



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Contract Management
ML 2026 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/26/2025

Proposal Title: Contract Management

Funds Requested: \$450,000

Confirmed Leverage Funds: -

Is this proposal Scalable?: No

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Katherine Sherman-Hoehn

Title: OMBS Grants Manager

Organization: MN DNR

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Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Metro / Urban

Activity types:

Other : Contract Management

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Narrative

Abstract

Provide contract management and customer service to OHF pass-through appropriation recipients for approximately 320 open grants. Ensure funds are expended in compliance with appropriation law, state statute, grants policies, and approved accomplishment plans.

Design and Scope of Work

This appropriation will be used to continue and enhance contract management services to pass-through recipients of Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations to the Commissioner of Natural Resources. The goal of contract management is to ensure that grantees are properly reimbursed and that organizations operate in compliance with OHF pass-through appropriation procedures, policies from the Department of Administration's Grants Management, OHF statute, and the recommendations of the Legislative Auditor. Contract management includes: grant agreements and amendments, training, technical assistance, reporting, fiscal monitoring, reimbursement request processing, and close-out of grants.

The DNR is currently the administrative agent for this program. The DNR's Office of Management and Budget (OMBS) Grants Unit is applying to continue to provide contract management services to pass-through grant recipients. The OMBS Grants Unit's goal is to provide pass-through recipients with the contract management, technical assistance, and grant monitoring they need to successfully complete their conservation work. The Grants Unit provides grantees with one consistent point of contact for their agreements and delivers timely, responsive, customer service.

This proposal includes a funding request of \$450,000, an increase of \$40,000 from the ML 2025 appropriation. The increase would allow the DNR to add additional FTE effort to account for increases in time spent on projects as the number of open grants continues to increase.

Contract management services are billed using a professional services rate. In FY27, 5.5 FTE will be dedicated to contract management. The professional services hourly rate includes salary and fringe for grants management staff, supervisory time, travel costs, supplies, and allocated administrative costs including rent and printing as well as other related costs necessary to carry out the pass-through grant management program. Multiple staff with a variety of grants, financial or other responsibilities provide contract management services to OHF as well as the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). The Grants Unit consults with Lands and Minerals and Fish and Wildlife staff as necessary on technical issues. Cost coding is used to record and differentiate time spent on ENRTF and OHF pass-through grant management. Services not received or provided will not be billed. The rate for FY24-5 is \$77.00/hr and is re-calculated at least biennially. If the rate changes, LSOHC staff will be informed immediately.

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

N/A

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

Contract management provides oversight of reimbursement for project deliverables and ensures that pass-through recipients are compliant with the Department of Administration's Office of Grants Management procedures as well as the recommendations of the Legislative Auditor.

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

N/A

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

Explain how this proposal 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.

OHF funds will be spent appropriately and reimbursed expediently so that work on projects that address climate change continues.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Describe how this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife, and if not permanent outcomes, why it is important to undertake at this time:

OHF funds will be spent appropriately and reimbursed expediently so that project work continues.

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

Other ~ Pass-through grants are managed appropriately and grantee expenditures are reimbursed efficiently and correctly.

What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this proposal?

N/A

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 request is for work related to Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations. It would not be implemented but for the appropriation. No outside funding has been used for this purpose.

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

N/A

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

The Grants Unit is bringing more focus to BIPOC and diverse communities in our grant management work. The Minnesota DNR has adopted advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as a key priority in its 2020-22 strategic plan. The plan focuses on increasing the cultural competence of our staff, creating a workforce that is reflective of Minnesota, continuing to strengthen tribal consultation and building partnerships with diverse communities. The DNR has DEI strategies that benefit all OHF projects:

- Multilingual and culturally specific hunting and fishing education programs take place on public lands.

- All hiring is equal opportunity, affirmative action, and veteran-friendly.
- Contracting seeks out Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned businesses. Subcontracting requirements for pass-through organizations also follow these guidelines.
- Public engagement seeks out BIPOC voices and involves diverse communities. Outreach and marketing of projects has this focus as well.

The Grants Unit participates in all trainings and have been leaders in developing the grants guidance, and members of our team helped launch the OGM's DEI community of practice. The Grants Unit only provides contract management activities to organizations who receive pass-through appropriations, so our scope for some activities is limited. In OHF contract management work, we concentrate on identifying and improving elements in our processes that may fall more heavily on or become barriers to participation by organizations from communities that have experienced disparities, and increasing our capacity for technical assistance. In FY21 we made several revisions to our reimbursement processes to:

- reduce the administrative burden on partners and provide flexibility in our process, while maintaining our high levels of risk mitigation
- focus on reaching out proactively to new organizations to set new projects up for success.

