ML 2026 / FY 2027 LSOHC Member Allocation Summary

Member Comments by Proposal Order

Project ID	Project Title	Suzanne Baird	Kristin Eggerling	David Hartwell	Matt Kucharski	Sen. Andrew Lang	Darrel Palmer	Tom Saxhaug	Ron Schara	Ted Suss	Rep. Samantha Vang
PA 01	2026 RIM Grasslands Reserve, Phase 7			Not happy that no reduction in oversight/administration staff if not fully funded - would like to see that scaled. Eliminate DU grazing specialists and focus only on easement acquistion	Pool of funds for RIM easements -- difficult to synch allocation with ML years. No available dollars available going forward if we don't fund. 89		This is phase 7. Easements vs land acq. Not open to public.			Expect all budget categories to be prorated from requested amount, especially personnel costs. Spend down the balance	
PA 02	Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program, Phase 18				Strong track record of implementation. Public access. Lots of leverage. Checks most boxes. Lowered a little due to funds available. 94		Land acq. Open to public.			reduced to fit in budget. I slightly increased recommendation because this intensively farmed region needs wetlands restored and protected. all projects look good and meritorious. The highest priority for funds used for restoration or enhancement are recommended to be habitat projects that create new or reestablished water storage on the landscape. Whenever possible, should be collected from public or private agricultural drainage systems.	
PA 03	DNR WMA & SNA Acquisition, Phase 18				Unique timing to acquire and restore native prairie in areas with very little public land. Specific tracts targeted. Reasonable track record in high-need area. 91		land acq adding to WMA. I like the projects but have limited funds			Recommended funds for acquisition,The highest priority for funds used for restoration or enhancement are recommended to be habitat projects that create new or reestablished water storage on the landscape. Whenever possible, should be collected from public or private agricultural drainage systems. Understand all named parcels to be secured in fee.	
PA 04	Martin County WMA Acquisition, Phase 10				Remarkable amount of work being done in Martin County. Money has been spent and good leverage. 92		land acq. Open to public. I like but have limited funds			my recommendation is for acquisition and related costs All of Fox Lake portion of purchase. The highest priority for funds used for restoration or enhancement are recommended to be habitat projects that create new or reestablished water storage on the landscape. Whenever possible, should be collected from public or private agricultural drainage systems.	
PA 05	ML 2026 Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, Phase 16				Mix of easements (largest portion) and acquisition. In line with average previous requests. Questions about spending track record. 87		fund land acq portion. Limited funds		Probable unspent funds???	About equal to annual expenditures in past with some extra because this SW minnesota area has fe requests , Spend down the balance	
PA 06	MN Prairie Recovery Program, Phase 15			Staffing should be scaled in proportion to reduction in request	No 2024 funding. All public lands. Recommending amount in line with ability to spend in the past. 79 but clearer now.					about equal to past annual expenditures plus because this area of state has few requests. spend down the balance	
PA 07	Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley, Phase 12				Lots of ancillary benefits. Public land use. High-opportunity area. Big ask. Funded based on past with slightly lower due to available funds.90					Well funded in previous years. Unspent funds may be spoken for, but completing those projects will involve significant work. PF has other requests to fund .	
PA 08	RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water			Not happy that no reduction in oversight/administration staff if not fully funded - would like to see that scaled.	Program protects water and provides habitat - pretty useful program that benefits upstream and downstream (literally). Wish there were more clean water funding. 92					expect all budget categories to be prorated from requested amount, especially personnel costs. Spend down the balance which is proportionally higher than other RIM program Balance. Prorate all budget categories.	

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PRE 01	2026 Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Conservation Easement Program			Unspent funds???	Received $4m in 2025 and in 2023. All for restoration on private lands. Wish there was a private landowner "leverage" requirement. 88					About equal to past annual expenditures DU has other requests to fund recommending fudns for acquisition. The highest priority for funds used for restoration or enhancement are recommended to be habitat projects that create new or reestablished water storage on the landscape. Whenever possible, should be collected from public or private agricultural drainage systems.	
