



# 2018 **LEGACY FUND** RESTORATION EVALUATION REPORT

Technical Panel Findings and Recommendations





MARCH 2019

## REPORT TO THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

Senate Environment and Natural Resources  
Finance Committee

Senate Environment and Natural Resources  
Policy and Legacy Finance Committee

House Environment and Natural Resources  
Finance Division

House Environment and Natural Resources Policy  
House Legacy Finance Division

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Clean Water Council

Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee

Submitted by the Department of Natural Resources  
and the Board of Water and Soil Resources

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### Legislative Charge

Parks and Trails Fund: M.S. 85.53, Subd. 5

Outdoor Heritage Fund: M.S. 97A.056, Subd. 10

Clean Water Fund: M.S. 114D.50, Subd 6.

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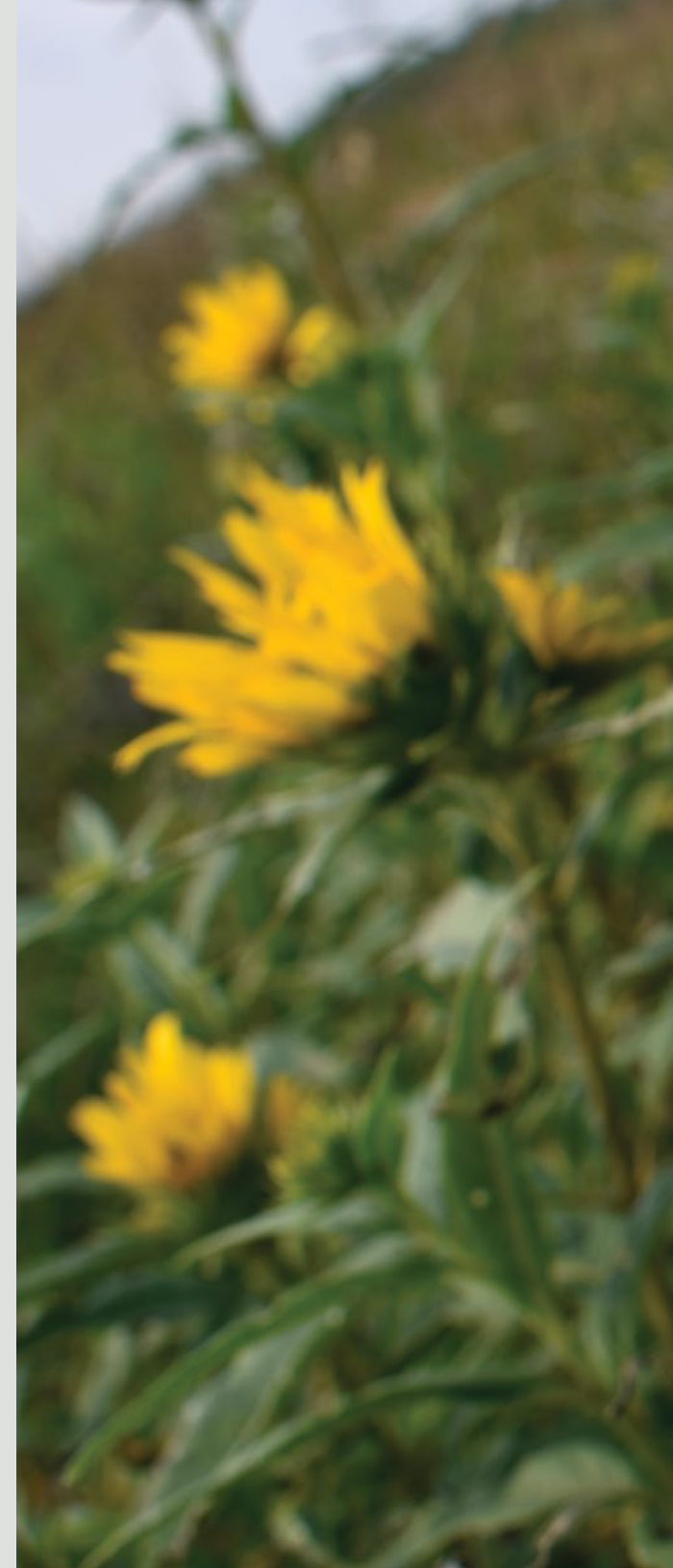
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MN DNR/BWSR

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHEN MINNESOTANS PASSED THE CLEAN WATER, LAND AND LEGACY AMENDMENT IN 2008, THEY DID SO WITH HIGH EXPECTATIONS. AS PROJECTS HAVE MOVED FORWARD THROUGHOUT THE STATE, SO TOO HAVE EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT THE PROJECTS ARE MEETING THOSE EXPECTATIONS.