Our goal is to continue and increase these efforts, so that OHF contract management work is responsive to and supports the success of organizations and projects from BIPOC and diverse communities, as well as all pass-through organizations.

Activity Details

Requirements

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 proposal either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?

No

Other OHF Appropriation Awards

Have you received OHF dollars through LSOHC in the past?

Yes

Are any of these past appropriations still OPEN?

Yes

Approp Year	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
2024	\$350,000	\$171,000	\$179,000	48.86%
2023	\$336,000	\$336,000	-	100.0%
2022	\$300,000	\$300,000	-	100.0%
Totals	\$986,000	\$807,000	\$179,000	81.85%

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Pass-through grant agreements prepared and provided to recipients	August 2026
Submit first annual status report	August 2027
Contract management for Pass-through grant recipients	June 2028
submit final report	August 2028

Budget**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	-	-	-
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	\$450,000	-	-	\$450,000
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$450,000	-	-	\$450,000

Amount of Request: \$450,000**Amount of Leverage:** -**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 0.0%**DSS + Personnel:** -**As a % of the total request:** 0.0%**Easement Stewardship:** -**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -**Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?**

No

Please explain why this project can NOT be scaled:

Expenses are based on hours worked, which is dependent on the number of pass-through appropriations open in a given fiscal year. A reduction in appropriation would result in insufficient funding for work required.

Professional Services**What is included in the Professional Services line?**

Other : DNR grants unit activities, billed using a professional services rate for actual hours worked.

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	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

Restoration/Enhancement Acres Breakdown of Existing Protected Lands (Table 1a.2)

	RESTORE		ENHANCE	
	Lands acquired with OHF	Lands NOT acquired with OHF	Lands acquired with OHF	Lands NOT acquired with OHF
DNR Lands (WMA, State Forests, etc)	-	-	-	-
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	-	-	-
Easements	-	-	-	-
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	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

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

Sign-up Criteria?

No

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

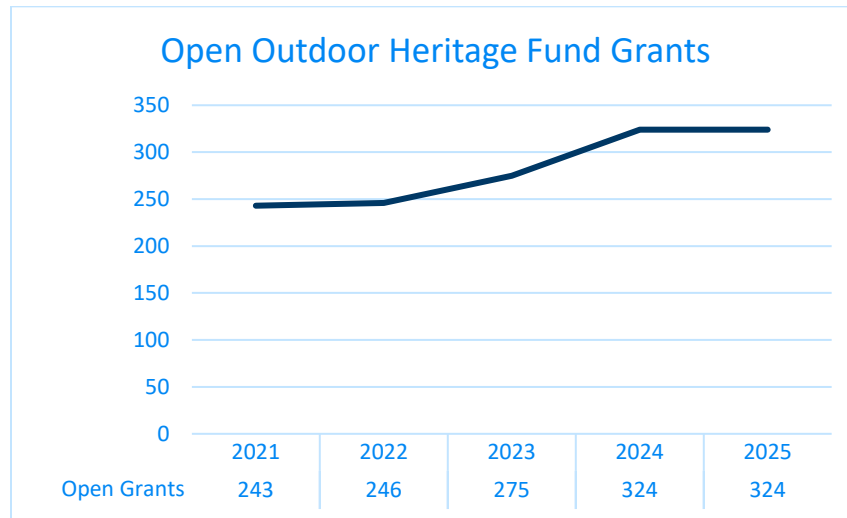
N/A

Outdoor Heritage Fund Contract Management Measures

The OMBS Grants Unit tracks several basic metrics to judge trends in contract management work and set strategic and staffing goals for the year.

Open Grants Per Year

The number of open Outdoor Heritage Fund grants per year increased over the last 5 years, with a sharp increase in FY21 due in part to COVID extensions. Open grants maintained the same level from FY24 through FY25, still significantly higher than prior to FY23.



Payments to Grantees

In FY24, grant specialists processed over 750 payments, trending up from FY22. Land acquisitions increased, hitting FY21 levels and significantly higher than the five year average. The DNR reimbursed \$203 million in eligible expenses in FY24, a sharp increase from prior years. FY25 is on track to return to FY23 levels.

