

## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

### **Agenda Item Memo**

DATE                      March 18, 2013

SUBJECT:                **Review and Approve Call for Funding Request**

### **Background**

Each year, the LSOHC revisits the LSOHC Ecological Planning Sections' Visions and Priorities. The purpose of the review is to provide an opportunity for council members to determine whether the priorities as stated in the ecological sections are appropriate to the current conservation needs. This is the important first step in the development of our next set of recommendation to be heard by the 2014 Minnesota Legislature. The Call for Funding Requests will be published April with a deadline of June , allowing 10 weeks for applicants to complete.

Attached is a memo sent out from Chair Hartwell. Also attached is the edited (strike out and underline) of the Call with members' suggested changes and their initials/notes after the changes.

### **Motion**

If changes for this year's Call for Funding Request need to be made, then Council members desiring a change should make a motion to amend the Call for Requests for Laws of Minnesota 2014. The final motion to approve the Call should allow for staff technical changes and substantive changes as approved by the chair.

**Agenda Item 12**





Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
The State of Minnesota

State Office Building, Room G95 100 Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

M E M O

Date: February 22, 2013  
To: LSOHC members  
From: David Hartwell, Chair  
Re: FY 15 Outdoor Heritage Fund Call for Requests

One of the most important items on March 18, 2013 agenda is to review and revise, as necessary, the FY 15 Call for Funding Requests. The call is the Council's main means of telling the public what we're interested in seeing funded with the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Therefore, the Call for Funding Requests should clearly describe the purpose of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Council's vision and priorities, the types of programs funded, and expected outcomes.


Our task is to critically review the current Call for Funding Requests and be prepared to discuss issues such as:

- Cultivating new and innovative conservation programs;
- Encouraging flexibility to address emerging conservation issues;
- Re-framing approaches to existing and future conservation issues;
- Effectively protecting Minnesota's resources from invasive species;
- Building budgets that meet the constitutional and statutory restrictions on the use of the fund;
- Encouraging applications from local units of government and conservation organizations we've yet to work with; and
- Extending the appropriations across broad geographical areas, so as to improve our geographic balance.

Our ultimate task is to amend the Call in light of our review and discussion of issues.

For your convenience a copy of the text of the current call is attached. To facilitate our upcoming discussion you may submit your Call for Funding Request ideas to Council staff verbally or in writing by March 13. Staff will provide a summary of member's ideas prior to the March 18 meeting. As always, please feel to call staff with questions.

Many thanks for your attention to this important review.



David Hartwell, Chair

Attachment: FY 14 Call for Requests

1 **Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council**  
2 **Fiscal Year 2015 Call for Funding Request**

3 **April 5, 2013**

4 The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (L-SOHC) is charged with making annual recommendations to the  
5 Minnesota Legislature on appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). Through this Call for Funding  
6 Requests, the Council is seeking ideas on what to recommend for funding. This request is open to all who want  
7 to apply. Successful applicants will:

- 8 1. Read and understand L-SOHC’s vision for each L-SOHC Section and the Council’s priority actions  
9 contained in this Call for Funding Requests;
- 10 2. Develop a request addressing those priorities;
- 11 3. Complete the on-line application form found at [://www.lsohc.leg.mn/FY2014/index.html](http://www.lsohc.leg.mn/FY2014/index.html) by **4 p.m.,**  
12 **Central Standard Time, Thursday, June 13, 2013.** A confirmation e-mail will be sent within 48 hours of  
13 the closing time;
- 14 4. Be available for a formal presentation/hearing and answer questions based on accurate completion of  
15 the details you provide;
- 16 5. Be recommended for funding by the Council; and
- 17 6. Be appropriated funds in the 2014 Minnesota Legislative Session for fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June  
18 30, 2015).

19 The L-SOHC will only consider funding requests that are:

- 20 • consistent with the Minnesota Constitution, statute, and state law, and laws on tribal self-governing  
21 harvest regulations; (*Jane Kingston motion adopted at November 13, 2012 meeting, JC comment: this*  
22 *does not belong here*)
- 23 • supported by the ~~Legislature~~ (*DM – not sure what those are at time of RFP*), the Governor and the  
24 public;
- 25 • sure to attain the immediate objectives of the strategic framework and plan for the Outdoor Heritage  
26 Fund; and
- 27 • priority actions identified by the Council.