This report summarizes annual work to evaluate Legacy Fund restorations. This effort is intended to support project managers in maximizing the impact of Minnesota's investment. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) (agencies), and the evaluation panel (panel), have worked together to improve restorations throughout the state.

This report summarizes evaluations of 35 project sites done in 2018, and panel recommendations based on 146 evaluations conducted to date. Projects evaluated in 2018 are largely on track to meet stated goals assuming ongoing maintenance, utilizing current science and complying with applicable laws. However, the panel did identify areas for improvement in the application of current science that include improvement in sequencing and management of wetland vegetation, careful implementation of conservation grazing and the importance of comprehensive planning in stream restorations. DNR, BWSR and project managers discussed these areas for improvement and continue to work to promote high quality restorations.



## Recommendations

### NEW RECOMMENDATION IN THE 2018 REPORT:

Improved Planning for Stream Projects – consistent project planning will enable project managers to make informed decisions and improve capacity to achieve desired outcomes.

### ONGOING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS ARE:

- Improved Project Teams
- Improved Design Criteria for Lakeshore Projects
- Improved Documentation
- Improved Restoration Training
- Evaluation Process Improvement

# EVALUATIONS SUMMARY

## RESTORATION EVALUATION PROJECT POOL

	Clean Water	Outdoor Heritage	Parks and Trails	All Funds
Projects sites evaluated in 2018	3	27	5	35
Projects sites evaluated to date	47	80	19	146
Project sites in evaluation program pool	281	3673	1054	5008

As statute directs, projects are evaluated relative to: the law, current science and stated goals. Statute also directs the panel to determine: any problems with the implementation and recommendations on improving future restorations. A high level summary of these criteria for 2018 is shown below. Detailed project evaluations are provided in Appendix C. Project Evaluations.

Program staff communicate these recommendations to restoration practitioners through reports, presentations, and targeted trainings. Project manager surveys are currently used to track trends in restoration and implementation of the panel's recommendations.

### PROJECT FUNDS

Restorations are completed utilizing three Legacy Funds:

- Clean Water Fund (CWF)
- Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF)
- Parks and Trails Fund (PTF)



# EVALUATIONS SUMMARY continued



## EVALUATED PROJECTS

	Clean Water	Outdoor Heritage	Parks and Trails
Complied with applicable laws	All projects	All projects	All projects
Utilized current science	All projects	*Predominantly	All projects
On track to meet stated goals	All projects	**Predominantly	All projects
Problems with implementation	None	***Some instances	***Some instances

\*Current Science - Most projects utilized state of the art site specific treatments and best practices within the range of current science. However the panel considered instances where sequencing and management of wetland vegetation could have been improved. The panel also discussed the need for careful implementation of conservation grazing and the importance of comprehensive planning in stream restorations (see new recommendation – Improved Planning for Stream Projects).

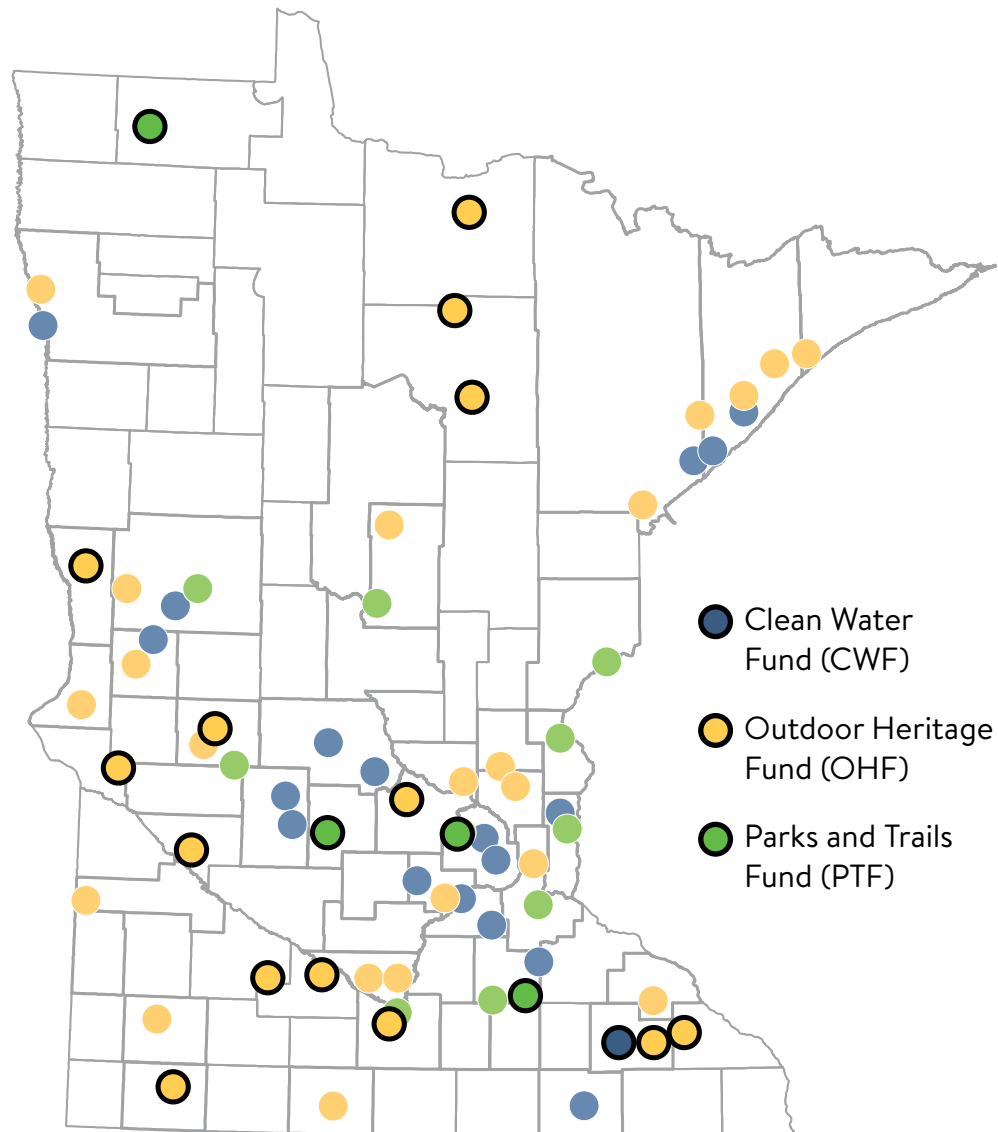
\*\*On Track to Meet Stated Goals – The panel reviewed one project where current indicators of project outcomes suggest the project may not meet the stated goals.