PRE 02	DNR Grassland Enhancement, Phase 17				Really wish prior funds would have been fully spent given they weren't large amounts. Program itself is right in the wheelhouse. 2 year request. 90		They need to get busy and use up existing funds		Reduce unspent funds and come back next year. No more excuses.	More than spent in any previous year spend down the balance	
PRE 03	Enhanced Public Land - Grasslands, Phase 9				Similar to PRE 02 but PF rather than DNR. Verbal explanation of funds spent. Public lands. 90				unspent funds concerning	More than spent in any previous year, spend down the balance author PF request to fund	
FA 01	Northern Forests Legacy Project	Ranked high but large request, recommend funding over 2 years		No funding for anything other than acquistion	Huge project -wish it was scalable. Can we do in 2 years? 93		One time opportunity. Need to fund over two years		One of two payments	Recommending full funding as this appears to be an all or nothing, once in a lifetime, project and appears to be the highest DNR Priority	
FA 02	Sand Lake/7 Beavers Acquisition & Enhancement	Large ask for a non-scalable project, ranked high	Acquisition	Only for acquistion	Combined with adjacent project results in more than 24000 acres. Unique opportunity. Area with a LOT of public land already but large opportunity. Watershed protection an important attribute.		One time opportunity. Cannot be funded over two years		Too many unknowns; who decides what's needed in county with 75 percent of land already gov't owned??	Funding at this level will necessitate zero funding for virtually anything else in the NE region, regardless of merit and some cuts to other forestry requests	
FRE 01	DNR Forest Restoration and Enhancement, Phase 6	The cost of the Contract coordinator seems very high - would like to see that scaled down.			Proposing prescribed fire. Significantly higher than historical ask. Good use of dollars covering a lot of lands. Would like to put limit on overtime but you burn when you need to burn. 95		I like the project and the idea of fix what we own before			use funds on hand to catch up. Money diverted to Forest Legacy request	
FRE 02	Enhancing Critical Wildlife Forest Habitats and Watersheds on Superior National Forest			If we fund anything, exclude capital equipment that is just to grow long term progam	Would like to see more fire, and would like to see what they can do with a starting fund. Always hard to fund something new and with a new organization when there are so many established ones. 89		Public lands. Fix what we own forst		Lots of questions? Fire suppresion equipment? Doesn't Superior NF have this already.	Money diverted to Legacy Forest request organization did not demonstrate capacity to complete project. Encourage this organization to seek contracts with other funded organizations to establish in-state credibility.	
WA 01	Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program, Phase 18				Previous funds well-spent. Limited ability to increase. Amount in line with previous years. 95		acquiring lands. Good pricing on acreages purchased/projected to be purchased		Money well spent; good leverage	Spend the balance, other PF to fund. The highest priority for funds used for restoration or enhancement are recommended to be habitat projects that create new or reestablished water storage on the landscape. Whenever possible, should be collected from public or private agricultural drainage systems.	
WA 02	RIM Wetlands - Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota				Private land enhancements. Key geographic areas. Difficult to add funds this year. 95?		fund but at a level closer to past allocations			Spend down the balance. close to annual expenditure for recent years.	

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WA 03	Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection & Restoration Program	Very efficient at spending funding, Member ranking in top 5			CP acre not going to go down. Clearly not the year to fund $12m or even the historic high. Avg spend in 5-6m in past years. 86		add to existing public lands		Money well spent.	I increased my orignal recommenation because this intensively farmed region needs wetland protection. To the full extent possible, I woulds prefer that projects prioity focus on converting lands not holding water and drained lands into axctual wetlands over enhancing existing wetlands . The test should be how much new wateer will this project keep on the landscape. Iam also supportive of the Council, to the maximum extent possible to encouragtfe or rquire using these funds in conjuntion with drainage improvement projects to keep water in the watershed being drained by creating wetlands in those areas.	
WA 04	Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program, Phase 11				IMO emphasis needs to be given to acquisition vs. easement when lands are available. Easements have their place. 81		Spend what they have first		Unspent funds concerning	above annual spending average understand property owners waiting in line but cannot fund everything Good work and program. I slightly increased my original recommendation because this intensively farmed region needs wetland protection. Strong preference for projects that create or recreate wetlands rather than enhancement unless work increases water storage capacity on the landscape	
WRE 02	Howard Lake Habitat Restoration				Trying to figure out how we could sustain this precedent. 700k for 5 year is not a lot - could it possibly be done through the small grants program? No home owner contributions? CPL funds? 67			CPL	Considered this experimental. Carp control or eradication plans unclear; fluridone can be toxic to fish and invertebrates; not a good choice; any plans for physical removal of invasives? Have doubts about results but won't know unless tried?	Question long term viability of goals encourage to apply for other grant programs question validity of carp reduction plan. Contact a commercial fisherman for winter netting.	