28  
29 The Council is currently **estimating \$92 million will be available for appropriations** from the Outdoor Heritage  
30 Fund (OHF) for expenditure in fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015). This estimate may be revised in  
31 November, 2013.

32

1 **Areas of Emphasis for Fiscal Year 2015 (M.L. 2014)**

2  
3 The Council would like to consider requests for funding programs in these three areas of habitat protection,  
4 restoration and enhancement:

5 **Programs Protecting Habitat Threatened by Silica Sand Extraction** - Priority will be given to requests to protect  
6 rare or unique habitats or habitat features as identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey or as Species  
7 of Greatest Conservation Need geographically associated with silica sand deposits, such as goat prairies.

8 **Programs Protecting, Restoring or Enhancing Fish Habitat Under Unique or Special Threat** – Priority will be  
9 given to requests conserving threatened fish habitat, especially habitat threatened by aquatic invasive species.

10 **Programs Protecting Fish, Game and Wildlife Habitat Under Threat of Conversion to Agricultural Uses** -  
11 Priority will be given to requests directed at protecting habitat currently privately owned that is likely to be  
12 converted to cropland. Special emphasis will be directed to land currently protected by term limited  
13 government programs. (RH)

14 **Schedule for 2013**

15 Insert when adopted  
16

17 **Guiding Principles for Outdoor Heritage Fund Recommendation Process**

18  
19 This request for proposals will:

- 20  
21 1. Be transparent, understandable, and accessible by the public for input and review;  
22 2. Protect and advance the public interest;  
23 3. Support programs that are grounded in science and reflect “best practices” for resource management;  
24 4. Take into account existing conservation delivery systems;  
25 5. Encourage efficient and effective conservation solutions; and  
26 6. Attempt to ensure conservation benefits are broadly distributed across the L-SOHC Sections *(JK: move to*  
27 *statewide priority)*  
28 7. The primary benefit must be for fish, game and wildlife. (JC)  
29

30 **Minimum Screening Criteria**

31 (JK: combine all of these with proposal requirements)  
32

33 Applicants must:

- 34  
35 1. Have a record of successful management and implementation of project/program(s) similar in scale,  
36 scope, and complexity to the project/program(s) being requested;  
37 2. Have demonstrated the ability to identify and establish the financial and managerial controls needed to  
38 successfully and fully implement the proposed project/program; and  
39 3. Have an up-to-date external financial audit or its equivalent with no serious negative findings.

1 **Statewide Priority Evaluation Criteria**

- 2 1. Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or  
3 more of the ecological sections.  
4 2. Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits.  
5 3. ~~Are able to leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation.~~  
6 4. Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately  
7 equal. JK: combine 4 & 9.  
8 5. ~~Address conservation opportunities that will be lost if not immediately acted on. (SR: everyone will be~~  
9 ~~lost if we don't move on it)~~  
10 6. Restore or enhance habitat on state-owned WMAs, AMAs, SNAs, and state forests.  
11 7. Use a science-based strategic planning and evaluation model to guide protection, restoration and  
12 enhancement, similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation  
13 model.  
14 8. Address wildlife species of greatest conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and  
15 rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions, as well as long-term  
16 or permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species. JK: combine 8 & 11  
17 9. Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and  
18 other outdoor recreation opportunities. JK: combine 4 & 9.  
19 10. Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits  
20 and others while doing this important work.  
21 11. Target unique Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife. JK: combine 8 & 11  
22 12. Getting the best "bang for the buck" as well as overall conservation outcomes (DH)  
23

24 **Proposal Requirements**

25  
26 The L-SOHC will only consider funding requests that:

- 27  
28 1. Are consistent with the uses of the OHF as specified in Article XI of the Minnesota Constitution and  
29 Minnesota Statutes and Laws, including restrictions on acquisition of lands in the public domain, as  
30 required in Minnesota Statutes.  
31 2. Have a process for ensuring transparency and access to information about the project/program in all  
32 stages of project/program implementation.  
33 3. Demonstrate significant and enduring resource and/or habitat outcomes.  
34 4. Clearly identify performance measures, and a plan for measuring, evaluating and publicly reporting  
35 these outcomes over time.  
36 5. Reflect the best available science regarding resource and/or habitat enhancement, restoration, and  
37 protection.  
38 6. Are for a minimum of \$400,000.  
39 7. Seek funding only to supplement (not replace) customary or usual funding sources.  
40 8. Identify funding necessary to fully implement the project/program(s), and have a plan to sustain the  
41 resource and/or habitat outcomes specified, including a plan to finance the necessary activities.  
42 9. Limit the state's exposure for additional funding for the project.  
43 10. Where possible and appropriate, use native plant material.  
44 11. Restore or enhance resources only on property under permanent protection of public fee ownership or  
45 conservation easement. This includes tribal lands under federal trust arrangements.  
46 12. Acquisitions through easement must be permanent.

