

Request for Funding

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fiscal Year 2016 / ML 2015

Program or Project Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program Phase VI

Funds Requested: \$5,555,000

Manager's Name: Jessica Lee

Title: CPL Program Coordinator

Organization: MN DNR

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Organization Web Site:

County Locations: No Counties Listed

Ecological Planning Regions:

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

Activity Type:

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

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Abstract:

The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program will be 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. \$5,000,000 of the requested \$5,555,000 will be available for grants. This is a stand-alone program, but depends on support/technical advice from public land managers, habitat and acquisition specialists, and support staff.

Grant activities include enhancement, restoration and protection of forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife in Minnesota. 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.

CPL Program Staff will develop a Request for Proposal (RFP)/Program Manual incorporating LSOHC priorities. Staff

also solicits applications, works with applicants to submit scorable applications, oversees grant selection, prepares/executes grant documents, reviews expenditure documentation ensuring financial integrity, makes payments, monitors grant work, assists recipients with closing out agreements, and prepares required reports.

Applicants will describe the project location, activity type and habitat, benefit to habitat, fish, game and wildlife, and duration of benefits. For acquisition projects, applicants will describe the parcel selection process.

CPL staff complies with the Department of Administration-Office of Grants Management policies. Stakeholders involved in this program include applicants, reviewers, and land managers. No opposition is known.

Application Process:

The RFP/Program Manual will be posted on the CPL website in August 2015.

The traditional Over \$25K/Under \$25K grant cycle will have one guaranteed grant round and a second round if funds remain. Applications will be accepted online through mid-September for Round 1. Projects under \$25,000 will have a simplified application.

The Expedited Conservation Projects grant cycle will be open continuously beginning in August, and applications will be awarded up to 5 times through May 2016, depending on available funds.

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:

CPL Grant Program Staff will review applications for completeness. Technical Review Committees, selected by the Commissioner of Natural Resources, evaluate applications based on criteria listed below. A final score will be given to all applications. Committees include representatives from 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 of Directors of the DNR Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Ecological Resources/Waters, and Forestry consider TRC, Division and Regional DNR comments, and recommend projects/funding levels to the Commissioner. ECP Grants will be reviewed by CPL staff and DNR habitat experts using criteria established for each type of project. 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:

- o Amount of habitat restored, enhanced, or protected
- o Local support
- o Degree of collaboration
- o Urgency
- o Multiple benefits
- o Habitat benefits
- o Consistency with current conservation science
- o Adjacent to protected lands
- o Full funding of project
- o Budget/ cost effectiveness
- o Public access for hunting/fishing
- o Use of native plant materials
- o 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 \$555,000 will be billed using actual costs. Costs include salary/fringe for grants staff, direct support services, travel, supplies, and outreach. An internal Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be developed with DNR's Management Information Systems to update/manage the online grant application system. Three FTEs are necessary to run an ongoing grant program with a cumulative budget of over \$20 million. As of May 2013, there are 148 active 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 projects to accommodate cash flow needs for acquisitions. Funds are built into grants for required Legacy logo signage and acknowledgement/notification of completed projects (such as local news advertisements).

How the request addresses MN habitats:

All CPL project requests will include a Natural Heritage Database Review, which addresses wildlife species of greatest conservation need, the MN County Biological Survey data, and/or rare, threatened and endangered species inventories.

Please explain the nature of urgency:

The CPL program will prioritize habitat projects of which applicants have demonstrated a conservation urgency.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

Plans Addressed:

- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- Plans addressed will vary depending on applications received and approved.

Please describe the science based planning and evaluation model used:

The CPL program has a Technical Review Committee that reviews and evaluates projects for sound conservation science.

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

LSOHC Forest Prairie Transition Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

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

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

LSOHC Southeast Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

This CPL proposal accelerates and/or supplements the wildlife and habitat management plans and activities of numerous nonprofit organizations and governments throughout the state of Minnesota.

Non-OHF Money Spent in the Past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
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Sustainability and Maintenance:

Applicants are asked to describe their long-term management plans when submitting a project proposal, and the Technical Review Committee considers these plans when scoring proposals and making funding recommendations.

Maintain Project Outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
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Applicable Criteria:

*If funded, this proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056? - **Yes***

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***

Current Hunting and Fishing Plan:

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

The land may be open for hunting and fishing, depending on individual project applications.

Future Hunting and Fishing Plan:

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion? - **Yes**

Hunting and Fishing Regulations Not Listed

Public Use:

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

Public use will depend on the conditions of the easement.

Permanent Protection:

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

Best Management Practice:

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program? - **Yes**

Permanent Protection:

Is the activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, 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, no)**

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Solicit applications: RFP posted online	August 2015
First round applications due (ECP applications accepted continuously)	September 2015
First round grantees announced	December 2015
First round grants encumbered, grantees begin work	June-April 2016
Solicit round 2 applications, if needed	January 2016
Round 2 applications due	February 2016
Round 2 grantees announced	May 2016
Round 2 grants encumbered, grantees start work	May-June 2016
Ongoing grant monitoring, per OGM policy	June 2019
Annual reports to the council	August 2016, 2017, 2018
Grantees complete grants and submit final reports	June 2019
Final report to council	August 2019

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

- Outcomes are dependent on proposals received and approved.

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Outcomes are dependent on proposals received and approved.

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- Outcomes are dependent on proposals received and approved.

Programs in southeast forest region:

- Outcomes are dependent on proposals received and approved.

Programs in prairie region:

- Outcomes are dependent on proposals received and approved.

Relationship to Other Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$5,555,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$440,000	\$0		\$440,000
Contracts	\$5,000,000	\$500,000		\$5,500,000
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	\$35,000	\$0		\$35,000
Professional Services	\$25,500	\$0		\$25,500
Direct Support Services	\$54,500	\$0		\$54,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$5,555,000	\$500,000	-	\$6,055,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Grants Specialist Coordinator	1.00	2.00	\$170,000	\$0		\$170,000
Grants Specialist Intermediate	1.00	2.00	\$150,000	\$0		\$150,000
Grants Specialist	1.00	2.00	\$120,000	\$0		\$120,000
Total	3.00	6.00	\$440,000	\$0	-	\$440,000

Amount of Request: \$5,555,000

Amount of Leverage: \$500,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 9.00%

Output Tables

Table 1a. 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	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	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	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	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

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

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
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

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

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.