



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

Thursday, January 7, 2016

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Re: Marsh Lake Ecosystem Project, Minnesota

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy:

The intent of this letter is to urge you and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to include funding for the Marsh Lake Ecosystem Project in the Fiscal Year 2016 Work Plan.

The Marsh Lake Ecosystem Project, authorized in Sec. 7002(5)(4) of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, is critical to restoring the ecosystem along the upper Minnesota River near Appleton, MN. This project upgrades the Marsh Lake dam and restores connectivity with nearby lakes and streams. These modifications will improve water quality benefiting multiple species of aquatic plants, fish and waterfowl, including Minnesota's largest breeding colony of American White Pelicans, as well as the rest of the ecosystem.

In Fiscal Year 2013, the Minnesota Legislature, considering recommendations of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), appropriated \$2.63 million to complete design and construction modifying the dam at Marsh Lake and returning the historic outlet of the Pomme De Terre River to Lac Qui Parle. For FY2017, the Minnesota Legislature will again consider recommendations from LSOHC to appropriate another \$2 million to the Marsh Lake Ecosystem Project. Both the FY2013 appropriation and the FY2017 recommendation are grounded upon testimony by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' representatives that the Marsh Lake Ecosystem project is of "high interest" to the Corps and that the Corps would be an active partner with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in working toward the project's completion with the partnership to include leveraged federal funding.

With extreme migratory waterfowl significance, Marsh Lake was in the President's FY2016 Budget for \$2.7 million, one of only four construction "new starts" and the only ecosystem restoration project. A total of \$8.6 million is needed to match the \$4.63 million in Minnesota state funding.

The good citizens and State of Minnesota are committed to the improvements with the Outdoor Heritage Fund tax dollars. Now, we respectfully urge that you our partners do the same by providing no less than the \$2.7 million requested, and hopefully the entire \$8.6 million, for the Marsh Lake Ecosystem Project in the FY2015 Civil Works Budget. Federal funding is essential for this project's completion and

to realize its extensive benefits to millions of migratory waterfowl and tens of thousands of Minnesota outdoor enthusiasts.

We eagerly look forward to your assistance to ensure continuation of this extremely valuable project's progression and completion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert W. Anderson".

Robert W. Anderson
Chair, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

C: Sen. Al Franken
 Sen. Amy Klobuchar
 Rep. Keith Ellison
 Rep. Tom Emmer
 Rep. John Kline
 Rep. Betty McCollum
 Rep. Richard Nolan
 Rep. Erik Paulsen
 Rep. Collin C. Peterson
 Rep. Timothy J. Walz
 LSOHC Members