\*\*\* Problems with Implementation – Most projects had no problems with implementation. However the panel identified a few situations where projects would have benefited from more comprehensive design detail, invasive management, or more attention to implementation of on the ground practices.



## Projects Evaluated in 2019

Dots may represent more than one project site. Circled dots represent projects evaluated in 2019; plain dots represent projects evaluated in previous years.



**Reducing Sediment in Cascade Creek, Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District (CWF FY 2012, FY 2015)**

**Montevideo Dam Removal and Bankful Shelf, City of Montevideo (OHF FY 2012 and 2017)**

**Spring Creek Instream Restoration and Bank Stabilization, Brown County (OHF FY 2013)**

**Lawndale Creek Channel Restoration, MN DNR (OHF FY 2010)**

**Sauk Rapids Area Small Wetlands Pelican Lake WMA, Ducks Unlimited (OHF FY 2011)**

**Whitewater WMA Crystal Springs Direct Seeding, MN DNR (OHF FY 2011)**

**Gordy Yeager WMA Direct Seeding, MN DNR (OHF 2012 and 2014)**

**Lincoln & Perch Lake WPA Restorations, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust (OHF FY 2012)**

**Dutch Charley Creek WMA Savanna Restoration, MN DNR (OHF FY 2012)**

**Artichoke Lake WPA and Glenwood Area Easement Restorations, The Nature Conservancy (OHF FY 2012)**

**Little Fork and Deer River Area Forest Restorations, MN DNR (OHF FY 2010)**

**Morris Area Easement Restorations, Friends of the Morris Wetland Management District (OHF FY 2011)**

**Fenmont and Four Corners WMA Restorations, Ducks Unlimited and MN DNR (OHF FY 2011)**

**Crow-Hassan Park Reserve Restorations, Three Rivers Park District (PTF FY 2010, OHF FY 2015)**

**Rice Lake State Park Prairie Restoration, MN DNR (PTF FY 2014, 2015, and 2017)**

**Greenleaf State Recreation Area Prairie Restoration, MN DNR (PTF FY 2014)**

**Hayes Lake State Park Jack Pine Restorations, MN DNR (PTF FY 2009)**

# RESTORATION EVALUATION PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF RESTORATION EVALUATIONS IS IDENTIFYING ISSUES AND PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO PROJECT MANAGERS TO IMPROVE FUTURE RESTORATIONS.

Statute directs the panel to determine: *...any problems with the implementation of restorations, and if necessary, recommendations on improving restorations.*

The emphasis of reporting is also directed in statute: *...the report shall be focused on improving future restorations.*

## Improved Planning for Stream Projects

### NEW RECOMMENDATION

The panel recommends that project managers complete consistent project planning for all stream projects. This information is particularly valuable for stream and river restorations due to the complexity, cost, and risks associated. This consistent planning process should include:

- Identifying problems (e.g. stressors or impairments)
- Articulating specific project goals
- Designing strategies to address identified problems and specific goals based on a stream assessment
- Budgeting funds adequate to achieve goals
- Documenting project partner capacity to manage and execute the work

The level of assessment and planning detail should be proportional to the scope, scale, and complexity of the restoration and be completed before work begins on the ground. Preparation and thoughtful application of this information will enable project managers to make informed decisions





throughout the project and improve the capacity to achieve desired outcomes. This level of project planning prior to projects hitting the ground will facilitate more consistent implementation of high quality stream restorations in the State.