- 1 13. Agree to not transfer the public interest in OHF fee and/or easement protected land without written  
2 approval.
- 3 14. Ensure that land acquired in fee with money from the OHF is open to the public taking of fish and game  
4 during the open season unless otherwise provided by law.
- 5 15. Commit to replace OHF protected resources converted to a use other than that intended in the OHF  
6 appropriation with land of at least equal market value that is in a reasonably equivalent location and  
7 reasonably equivalent useful conservation purpose.
- 8 16. Are associated with established land acquisition programs, if the request is to acquire fee simple title or  
9 a permanent conservation easement of real property. *(JK: 16 & 17 are redundant with 4 & 9, and 8 & 11  
10 under Statewide Priority)*
- 11 17. Are associated with established land acquisition programs that use explicit criteria for evaluating the  
12 parcel's habitat potential, if the request is to acquire an interest in real property. *(JK: 16 & 17 are  
13 redundant with 4 & 9, and 8 & 11 under Statewide Priority)*
- 14 18. Commit to erect and maintain signage, as outlined in Minnesota Statutes, crediting the OHF with  
15 support for protected, restored, or improved resources.
- 16 19. Commit to communication standards in Council plan.
- 17 20. Proposal must show, if applicable, the easement costs as a percentage of fee acquisition costs for each  
18 parcel.
- 19 21. Preference will be given to projects that include local outreach and education so that the community  
20 develops the capacity to monitor and sustain the project outcomes on a long-term basis. (EW\*)
- 21 22. Preference will be given to projects that engage community members, including local schools, in  
22 reaching outcomes. (EW\*)

23 *\*The reasons for including the above relate to the 25-year framework. Nearly all the constraints listed in Appendix A (p. 40)*  
24 *can be reduced significantly by an educated and engaged public. We need to build the knowledge base and skills of our*  
25 *citizens so that all of them have the capacity to take care of their land. Whether in public or private hands, good land*  
26 *stewardship is essential if we want to maintain what we already have and eliminate the need for future restoration of*  
27 *habitat destroyed by those who do not have a conservation ethic. Hands-on learning and engaging in projects that have a*  
28 *positive environmental impact is one of the most effective ways of creating conservationists.*



# 1 Ecological Section Vision and Priorities

## 3 Northern Forest Section Vision

4 The Council’s vision for the Northern Forest Section contains clear view of the desired future condition for the  
5 section’s forest lands, lakes and wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

6  
7 Forestland should be universally accessible for forest management purposes as well as protected from  
8 development and fragmentation. Private in-holdings in public forests and key properties for habitat and stand  
9 management, adjacent to existing ownership should be acquired, with an eye toward ensuring no net loss of  
10 forestland. Of special concern is the condition of brushlands within the forestlands. These lands, along with early  
11 successional forest habitat are crucial for game species and non-game species and need restoration and  
12 enhancement work so as to ensure ample availability of this habitat type.

13  
14 Lakes and wetlands supporting healthy fish populations are fundamental to the future of the Northern Forest  
15 Section. Lakes and streams with protected shoreland and restored watersheds will produce quality warm and  
16 cold-water aquatic systems. Those resources will provide the aquatic habitat required to support excellent fish  
17 populations and other aquatic organisms.

18  
19 The Northern Forest Section is home to both cherished and unique Minnesota wildlife populations. It is  
20 imperative that the wildlife habitat of this Section support those populations. Healthy wild rice wetlands and  
21 shallow lakes that provide important habitat for a wide range of game and non-game wildlife which are clearly  
22 front and center in the Council’s vision. These and other key habitats are envisioned to protect habitat for  
23 endangered, threatened and species of special concern and more common.