WRE 03	Living Shallow Lakes and Wetlands Enhancement & Restoration Initiative	Strong proposal, ranked high, good spending rate.			Funds go a long way and are spread across a lot of different properties. Funding based on an average of previous years but lowered a little bit due to funds available. 88					perhaps slightly less than annual average, but program has been extremely well funded Use the money to restore drained wetlands or lakes rather than improving existing wetlands. Create more water storage on the landscape.	most are federally owned/areas, prioritize state only assets
WRE 05	Talcot Lake	Recommend funding engineering and come back to fund the construction.		$1M for engineering - when permits are available, come back for construction funding	Hard to fund all in one year but a well-conceived project. Would like to see this as a Phase I and then a Phase II. Funding for engineering and starting on an initial phase. 90		Get the engineering done first and then come back when you have that completed and better cost data available			Use unspent funds question money spent on WCS Maybe allow to return to natural level? Open to being educated.	
WRE 06	Roseau Lake Rehabilitation, Phase 3				Funding for Phase 6 and hopefully with additional funds from other sources completion of Phase 5. 87					project plans are not clear cut enough for me to justify funding	

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WRE07	Shallow Lakes and Wetland Enhancements, Phase 18 (Habitat Projects/Critical Staff Combination)	A lot of unspent OHF going back to 2019. Require only spend personel costs on OHF projects. No more than 10% of allocation to be used on personnel costs.	No to critical staff component if they are working on non-OHFprojects. Don't like the idea of funding core staff	Limit staff to just working on OHF funded projects and cap at 25% of final allocation.	Would like to see staffing focused on OHF projects to extent possible. Assuming that is the case, this is keeping with historical spend but reduced a little bit due to other big asks. 84/87		This amount is for a two year funding. If the DNR plans to come back next year on this then I would reduce this to $5,000,000.		Open for suggestions??	use unspent funds for projects. $2,000,000 not for staff that was hired with OHF $ and needed for the shallow lakes program. Every project on the list is worthwhile but question ability to complete all of them this plus assumed backlog from prior request listed projects. The highest priority for funds used for restoration or enhancement are recommended to be habitat projects that create new or reestablished water storage on the landscape. Whenever possible, should be collected from public or private agricultural drainage systems.	
HA 01	2026 Riparian Habitat Protection in the Kettle and Snake River Watersheds				Funding for next phase - need to see some sort of end game here in future requests. 88					Direct landowners to apply for RIM easements	
HA 02	Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - 15			Exclude park restoration - just fund acquisition	Good use of dollars, not an area that's highly represented. Historical funding. 95				Good spending record	support and recommend Full funding for acquisition and acquisition related costs plus $100,000 for Clean River Partners, for continued needed outreach. Nothing for restoration and enhancement at this time. Use the money to get control of the land. This area is under intense pressure from people wanting to buy land for development/rural housing creating even more pressure on Farming. one of few projects in Southern MN	
HA 03	DNR AMA Fee-Title and Trout Stream Easement Acquisition			Easement funding only	No money since 2023. $1.5m for easement acquisitions for AMAs. 90	Prioritize fee title with Pilt	Concentrate on Trout stream easements with public access allowed			DNR has spent almost nothing on this program in recent years. Spend the balance	
HA 04	Washington County Habitat Protection and Restoration Partnership, Phase 2				Not really sure how to break this one out. Difficult to justify the amount of money for a non-public easement that doesn't seem to have an ecological benefit beyond protecting it from development? May need some clarification. 87??		easements and county staff.		Open for suggestions. Confusisng presentation via phases??	support full allocation for acquisition and closely related costs. Balance to Washington county as they see fit to allocate no funding recomended for restoration or enhancement at this time.	
HA 05	Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - ML2026				Good mission, reasonable and responsible use of past funds. Public use, goal of 75% of watershed. County support. Reflects previous funds. 89					while this project is meritorious, this area is rich in habitat of all kinds and has more resources than almost any part of the state.	
HA 06	Greenbelt, Phase 1				Metro area program, well-studied and identified as habitat corridor. Some more clarity needed about where easements exist and whether those easements are publicly accessible. 79?		$2 mill for land acq only		One and done.	Much of the land slated for purchase or easement appears to already be wetland which should be protected in statute and other rules. Could zoning accomplish much of the protection. Nothing spent from 2023 allocation.	
HA 07	Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program, Phase 3				Appears to be all for private easements. Would be good to know the long tail. 83		pay for restoration on existing parcels			would love to support full amount but simply not enough money	
HA 08	Integrating Habitat and Clean Water				Like effort to tie to CWF implementations. All private easements. Not a year to increase. 87		Unspent funds, easements, no public use			Spend down the balance. Prorate all budget categories. ??	
