on the project.

- Remove in-stream beaver dams and silt deposits, collapsed stream banks and woody debris that inhibit fish migration and negatively alter stream flow.
- Planting of trees to restore the overhead canopy.
- Restore stream flow.
- Placement of large woody debris.
- Removal of small woody debris.
- Repair or stabilize eroded stream banks.

The project data and design parameters will be incorporated in a project permit and submitted for approval to the DNR and Army Corp. of Engineers.

# Equipment Usage and Project Site Access

The goal of this project is to restore beaver impacted areas within the upper Knife River watershed. To accomplish this goal, mechanical equipment will be used in specified areas that have vehicle access or in logged areas. In areas with vehicle access to the watershed, heavy equipment will be mobilized to remove dams, stabilize stream banks, placement of large woody debris and plant mature trees. These areas will be given a high priority because rehabilitating these stream sections can provide an almost immediate benefit to the watershed.

## Tree Planting

Tree planting will be a critical component of this restoration project. Tree planting will be focused on the riparian area of the stream or watershed. In remote areas of the watershed tree planting may be the only reasonable method of restoration employed due to lack of heavy equipment access. Plantings will vary between coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs. The proposed species will consist of a various arrangement of bare root, potted and large root bundled trees. Some of the tree species that may be utilized include: white spruce, black spruce, tamarack, red pine, silver maple alder and red maple. Tree species due to Climate Assisted Migration will also be evaluated.

## Black Ash Stand Identification

Black ash stands currently comprise a large percentage of the riparian forest community in various sections of the Knife River watershed, most notably in the headwaters where young trout rear. The State of Minnesota and the Minnesota DNR expect that all ash stands in the state to eventually experience high to total mortality due to an infestation of the emerald ash borer. This project aims to attempt to identify and retain shade cover for the upper Knife River watershed by identifying black ash stands and planting additional tree species within the riparian corridor to diversify the forest. Forest comprised primarily of black ash will be targeted for this component of the project.

## Planning

### MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and 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:

- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- National Fish Habitat Action 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
- 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 Northern Forest Section Priorities:**

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas
- Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement
- 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
- Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in area in recent decades

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

- No Relationships Listed

Clean Water Fund money is being used for the Knife River Watershed's middle sections (clay bank sections). This money is being used to stabilize slumping clay banks as part of the TMDL implementation plan. This money has been provided to the South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The LSSA and SWCD are working cooperatively on separate sections of river to insure the entire watershed is improved. The LSSA is primarily working on the upper river spawning and rearing tributaries on public land, while the SWCD is working on the middle river sections (clay bank section) and concentrating primarily on private lands.

### **Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:**

This project phase of work will supplement the first grant project. During the first grant project, additional areas of concern were discovered within the West Branch during our assessment and new areas of concern were identified in other Knife River tributaries during stakeholders meetings. This project phase will focus on the new West Branch areas of concern and assess the other Knife River tributaries highlighted by stakeholders.

### **Sustainability and Maintenance:**

A critical component of this project is to insure beaver do not re-impact areas that have been rehabilitated. To insure that the project areas are maintained after the project is complete, annual flights will be conducted to insure beavers do not re-colonize this project area. These beaver flights will be conducted in late autumn by the DNR as they have been previously for the past 10 to 15 years. If dams or beaver activity is noted in the annual flight, the DNR will contract trappers to remove the beaver. This has also been performed for the past 10-15 years. The estimated cost of the flight and beaver removal throughout the entire Knife River watershed is \$15,000.

If the DNR loses funding for this project, the TMDL implementation plan has budgeted \$35,000 annually for this task. Included in this budget are beaver flights and trapping, but also other tasks not included in the DNR budget. These other tasks are re-planting of trees, beaver dam removal and bank repair. These other tasks may not be necessary to be performed or funded annually, but have been listed in the TMDL plan in the event future maintenance and funding is necessary.