## 24 Priority Actions for the Northern Forest Section with Examples of Outcome Measures

25 *Priorities actions are not in order of preference or importance. (SR: We need to put this is priority order)*

- 26  
27 1. Protect shoreland and watersheds to restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes,  
28 cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas.
- 29 • Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation (*acres protected from*  
30 *development and fragmentation; average size protected complex; acres of forestlands with high*  
31 *connectivity to other forestlands protected*)
  - 32 • Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, or special concern species, species in greatest  
33 conservation need, and more common species – emphasis on unique species (*Population levels of*  
34 *focal forest game species, focal species in greatest conservation need; number and acreage of native plant*  
35 *communities with high biodiversity significance*)
- 36 2. Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from  
37 parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement.
- 38 • Greater public access for wildlife and outdoors-related recreation (*# of access points, % population*  
39 *with access within distance*)
  - 40 • Landlocked public properties are accessible with increased access for land managers (*# of*  
41 *landlocked properties accessed, % decrease in landlocked properties*)
- 42 3. Restore and enhance habitat on existing protected properties, with preference to habitat for rare,  
43 endangered or threatened species identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey.
- 44 • Increased availability and improved condition of riparian forests and other habitat corridors  
45 (*acres, habitat connectivity*)

- 1 4. Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in aerial extent in recent  
2 decades.  
3 • Improved aquatic habitat indicators (*index of biotic integrity and other aquatic habitat indicators*)  
4 • Increased availability and improved condition of habitats that have experienced substantial  
5 decline (*e.g., acres of pine and brushland*)  
6  
7

## 8 **Forest/Prairie Transition Section Vision**

10 The Council's future for the Forest/Prairie Transition Section envisions diverse and productive remnant tracts of  
11 native prairie, forests grasslands, wetlands, lakes and rivers, and their associated fish and wildlife habitat.  
12

13 The Council sees a future when ample grasses and other vegetation on shorelands and higher in the watershed  
14 keeps water on the land This will yield clean lakes and streams, steady lake and stream levels, and improved  
15 aquatic vegetation, providing a plentiful supply of habitat for fish, game and wildlife in the Section, especially  
16 habitat for waterfowl and upland birds.  
17

18 These rivers and streams and their surrounding vegetation will provide corridors of habitat including intact areas  
19 of forest cover in the eastern reaches of the Section, and large wetland/upland complexes in the more westerly  
20 areas. These wetland/upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands and  
21 restored shallow lakes and wetlands.  
22

### 23 **Priority Actions for Forest/Prairie Transition Section with Examples of Outcome Measures**

24 *Priorities actions are not in order of preference or importance. (SR: We need to put this is priority order)*  
25

- 26 1. Protect, enhance and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen  
27 parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and non-game wildlife.  
28 • Protected, restored, and enhanced aspen parklands and riparian areas (*evidence of successful*  
29 *projects, connectivity of protected habitats, connectivity of forest habitats via corridors*)  
30 • Wetland/upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands,  
31 and restored shallow lakes and wetlands (*# and type grassland bird conservation areas protected and*  
32 *restored; average size of complex, grassland and wetland acres; ratio grassland/upland; Increased grass*  
33 *cover %; # protected sites connected via corridor*)  
34 2. Protect, enhance and restore rare native remnant prairie.  
35 • Wetland/upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands,  
36 and restored shallow lakes and wetlands  
37 (*# and type grassland bird conservation areas protected and restored; average size of complex, grassland*  
38 *and wetland acres; ratio grassland/upland; Increased grass cover %; # protected sites connected via*  
39 *corridor*)  
40 • Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large  
41 and small wetlands (*Acres/percent of priority prairie wetland complexes protected under conservation*  
42 *management; # and type grassland bird conservation areas protected and restored; average size of*  
43 *complex, grassland and wetland acre (minimum of 40% grass and 20% water in prairie core areas); % and*  
44 *# protected sites connected via corridor*)  
45 3. Protect, enhance and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase  
46 migratory and breeding success.