HA 09	Metro Big Rivers 16				Big ask, tons of collaboration, one of the few metro area programs. Wish we didn't have a couple of other big one-time asks. 97		Unspent funds, fund at level close to historical		Need to reduce unpsent funds even further than explained.	exclude trust purchase they have funds for purchase to expand refuge. recommendation for Acquisition only	

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HA 10	Minnesota Statewide Trout Habitat Enhancement & Protection	Proposal was inaccurate and confusing.		Spend existing and come back. Do not fund easements. 2024 contract took far longer than others have which seems unusual - what is going on? I believe going forward, we should fund engineering and permitting and when it is "shovel ready" fund construction - this would eliminate tieing up funds for 2-3 years before they can be used.	Going based on previous amounts (not including 24-25 which is not present). Like the public accessibility. 94		unspent funds dating back to 2020/21		Spend the money already received	increase over previous years average spending and because DNR trout request zeroed out.	
HA 11	Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project, Phase 10				Important program. Wish there was more being done downstream so that this work doesn't go to waste. 91		No clearly defined goal achievement for overall project.		Said exceeded goals? So are there new goals??	unspent balance is over double average annual spending. Entity has taxing authority. Resource rich area.	
HA 12	Protecting Coldwater Fisheries on Minnesota's North Shore, Phase 4				Really solid program - funding based on historical. Not sure aboutt 2023? 96		need to get previous projects caught up and then come back			Wonderful program, but this is resource rich area and two forest acquisitions are to same area.	
HA 13	Protecting Minnesota's Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance, Phase 5			Exclude paying for buildings - removal is okay	Would like to see more toward acquisition than easement but that may not be my choice. 85		Mn lakes of OBS need to be protected now			this area is resource rich with many lakes and forests. The Need to direct funding to Northern forest acquisition even though project is not in far northeast it is north enough for me.	
HA 14	Protection and Restoration of Money Creek and its Natural Riparian Communities	Cost per linear foot seems reasonable	I appreciate the innovative approach	No idea if this proposal presents a fair price. Why is TNC not proposing this work and then putting put out a performance based RFP to insure a good deal for taxpayers? More than TU costs ($114-$157/foot) but slightly less than DNR average ($236/foot). Easement endowment should be transferred in full if we do decide to fund this proposal.	I really like the project - I don't like the arrangement with the landowner. I would feel much better about this if there was better public access provided and some landowner leverage of some type. Suggest doing the easement and starting the restoration work. 99.		Single project, less than DNR avg cost, DNR approves eng design, new approach - RES is "at risk" and performance based		No public access; angry landowner? Nothing but trouble here if anglers step out of the water?	Money for NE Minn diverted to forest acquisition	
HA 15	Red River Basin Riparian Habitat Program, Phase 2			Don’t fund until there is a long term plan with some additional sources of funding identified.	Easements for Red River watershed. Adjusted based on available funds. It's a big endeavor - may never get "fully" completed but assuming there is value in reduced scale. 89		Project needs to find additional sources of funding		Need reality check here. Doubt if Legacy funds can do whole project;	have not spent previous allocation. not sure RRB is ready for a big infusion of funds, as requested at this time for this program. Fully support goals of program when ready to expand.	
HA 16	Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program			Channel restoration "banking" of funds is concerning and was not disclosed when initially appropriated.	Comparatively small allocations annually and money is being spent and leveraged effectively. SE MN. 91	restoration projects priority	3.4 mil for lake restoration + .6 for stream restoration		Hmmm? 14 years of requests and $23 million in requests granted? What's the goal??	full funding for acquisition nothing for enhancement at this time. Funding for actual wetland restoration, that is breaking tille or other methods to turn dryland into wetland	
HA 17	Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration, Phase 14		Wacouta Bay is priority 1	Use of funds must include Wacouta Bay acquisition	Wacouta acquisition a unique opportunity. Would love to see it funded but may not be possible. Minnesota bluff region with limited habitat development opportunities. Funding in line with average historical. Trying to fund as much as possible. 88	Fee aqusition and restoration only please	purchase of Wacouta Bay only		Not sure we're getting the most bang for the buck with such high land purchase decissions?	acquisition, not restoration fully funded. if full amount I recommend is not funded, the highest priority is for Wacouta Bay fee acquisition.	