### **Permanent Protection:**

*Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - **Yes (Public Waters)***

## Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
West Branch Tree Planting	June 30,2018
West Branch Tributary Beaver Dam removal and tree planting	June 30, 2018
Other Knife River Tributary Assessment	June 30, 2018

## Outcomes

### Programs in the northern forest region:

- Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species *This project should increase the brook, brown and steelhead populations in the Knife River.*
- Improved aquatic habitat indicators *This project will improve in-stream habitat by installing large woody debris due to logging old growth trees.*
- Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors *This project will restore the lost riparian zone.*
- Greater public access for wildlife and outdoors-related recreation *This project should increase the overall trout population and give anglers better opportunity to catch more fish.*
- Improved availability and improved condition of habitats that have experienced substantial decline *This project will improve stream habitat for brook, brown and steelhead trout.*
- This project will retain water through increased transpiration via tree planting and reduce erosion through streambank stabilization.

# Budget Spreadsheet

**Total Amount of Request: \$1,499,000**

## Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$157,000	\$0		\$157,000
Contracts	\$990,000	\$0		\$990,000
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	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
Professional Services	\$30,000	\$0		\$30,000
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$60,000	\$0		\$60,000
Supplies/Materials	\$257,000	\$0		\$257,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$1,499,000	\$0	-	\$1,499,000

## Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Manager	0.50	4.00	\$157,000	\$0		\$157,000
Total	0.50	4.00	\$157,000	\$0	-	\$157,000

## 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	612	612
Total	0	0	0	612	612

**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	\$1,499,000	\$1,499,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,499,000	\$1,499,000

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

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern 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	612	612
Total	0	0	0	0	612	612

**Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern 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	\$1,499,000	\$1,499,000
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,499,000	\$1,499,000

**Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles**

51 miles



# Parcel List

## Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

Lake

<b>Name</b>	<b>TRDS</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Est Cost</b>	<b>Existing Protection?</b>
West Branch of Knife River and other tributaries of the Knife River	052112	0	\$0	Yes
West Branch of Knife River and other tributaries of the Knife River	053112	0	\$0	Yes
West Branch of Knife River and other tributaries of the Knife River	054112	0	\$0	Yes

St. Louis

<b>Name</b>	<b>TRDS</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Est Cost</b>	<b>Existing Protection?</b>
West Branch of Knife River and other tributaries of the Knife River	052122	612	\$1,499,000	Yes
West Branch of Knife River and other tributaries of the Knife River	054122	0	\$0	Yes
West Branch of Knife River and other tributaries of the Knife River	053122	0	\$0	Yes

## 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.

**Future Proposed Project  
Tree Planting Site**

Future Tree Planting Sites





**Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council  
Proposal**

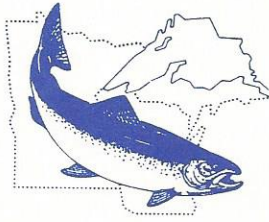
**Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation  
Phase II**

**Proposal Addendum**



**Lake Superior Steelhead Association  
PO Box 16034  
Duluth, MN 55816**

**[www.steelheaders.org](http://www.steelheaders.org)**



## LAKE SUPERIOR STEELHEAD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 16034 · Duluth, MN 55816-0034

June 13, 2013

Mr. Bill Becker, Executive Director  
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
95 State Office Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155  
bill.becker@lsohc.leg.mn

Re: Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fiscal Year 2015 / ML 2014 Proposal  
Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Phase II  
Lake Superior Steelhead Association, applicant

Dear Mr. Becker,

The Lake Superior Steelhead Association (LSSA) has requested funding through a proposal to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) for Fiscal Year 2015 / ML 2014 for Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Phase II. The LSSA provides additional information for the LSOHC. Please accept the following information as an Addendum to the Proposal.