- Water is kept on the land (due to abundant grasses and other vegetation on shorelands and higher in the watershed); (#/miles protected floodplain, saturated, and fen wetlands; # protected high gradient stream reaches; evidence of restored natural hydrology)
- Improved aquatic vegetation (Evidence of healthy aquatic vegetation, low turbidity)
- Rivers and streams (and surrounding vegetation) provide corridors of habitat including intact areas of forest cover in the east and large wetland/upland complexes in the west (Evidence of use in migration, connectivity of protected lands, # and extent of complexes; acres restored riparian vegetation)
- Increased waterfowl and upland bird migratory and breeding success (Population levels of focal game species and species in greatest conservation need, # small basins and permanent wetlands, wetlands in high density nesting areas, wetlands with adjacent grassland)
- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need (evidence of successful projects, connectivity of protected habitats, # MCBS sites)

## Metro Urbanizing Vision

The Council's vision for the Metropolitan Urbanizing Section is the acquisition of a network of natural lands in the Section providing wildlife habitat, birding sites, quality fisheries, especially cold-water fisheries and a forest land base that contributes to the habitat picture. (JC)

These natural lands in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Section include complexes of restored and perpetually protected wetlands, prairies, and forests, providing habitat benefits and access. These will have core areas spaced proportions throughout the section (JC) with protected highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities including native prairies. Where possible, the habitats will connect, making corridors for wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation, and hold wetlands and shallow lakes open to public recreation and hunting. The Section's game lakes will be significant contributors of waterfowl, due to efforts to protect uplands adjacent to game lakes. In the corridors, the streams, rivers and lakes will be protected by vegetative buffers along riparian areas. Remnant oak savanna will be protected and its health restored, as will forests contributing to quality fisheries. As a result cold-water streams and lakes will provide high quality fisheries within an hour's drive of the majority of the state's population. Where possible, invasive species will have been permanently eradicated.

### Priority Action for Metropolitan Urbanizing Area with Example of Outcome Measures

**Priorities actions are not in order of preference or importance. (SR: We need to put this in priority order)**

1. Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity.
  - Core areas protected with highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities including native prairies. (% of 2010 remaining prairie and oak savanna protected, % protected sites that are MCBS sites, % adequately buffered/connected, average size of core complexes, evidence of successful R/E projects)
  - A forest land base that contributes to the habitat picture (High quality forests, including oak savanna and Big Woods complexes are restored/protected, evidence of use by species dependent on these habitats, particularly SGCN, evidence of successful watershed approaches...e.g., reduced erosion)
2. Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain.)

- A network of natural land habitats will connect, making corridors for wildlife and species in greatest need of conservation (*Corridors connecting protected areas, evidence of SGCN and other wildlife using corridors, acres of “green infrastructure” corridors protected*)
  - Protected habitats will hold wetlands and shallow lakes open to public recreation and hunting. (*# access points, user satisfaction*)
3. Enhance and restore coldwater fisheries systems.
    - High quality aquatic habitat (*streams, rivers and lakes protected by vegetative buffers along riparian areas, aquatic indicators...mussels, fish populations, increased water quality and water on a site*)
  4. Protect, enhance and restore riparian and littoral habitats on lakes to benefit game and non-game fish species.
    - Game lakes are significant contributors of waterfowl, due to efforts to protect uplands adjacent to game lakes (*# impaired lakes, evidence of lake use/success....nesting success, etc.*)

## Southeast Forest Section Vision

The Council recognizes the Southeast Forest Section of Minnesota is a unique place, largely untouched by recent glaciers that covered most of Minnesota. The underlying karst geology and overlying remnants of the Big Woods are not found elsewhere in Minnesota. The ages have left a legacy of warm and cold water streams and rivers, floodplains, hardwood forests, remnant bluffland prairies, and striking topographic relief that provides diverse habitat worthy of protection.

In the forested parts of the Southeast Forest Section the Council sees a future of restored and protected oak savanna and mixed deciduous forest lands making up large blocks of protected property, accessible for resource management purposes.

The cold and warm water streams of the region will be protected and enhanced by work in and along streams as well as work streamside to the top of the watershed to slow runoff and keep aquatic habitat clean and productive, with prolific fish, game and wildlife populations.

Southeast Forest Section wildlife habitat will be established in large corridors and complexes of restored and protected, biologically diverse habitat typical of the un-glaciated region. As a result the Section’s endangered or threatened species will find habitat, such as goat prairies, in which to survive, alongside more common species of interest to Minnesotans. The Mississippi River and associated floodplain and bluffs, as well as the feeder streams will be an important part of this network of corridors and complexes.