HA 18	St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration, Phase 7				Mix of easement and acquisition - Namekagon/Nemadji - worthwhile program.92		Funds for land acq only		Open for suggestions. We spend tons on St. Croix and ignore other important rivers?	about average spending since program began spend the balance	
HA 19	Upper Mississippi Flyway Habitat Conservation Program			Exclude TNC - restoration staffing cost is simply too high as a percentage of the project	Victim of timing - well-conceived program where we simply don't have the funds and there is a lot of work being done in this vein already. 91	restoration projects priority	I support protection of the Upper Mississipi Flyway but want to see different projects that are focused on land acq or restoration on existing owned lands		Problems with 20 acres??	funding for easement acquisition and directly related costs	

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HRE 01	A River of Birds in the Sky: Conserving Minnesota's Flyway				Not a big allocation - enhancement projects mostly on public lands (not necessarily OHF-acquired). Slightly changed geography. Questions on money spent (estimated 70 percent by next summer) 90	good restoration project	Conflict of interest		Move the needle questions? Not much impacted land; no evidence of habitat shortage. High restore fees	more than any annual expenditure to date	
HRE 02	Bone Lake South, Phase 2				R&E work on 2023-funded acquisition. Completes the project. Hoping scalable.		finish project.		One and done.	looks as if acquisition is mostly wetlands that should be protected by law. highest priority is to restore wetlands that are now drained or otherwise dry.	
HRE 03	City of Delano - Crow River Restoration and Enhancement	recommend full funding	habitat project?	I want to fund this effort but it needs to be habitat based. Please come back with habitat focused project.	Sympathetic to the project but not particularly comfortable with OHF funds being used. Habitat benefit questionable given what is upstream and downstream. 89		City water management program/problem		Open for suggestions? Flood control may need to be applied upstream. Can't move the city. Toiugh problem.	does not seem feasible in space available to accomplish much habitat work	
HRE 04	DNR Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Enhancement, Phase 9	Strog proposal but still a lot of funding unspent			Useful efforts covering a lot of water - slight down from historical due to other competing priorities this year. 90		Requested 4 projects - fund 2 this year $4 mill/project			spend balance, money diverted to forest legacy request. other applicants have better record of completing projects in a timely manner. ??	
HRE 05	Little Cannon River Stream Habitat Restoration	Strong proposal	design and permitting	For design and permitting - come back when permits are in site	Let's fund the permitting and get the project rolling. 95		funds for design and permitting		Great project. Engineering first.	funding for design and engineering and to keep local partners able to work on project. Because this project is so close to the twin cities population center, support funding some construction, not just acquisition and design.	
HRE 06	Mission Creek Watershed Connectivity			fund culvet replacement only	New project. Scalable? Other funding sources? 92		need partnership funding from Hwy Dept and Parks n Trail before we fund a culvert on a non designated Trout Stream		Priority??	Money diverted to forest legacy request also in St Louis County	
HRE 07	Mud River Enhancement Project	Recommend fully fund - Fifth highest score by Council. Not requesting any staffing funds. This is an important project and is a one and done project. They have engaged with stakeholders to develop this project.	figure out a plan to make this scalable or implemented over time	Not scaleable - to much to consider this year	So hard to figure out how to slice and dice this - important and worthwhile project. Would like to give more but so many priorities. 95		Need to fix upstream problems first.		One and done?	Recommended amount is for design and engineering. I will be much more supportive of completion funding if there is evidence of significant percentage of landowners with a binding agreement for conservation farming BMPs including cover crops, perennial crops in the rotation, minimum or strip tilling. More than just statutory required buffers.	
HRE 08	Oak Savanna Restoration for Living Landscapes			Interesting project but taking on a new effort like this in a year with huge requests does not make sense. Come back in future years…	Want to fund this but as a new program it's really difficult. Feels like it's going to be a long-term program, which isn't a bad thing, but it's not something that will be "one and done" 91		Good project but shortage of funding			very attractive new program, some money to get program started	

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HRE 09	Swift Coulee Channel Restoration/ Enhancement, Phase 2	Ranked high.			Want to give some money to this due to the leverage opportunity. Would be great to see it finished in next round. 94		Phase 2 and done. Remote area and if project split would likely add mobilization costs		One and done.	in abstract section described work is for design and prep, not construction. Later construction is included. My recommendation is intended for design, engineering and permitting. If construction can start, spend down the balance. I will be much more supportive of completion funding if there is evidence of significant percentage of landowners with a binding agreement for conservation farming BMPs including cover crops, perennial crops in the rotation, minimum or strip tilling. More than just statutory required buffers.	
HRE 10	Woods Creek Restoration	Recommend fully fund - Fully support by Council - scored highest after the CPL allocation. Not a large ask.			Straightforward, leverageable and worthwhile project with a ton of upstream and downstream benefit. 92					I see this as a road improvement project. Yes more expensive for adding habitat.	
CPL	Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program ML26/FY27				Makes funds acccessible to broader group of people. Need to reduce this year due to other priorities. 108					spreads money to small projects statewide.	
O1	Contract Management										
O2	DNR Core Functions in Partner-led OHF Acquisitions										
O3	Restoration Evaluations - ML 2026										