### Addendum to Proposal

- I. Letters of Support. Please see the attached letters of support from South St. Louis County Soil and Water Conservation District, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Duluth Area Fisheries, Hartley Nature Center, Carlton County 4-H member, MacKenzie Carlson, Superior Sport Fishing Alliance and Trout Unlimited.
- II. Volunteer Support. LSSA members believe in stewardship and conservation and one form of showing this is volunteer tree planting efforts. On June 1, 2013, eighteen (18) LSSA members and friends donated 110+ hours of labor to plant about 170 trees. Please see the attached tree planting photos.
- III. Steelhead Mentoring Class. For the past three years the LSSA has partnered with Hartley Nature Center in offering a Steelhead Mentoring Class. The class consists of two classroom and two river sessions teaching knots, skills and hands on experience at the river. Each year the class size averages ten (10) participants. Participants are equipped with a fly-rod, reel, vest and tackle they get to keep. On-river mentoring has a 1-1 mentor to participant experience. Please see the attached mentoring photos.
- IV. Media Coverage. The local broadcast television news has caught on to the LSSA Mentoring Program. Each year a story has been broadcast on WDIO-TV or KBJR-TV. A dvd copy of the broadcast is available upon request.

- V. Cooperation with other Agencies. The LSSA has been working in cooperation with the following Agencies; Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District (LCSWCD), MN DNR Parks and Trails, St. Louis County Forestry and St. Louis County Highway Department.

LCSWCD is working on a clay bank stabilization project on the Knife River. The planting of trees by the LSSA above the LCSWCD work will help to slow run off and retain water in the Knife River and put less pressure on the clay banks LCSWCD is working to stabilize.

The MN DNR Parks and Trails granted the LSSA access to the North Shore Trail for grant work and volunteer tree planting projects.

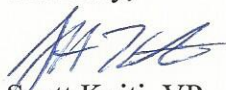
St. Louis County Forestry supported the planting of trees by the LSSA on county land and permitted access to county property.

Through assessment work, the LSSA has been able to help identify culverts for replacement, sharing this information with the St. Louis County Highway Department.

- VI. Future Tree Planting Sites. Through assessment work, the LSSA has identified several sites for future tree planting. Please see the attached photos of potential tree planting sites.

Thank you for your time and consideration as the LSSA has requested funding from the LSOHC for the Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Phase II.

Sincerely,



Scott Kuiti, VP  
Lake Superior Steelhead Association  
PO Box 16034  
Duluth, MN 55816-0034  
skuiti@hotmail.com  
218-590-8726

Cc: Heather Koop, Project Analyst Manager, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, 100 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, 95 State Office Building St. Paul, MN 55155  
heather.koop@lsohc.leg.mn

# **Project Letters of Support**





**South St. Louis**  
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Lessard - Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 95  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Council Members,

The South St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District in Duluth, MN would like to offer support for the Lake Superior Steelhead Association's (LSSA) 2013 application for funding (*Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Phase II*). The Knife River is a large, popular and scenic watershed along the North Shore that is impaired for turbidity. It was the first river on the North Shore that received a Total Maximum Daily Load Study (approved by the EPA in 2010). Our office completed that Study for the MN Pollution Control Agency along with the associated Implementation Plan.

The Knife River straddles two counties (Lake and St. Louis) has an active citizens' group (Advocates for the Knife River Watershed) and is a nationally recognized fishing destination. Both the South St. Louis and Lake County Soil & Water Conservation Districts have been actively working in the Knife River Watershed for many years to solve the turbidity problem, mostly on private lands. The Lake Superior Steelhead Association play an important role in restoring the water quality issues in this large watershed for several reasons: 1) they have passion for their projects (as active anglers who love to fish in the river), 2) they have the financial and organizational capacity to handle large grants, and 3) they focus on public parcels, which make up 50% of the land ownership in this watershed.

The LSSA's proposal to address potential problems caused by beavers, to conduct on-the-ground assessments of the West Branch and additional tributaries and to plant trees in areas that may not get planted due to difficult terrain and accessibility issues, would be incredibly valuable to the greater effort that so many agencies, citizens and landowners are making to restore this river enough to get it removed from the State's Impaired Waters list.