### Priority Actions for Southeast Forest Section with Examples of Outcome Measures

*Priorities actions are not in order of preference or importance. (SR: We need to put this in priority order)*

1. Protect forest habitat through acquisition in fee or easement, to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties.
  - Forestlands and savannas are protected from parcelization and fragmentation and accessible for resource management purposes (*acres protected from development and fragmentation, acres of forestlands with high connectivity to other forestlands protected, # landlocked properties accessed, % decrease in landlocked properties*)

2. Protect, enhance and restore habitat for fish, game and non-game wildlife in rivers, cold water streams and associated upland habitat.
  - High priority riparian lands are protected from parcelization and fragmentation (*acres protected*)
  - Stream to bluff habitat restoration and enhancement will keep water on the land to slow runoff and degradation of aquatic habitat (*index of biotic integrity and other aquatic and shoreline habitat indicators, acres of riparian forest, increased water infiltration*)
  - Rivers, streams and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat (*Evidence of use in migration, connectivity of protected lands, # and extent of complexes*)
3. Protect, enhance and restore remnant goat prairies.
  - Remnant goat prairies are perpetually protected (*% of remnant goat prairies protected, evidence of increased goat prairie habitat quality*)
4. Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in aerial extent in recent decades.
  - Large corridors and complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat typical of the unglaciated region are restored and protected (*Connectivity of wildlife habitat, average size protected complex, # and acreage of native plant communities with high biodiversity significance, evidence of migratory success*)
  - Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species (*population levels of focal game species, focal species in greatest conservation need*)

## Prairie Section Vision

The Council sees the future of the Prairie Region as vital to the future of waterfowl, grassland birds and other wildlife dependent on native and restored prairies, shallow lakes, wetlands, and grasslands. The prairie region of Minnesota was once home to some of the largest herds of grazing animals the world has ever known. It also contains within its borders, a portion of the Prairie Pothole Region the birthplace of 70 percent of North America’s waterfowl. Unique components of this section are the prairie rivers, large and small, from the Red and Minnesota Rivers to their tributaries in adjacent watersheds. This section also contains some of the largest freshwater marshes in North America.

The Prairie Section of Minnesota is now one of the most altered rural landscapes in the world, with 90 percent of its native prairie and wetlands now under plow. The native prairie and wetlands that remain should be perpetually protected. Where possible these remnant native prairies should be part of large complexes with a goal of nine square mile parcels. These parcels should include restored prairies, grasslands, large and small wetlands that will create buffers to the native prairie and provide the density of habitat needed by fish, game and wildlife. Key core parcels should be set aside as areas managed for game species as well as refuges for fish, game or wildlife, and endangered or threatened species. Special emphasis should be put on extremely uncommon Minnesota species with unique or specific habitat requirements.

The Prairie Section waters, affected by agricultural practices which increase run off over natural levels, will have benefitted from revitalized and expanded shoreland buffers and work to enhance shallow lake productivity for a variety of shorebirds and waterfowl. As a result of concentrated work of this type, combined with restored and enhanced upland habitat, historically significant resources for migratory waterfowl, such as the Heron Lake and Swan Lake Watersheds will once again be important landscapes for many species of migrating birds. Likewise the Red River Valley will provide abundant wildlife habitat while simultaneously keeping water on the land to reduce flood potential.

1 The Prairie Section is the home to a critical portion of the state’s wildlife-related lands. The Council sees these  
2 being increasingly productive in the future, as the result of restoration and enhancement of native prairie,  
3 grassland and associated watershed, including the shallow lakes of this section. In the southeastern part of the  
4 Section there are precious remnants of the Big Woods and oak savanna they will also be targeted for protection.  
5

## 6 **Priority Actions for the Prairie Section and Examples of Outcome Measures**

7 *Priorities actions are not in order of preference or importance. (SR: We need to put this is priority order)*  
8

