



# Media Guide

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**OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND**

# Protocol For Handling Media Inquiries

If you are contacted by media regarding a story involving the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, the Outdoor Heritage Fund or any related project, please keep in mind a few things.

- Thank them for contacting you.
- Gather basic information (name, contact information, publication, outlet, deadline).
- Ask reporter to explain the story, including providing possible interview questions.
- Explain that someone will be in touch soon.
- Contact Mark or Patrick.
- It is important to always be responsive and honest. Even if you don't want to be interviewed for a story or don't have time, always contact the reporter, thank them for their interest and explain that, while you cannot participate in this story, you would like to be kept in mind for future reporting. If possible, don't ignore calls or emails from media.

## MEDIA CONTACTS

### Mark Johnson

Executive Director  
Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
651-296-6397  
mark.johnson@lsohc.leg.mn

### Patrick Thornton

Russell Herder  
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Patrick.thornton@russellherder.com

## Tips For Interview Prep

Prepare. Remember your key message(s). Ask yourself: What do you want people to know when they read the story?

Ask the reporter to provide a list of potential questions ahead of time to help prepare. Sketch out answers to each ahead of time.

Be succinct and speak in complete sentences. Plan about what quotes you would like to see or hear when the story publishes.

Once you have provided a complete answer, stop talking and let the reporter ask the next question. It is not your job to keep the conversation going. Be honest, passionate and energetic. Always use positive language.

Use terms like "Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council", "Outdoor Heritage Fund" "Lessard-Sams", and "the Council" rather than "us" or "we".

Avoid acronyms and don't assume the reporter is well versed in the topic. Provide as much background and basic information as you can. This will help ensure the article is accurate.

If you don't know the answer, say "I don't know". It is OK to follow up later with information via call or email.

If you say something by mistake, or get nervous and want to start over, it is ok to stop, ask the reporter if you can restate, and then start over. Reporters generally want you to be comfortable with your comments.

When appropriate, refer reporters to additional useful contacts whose input will make the story better

Anticipate and gather information in advance (think of visuals, photos, links and data) that can be included with the story. OHF staff maintains a photo database and can help gather additional resources to improve a story.

## Key Messaging

Any interview with a reporter is an opportunity to promote the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the Council. It is important to use consistent messaging to convey a clear image of the fund and the benefit to all Minnesotans. Whenever possible, incorporate these key messages into media interviews.

### **What is the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF)?**

The Outdoor Heritage Fund is one of four funds created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment and receives one-third of the money raised by the Constitutionally Dedicated Legacy sales tax increase. The increase is roughly four cents for every 10-dollar purchase. Since its inception, the Minnesota Legislature has appropriated \$940 million to 310 OHF programs statewide. Outdoor heritage money is distributed to project requests that exceed \$400,000.

As directed by the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, funds must only be spent to, “restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.” Since 2010, the LSOHC has been consistently measuring several key outputs of the Outdoor Heritage Fund such as acres acquired, miles of shoreline protected, and acres restored.

### **Who is the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council?**

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council was established in 2008 by the Minnesota Legislature following a referendum vote. The 12-member body consists of eight citizens and four legislators. Two public members are appointed by the Minnesota Senate Rules and Administration Subcommittee on Committees, two public members are appointed by the Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, four public members are appointed by the Governor, two members of the Senate are appointed by the Senate Rules and Administration Subcommittee on Committees and two members of the House of Representatives are appointed by the Speaker of the House.

### **What is the Council’s role?**

Each spring, the Council solicits requests for funding from partner nonprofit organizations and governmental units or agencies. The Council then reviews and makes funding recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature. Projects that are approved for legislative appropriations receive funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund in the summer of the following year.

## Key Messaging Continued

### Why is the Fund special?

The Outdoor Fund is unique in the United States. Minnesotans care about the outdoors and have a passion for conservation. Enjoying the outdoors, and preserving wildlife and habitat is part of what it means to be Minnesotan. Minnesotans grow up hunting, fishing, swimming, bird watching and much more. They want their kids and grandkids to have the same opportunities.

In 2008 voters overwhelmingly approved the passage of the Legacy Amendment and in doing so established the largest conservation program in the country's history.

Since it started in 2009, the Fund has made sure there is a system in place to decide how the money is spent and measure the impact of each dollar. OHF money would not otherwise show up in the state's budget. These are long-term projects. The OHF money supplements the work that the many great conservation partner organizations across the state are doing. OHF money allows our partners to take on bigger projects that have a longer, more lasting impact.

### GENERAL THEMES

- Minnesotans overwhelmingly approved the Legacy Amendment, and the Council and the legislature are delivering on the voters' wishes.
- Minnesota has one of the strongest financial commitments to protecting its outdoor heritage of any state in the country.
- The Outdoor Heritage Fund is a model that raises us above other states.
- The State has established a clear set of checks, balances and rules governing conflicts of interest to make sure that Outdoor Heritage Fund money is being put to good use.
- Members of the public are part of the process to ensure Outdoor Heritage Fund money is going to the right place.
- The state's leading conservation organizations leverage and make sure the dollars have real, direct public impact.
- Conservation needs a long-term view.
- The funds generated by the Legacy Amendment are used to restore the Minnesota environmental landscape so the next generation of Minnesotans can enjoy the outdoors.