We appreciate your consideration of their proposal and your attention to the North Shore. Please feel free to call me anytime with questions or for more information.

Sincerely,

Kate Kubiak  
Conservation Specialist  
218-723-4946  
[Kate.kubiak@southstlouisswcd.org](mailto:Kate.kubiak@southstlouisswcd.org)



## Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Duluth Area Fisheries  
5351 North Shore Drive  
Duluth, MN 55804  
218-525-0853 ext. 201

June 10, 2013

Scott Kuiti  
Lake Superior Steelhead Assn.  
PO Box 16034  
Duluth, MN 55816

Dear Mr. Kuiti,

Thank you for the information you provided on your plans to apply for additional Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council funding to continue habitat efforts within the Knife River Watershed.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Section of Fisheries supports the continuing efforts by the Lake Superior Steelhead Association to improve habitat in the Knife River watershed through tree planting within the riparian corridor.

Providing future shade to the stream channel is critical to maintaining temperatures that will allow for viable trout populations in the Knife River watershed. In addition, trees planted in the riparian corridor increase the likelihood that large woody habitat will be present within these streams in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deserae Hendrickson".

Deserae Hendrickson  
MNDNR Duluth Area Supervisor

cc: Don Schreiner, MNDNR Lake Superior Area

DNR Information: 651-296-6157 • 1-888-646-6367 • TTY: 651-296-5484 • 1-800-657-3929

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# HARTLEY NATURE CENTER

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May 29, 2013

Dear Grant Committee Members,

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the Lake Superior Steelhead Association (LSSA) and the wonderful educational work they do in partnership with Hartley Nature Center (HNC).

Three years ago, LSSA approach HNC with the idea of teaching and mentoring young people in the art of steelhead fishing using association members as mentors. For our part, we provided an indoor teaching space, promotion through our environmental education channels and managed the registration. For their part, LSSA procured donations from the business community so that each participant receives all the needed fishing equipment, provided instructors and mentors and worked with the participants throughout the program. The program runs for four weeks with a class size limited to ten students. For each of the three years, the program has filled along with a waiting list and people are already calling to be put on the list for next spring.

This educational opportunity that LSSA has created has obviously filled a need in our community that connects young people (and their families) to the natural world in an engaging way. Not only are they imparting their fishing knowledge and experience to the participants but they are also connecting these young people to an understanding and appreciation to the valuable resources of fish populations and clean water. And new this past spring, LSSA has been intentional in engaging and equipping parents through these classes so that the whole family can continue in steelhead fishing beyond the four week class.

LSSA continues to be a great educational partner and we look forward to providing this opportunity for youth in the area for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Brett Amundson  
Director of Operations  
Hartley Nature Center

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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*University of Minnesota Extension*

*Carlton County*

*Carlton County Extension  
PO Box 307  
310 Chestnut Avenue  
Carlton, MN 55718-0307  
218-384-3511  
Fax: 218-384-3512  
www.extension.umn.edu  
mnext-carlton@umn.edu*

6 June 2013

Dear Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council members:

As a former 4-H club president and member of the Carlton County 4-H shooting sports and wilderness project, I am honored to write this letter on behalf of the Lake Superior Steelhead Association (LSSA). It is my intent that this letter gives high recommendation to them as potential recipients of grant funding.

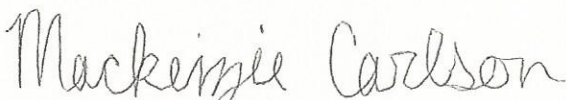
One year ago, my cousin and I participated in the LSSA's mentoring program. We were introduced to this program through our 4-H involvement; both of us had participated in other outdoor activities, and we thought this mentorship would be worth a go.