- 9 **1.** Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new  
10 wetland/upland habitat complexes. *(SR: How is this different than #3 below , they look the same)*
  - 11 • Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *(acres/percent of priority key parcels*  
12 *protected in fee or permanent easement)*
  - 13 • Increased participation of private landowners in habitat projects *(acres habitat P/R/E in private*  
14 *adjacent/near projects)*
  - 15 • Improved condition of habitat on public lands *(evidence of successful R/E projects)*
  - 16 • Restored and enhanced upland habitat *(evidence of successful restoration/enhancement projects)*
- 17 **2.** Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna.
  - 18 • Protected, enhanced and restored remnants of big woods and oak savanna *(% of large remnants (>500*  
19 *acres) of big woods and oak savanna protected)*
  - 20 • Remnant native prairie and wetlands are perpetually protected and adequately buffered *(Percent of*  
21 *remnant native prairie and wetlands protected, acres of remnant prairies with adequate buffers)*
  - 22 • Remnant native prairies are part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and large and  
23 small wetlands *(Acres/percent of priority prairie wetland complexes protected under conservation*  
24 *management; # and type grassland bird conservation areas protected and restored; average size of complex,*  
25 *grassland and wetland acre (minimum of 40% grass and 20% water in prairie core areas); % and # protected*  
26 *sites connected via corridor)*
- 27 **3.** Convert agricultural land to wetland/upland to protect, enhance, or restore existing habitat complexes,  
28 such as existing WMA’s.
  - 29 • Agricultural lands are converted to grasslands to sustain functioning prairie systems. *(Acres/percent of*  
30 *priority key parcels are converted)*
  - 31 • Improved access to public lands *(# access points, acres of protected lands open for public access, %*  
32 *population with access within distance)*
  - 33 • Water is kept on the land to reduce flood potential and degradation of aquatic habitat *(Watershed*  
34 *yield (indic. in dev.); evidence of restored natural hydrology; #/area/miles of protected floodplain, saturated,*  
35 *and fen wetlands)*
- 36 **4.** Restore or enhance habitat on public lands.
  - 37 • Increased wildlife productivity *(evidence of increased productivity on specific lands; populations*  
38 *levels of focal game and Species in Greatest Conservation need)*
- 39 **5.** Protect, restore and enhance shallow lakes.
  - 40 • Protected, restored and enhanced shallow lakes *(% of priority shallow lakes protected, evidence of*  
41 *successful restoration/ enhancement projects)*
  - 42 • Improved aquatic vegetation *(Evidence healthy aquatic vegetation, low turbidity)*
  - 43 • Enhanced shallow lake productivity *(degree of use by shorebirds and waterfowl)*
- 44 **6.** ~~Protect expiring Conservations Reserve Program (CRP) lands. (SR)~~
  - 45 • Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *(Acres/percent of priority key parcels*  
46 *protected in fee or permanent easement)*
- 47 **7.** Protect, enhance and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase  
48 migratory and breeding success. *(SR: What does this mean??)*

- Protected, restored, and enhanced habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species
- *(degree of fall use of significant resources by migratory waterfowl; evidence of successful projects, connectivity of protected areas via riparian corridors)*

**Terms of the Funding**

**Payment**

For ~~non-state~~ all entities, payment is reimbursement for expenses paid. The expenses must be direct to and necessary for the program or project, as determined by the state’s fiscal agent, and must protect, enhance or restore prairies, wetlands, forests or habitat for fish, game and wildlife. The funds may not be used for general organization support or overhead seeking funding from any source. They may be used for planning and evaluating habitat programs or projects paid for with the OHF; however, the evaluation and planning expenses must be direct to and necessary for the program or project, as presented to the Council. (JC)

**Timing**

Reimbursable expenses may be incurred on or after July 1, 2014 or the date on which the L-SOHC approves the accomplishment plan. Unless otherwise provided by the legislature during the appropriations process, the funds are available until June 30, 2017, when projects must be completed and final accomplishments reported. Funds for restoration or enhancement are available until June 30, 2019, or four years after the acquisition, whichever is later, in order to complete the restoration and enhancement work. If a project receives federal funds, the time period of the appropriation is extended to equal the availability of federal funding.

<p><b>For more information:</b>          Lessard - Sams Outdoor Heritage Council          100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.          State Office Building, Room 95          St. Paul, MN 55155           Email: <a href="mailto:@lsohc.leg.mn">@lsohc.leg.mn</a>           Phone: (651) 297-7141          Fax: (651) 297-3697</p>	<p><b>LSOHC Staff</b></p> <p><b>Bill Becker</b>, Executive Director 651-296-6397  <a href="mailto:.becker@lsohc.leg.mn">.becker@lsohc.leg.mn</a></p> <p><b>Heather Koop</b>, Project Analyst Manager 651-297-7142  <a href="mailto:.koop@lsohc.leg.mn">.koop@lsohc.leg.mn</a></p> <p><b>Sandy Smith</b>, Council Assistant 651-297-7141  <a href="mailto:.smith@lsohc.leg.mn">.smith@lsohc.leg.mn</a></p>
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