Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Restoration Evaluations - ML 2026

Laws of Minnesota 2026 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 12/16/2025

Project Title: Restoration Evaluations - ML 2026

Funds Recommended: $189,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Wade Johnson
Title: Restoration Evaluations Program Coordinator
Organization: MN DNR
Address: 500 Lafayette Road Box 25
City: St Paul, MN 55155-4025
Email: Wade.A.Johnson@state.mn.us
Office Number: 651-259-5075
Mobile Number:
Fax Number:
Website: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/legacy/restoration-evaluation.html

Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Activity types:

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Narrative

Abstract

This proposal supports the work of the Restoration Evaluation Program (REP). The REP carries out the statutory charge to annually evaluate a subset of Outdoor Heritage Fund supported projects with the goal of improving future restorations and enhancements. The REP coordinates the evaluation work, presents the evaluation results

to a technical panel of experts, and collates resulting recommendations. The REP produces a related report and offers various targeted outreach to practitioners highlighting successes, failures, lessons learned, and recommendations for improving restoration practice.

Design and Scope of Work

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) are jointly responsible for convening a Restoration Evaluation Panel (Panel) of technical experts to annually evaluate a sample of habitat restoration and enhancement projects completed with Outdoor Heritage funding, as provided in M.S. 97A.056, Subd. 10. Primary goals of the restoration evaluation program are to provide on the ground accountability for the use of Legacy funds and to improve future habitat restorations in the State. Per statute, the Panel will evaluate the selected habitat restoration projects relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals in the restoration plan. Program staff will identify projects to be evaluated, coordinate field assessments and provide a report to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and the legislature determining if the restorations are meeting planned goals, any problems with implementation, and, if necessary, recommendations on improving restorations.

The anticipated long-term outcome of this program is to promote and increase impactful, long-lasting habitat restoration projects. This is accomplished by advancing awareness among practitioners and decision-makers of common challenges and recommended management options to improve future restoration projects. The primary mechanism for advancing awareness is through program staff coordinating various communications including the annual report, website, webinars, field trainings, conference seminars and workshops and integration in technical guidance (e.g. https://bwsr.state.mn.us/native-vegetation-guidelines). Program staff are working with the Panel, LSOHC, and project managers to explore novel approaches to advance the intent of M.S. 97A.056, Subd. 10. Updates on continued coordination with Council members and Council staff are anticipated in 2026.

Funding for this proposal will:

- Complete up to eighteen initial Outdoor Heritage Fund project evaluations and three follow up evaluations of previously assessed sites. Follow up assessments provide valuable insight into tracking progress and estimating trajectory towards planned goals. Site evaluations will be conducted by a state staff and contacted assessors. Contracted assessors add value by providing deep knowledge of practice implementation and avoiding conflict of interest.
- Coordinate review by the technical evaluation panel, synthesize and organize their findings and recommendations and report the results in 2026 Legacy Restoration Evaluation report.
- Continue creating, disseminating and promoting targeted guidance for improving restoration and enhancement practices based on panel recommendations.

During 2025 the evaluation program is focused on stream restoration projects, with outcomes reported to the Council in early 2026. Continued discussion with the Panel and Council members will guide areas of focus in 2026.

The most recent Restoration Evaluation report, appendix of project evaluations and an overview of ongoing recommendations for improving practices are available on the MN DNR website https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/legacy/restoration-evaluation.html.

A permanent record of all Legacy Fund Restoration Evaluation reports beginning in 2012 are available from the Legislative Library: http://www.leg.state.mn.us/edocs/edocs.aspx?oclcnumber=823766285.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Explain how this plan will uniquely address habitat resilience to climate change and its anticipated effects on game, fish & wildlife species utilizing the protected or restored/enhanced habitat this proposal targets.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Outcomes

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This program is entirely dedicated to Legacy Fund work and does not supplant or substitute for previous funding.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

It is anticipated that the evaluation program outputs will help to create a framework for continuous improvement in restoration practice. Direct work of the Legacy Fund Restoration Evaluation Program will be sustained for the period of funding.

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

Activity Details

Requirements

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

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
2026 Restoration Evaluation report submitted to Legislature and LSOHC	April 28, 2027
Site assessors (State staff and contractors) conduct field surveys of selected sites	October 1, 2026
Program staff select up to twenty-five project sites for evaluation	July 1, 2026
Evaluation Panel establishes annual priorities	July 1, 2026

Date of Final Report Submission: 10/31/2028

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2030;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2034;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2031;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

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

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$148,400	-	-	$148,400
Contracts	$23,000	-	-	$23,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$2,000	-	-	$2,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$15,600	-	-	$15,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$189,000**	**-**	**-**	**$189,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Evaluation Specialist	0.57	1.0	$71,000	-	-	$71,000
Program Coordinator	0.57	1.0	$77,400	-	-	$77,400

Amount of Request: $189,000
Amount of Leverage: -
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%
DSS + Personnel: $164,000
As a % of the total request: 86.77%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
No

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
Technical evaluation of completed restorations and enhancements.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
No

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?
DNR Direct and Necessary Calculator.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Restoration Evaluations - ML 2026

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2026 - Restoration Evaluations - ML 2026
Organization: MN DNR
Manager: Wade Johnson

Budget

Requested Amount: $204,000
Appropriated Amount: $189,000
Percentage: 92.65%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$165,000	-	$148,400	-	89.94%	-
Contracts	$18,000	-	$23,000	-	127.78%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	$2,000	-	$2,000	-	100.0%	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$17,000	-	$15,600	-	91.76%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$2,000	-	-	-	0.0%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$204,000**	**-**	**$189,000**	**-**	**92.65%**	**-**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-