My cousin and I were blown away by the helpfulness and generosity of the LSSA mentors. Each adult worked enthusiastically with youth to share their knowledge of steelhead fishing. I personally noted how each adult mentor was available for fielding questions, re-teaching tricky skills, and just talking about their past experiences as steelhead fishers. In addition, these mentors displayed incredible patience while we inexperienced fishers made our first cast, snagging trees and rocks and anything but steelhead. Through their careful guidance, some of us eventually caught a fish! (We were educated on the catch-and-release aspect of this sport, however, so our handling of the fish was excellent.)

By the end of the program, my cousin and I proudly called ourselves proficient steelhead fishers. The mentors had a few more surprises for us, though. I have already commented on the generosity of these LSSA members, but hopefully these examples illustrate my point. After the last cast had been reeled in on the last day of fishing, the mentors hosted a hot dog roast and picnic to celebrate a successful program. We young people were also able to keep all of the equipment we used, including fishing poles, bait, vests, and tackle. This enables us to go steelhead fishing on many more occasions, and we as a group could not be more thankful.

I commend the Lake Superior Steelhead Association for coordinating such a spectacular mentoring program. I wish them the best as they continue to teach young people each spring, and I wholeheartedly recommend them for any grant that they pursue.

Sincerely,



Mackenzie Carlson  
4-H Member

**Superior Sports Fishing  
Alliance Officers**

President  
Al House  
housea@centurytel.net  
715-292-5117

Vice President  
Jim VanLandschoot  
jvl1979@yahoo.com  
218-591-0295

Treasurer  
Richard Brown  
rlbrown555@yahoo.com  
218-393-4578

Secretary  
Keith Okeson  
green@lcp2.net  
218-273-6389

**Organization Members**

Douglas County Fish and Game

Western Lake Superior Trolling  
Association

Duluth Charter Fishing Guides

Apostle Islands Sportsmen  
Alliance

Kamloops Advocates

Lake Superior Steelhead  
Association

The Lake Superior Chapter of  
Muskie's Inc.

Black Harbor River Fishermen

Ontonogon Sport Fishermen

North Wisconsin Rod and Gun

**The Superior Sports Fishing Alliance**

<http://superiorsportfishingalliance.org/>

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Counsel:

The Superior Sport Fishing Alliance (SSFA) supports the Lake Superior Steelhead Association's (LSSA) Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fiscal Year 2015/ ML 2014 Proposal. LSSA's "Knife River Habitat Rehabilitation Phase II" proposal will continue critical habitat work started under Phase I to improve cold-water habitat in the Knife River watershed. The LSSA's work will help to improve and sustain wild trout populations that replenish Lake Superior's fishery resource. As anglers we look forward to appreciating the results of improved habitat allowing us to enjoy high-quality fishing experiences. More importantly, as outdoor enthusiasts we look forward to the chance to experience a vital natural area that is totally restored to health.

Respectfully,



Al House  
President



Carl Haensel, Northern Minnesota Vice Chair  
Minnesota Trout Unlimited  
PO Box 845  
Chanhassen, MN 55317  
612.670.1629

June 12, 2013

*Sent Via Electronic mail*

Craig Wilson, President  
Lake Superior Steelhead Association  
P.O. Box 16034  
Duluth, MN 55816-0034

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Minnesota Trout Unlimited supports efforts to restore and enhance coldwater fisheries habitat within the Knife River watershed in St. Louis and Lake Counties. We understand that the Lake Superior Steelhead Association is seeking funding to enhance or restore in-stream and riparian habitat in the West Branch of the Knife River. We believe that the West Branch is the most significant nursery area for wild steelhead in the watershed. We support efforts to improve juvenile steelhead habitat in this part of the watershed by returning large woody cover logs to the stream channel and restoring riparian forests, including through tree plantings and management of artificially high beaver numbers which impede forest restoration. Our members are happy to assist LSSA in these activities, and Minnesota Trout Unlimited looks forward to partnering with LSSA in their restoration efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "CARL HAENSEL". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "C" and "H".

Carl Haensel

**1<sup>st</sup> LESSARD Grant**

**Volunteer Support**

Volunteer Support







# **Steelhead Mentoring Class**

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