#### ROLES OF PROJECT MANAGERS:

- Engage State agencies, local government units and other technical experts early in, and throughout, the project planning phase.
  - Secure financial, staff and/or contract resources to complete appropriate project planning.

#### ROLE OF STATE AGENCIES:

- Identify and promote best practices in consistent project planning detail.

#### MOVING FORWARD

The Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment continues to fund stream restorations throughout the state. These projects are of particular interest because of the evolving nature of stream restoration science, the range of goals addressed in the work, and the high stakes surrounding problems with implementation. The Legacy Fund Restoration Evaluation program will focus on stream projects in 2019 to provide the panel an opportunity to evaluate stream restoration practice in the state more holistically and, if necessary, make more specific recommendations on improving stream restoration and enhancement projects.



# RECOMMENDATIONS continued

## Improved Project Teams

CONTINUED RECOMMENDATION—FIRST ADDRESSED AND DETAILED IN 2015 REPORT

The panel recommends the use of more comprehensive project teams to improve ecological outcomes and better meet Fund goals. Bringing more sets of expertise to the table, will ideally: minimize instances of non-native plant use, identify plan components with high risk of limited success, help plan contingencies for potential challenges, and expand limited project goals. Project components sometimes require modification during instillation. It is important that project managers identify contingencies and engage appropriate expertise from a project team during planning and when modifications are needed.

### ROLES OF PROJECT MANAGERS:

- Use multidisciplinary project teams appropriate to project scale/complexity.
- Engage State agency, local government units and technical experts early in the planning phase.

### ROLES OF FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Include project team requirements in requests for proposals.
- Continue to make staff available for consultations.

### ROLE OF STATE AGENCIES:

- Consult with project managers regarding technical specifications.





## Improved Design Criteria for Lakeshore Projects

CONTINUED RECOMMENDATION—  
FIRST ADDRESSED AND DETAILED  
IN 2014 REPORT

The panel recommends that project managers establish consistent minimum design criteria for lakeshore projects. These criteria will allow screening for projects that provide a base level of environmental benefit aligning with Fund goals. Design criteria should accommodate local, regional and site conditions and specific project types. Adaptability to specific conditions and constraints is critical for effective guidance. This recommendation addresses the need for a consistent level of performance for publicly funded projects.

### ROLES OF PROJECT MANAGERS:

- With guidance from state agencies, establish minimum design criteria based on programmatic goals and local conditions that integrate with existing direction for shoreline restoration from total maximum daily load or local water plan.
- Promote the use of established criteria.
- Use improved criteria when recruiting, screening, and approving projects with landowners.



## Improved Documentation

### CONTINUED RECOMMENDATION—FIRST ADDRESSED AND DETAILED IN 2012 REPORT

The panel believes documentation is critical for understanding, tracking and achieving successful restorations. Documenting clear outcome based goals is necessary for establishing a common understanding and tracking progress. Project managers should clearly state both ecologically based goals and other goals that may exist for the project (e.g. citizen engagement) and note how they may adjust methods or outcomes. The panel recommends that the Agencies work to improve documentation through targeted trainings and grant guidance for project managers.

#### ROLES OF PROJECT MANAGERS:

- Consistently document restoration project data in a simple accessible format.
- Ensure that details of implemented actions are recorded and coupled with the initial plan.
- Designate one project partner to permanently store project data.

#### ROLE OF FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Develop checklist of key project data to be archived by project managers.

## Improved Restoration Training

CONTINUED RECOMMENDATION—  
FIRST ADDRESSED AND DETAILED  
IN 2012 REPORT

The panel believes continued development and implementation of training is essential to promote best practices and improve restorations. The agencies and panel will identify specific opportunities to develop and disseminate trainings. It is recommended that the agencies track and report progress in integrating evaluation recommendations and lessons learned into new and existing trainings.

### ROLES OF LEGACY FUND RESTORATION EVALUATION PROGRAM:

- Compare needs identified from evaluations with existing trainings.
- Identify gaps and opportunities for targeted trainings.
- Integrate program findings and recommendations into existing trainings.





## Evaluation Process Improvement

CONTINUED RECOMMENDATION—FIRST ADDRESSED AND DETAILED IN 2012 REPORT

The panel believes the Restoration Evaluation Program should implement strategic processes to achieve the stated goal of improving future restorations. The Panel has made recommendations including revisiting evaluated sites, producing case studies, tracking factors of success, and tracking evaluation panel recommendations.

ROLES OF LEGACY FUND RESTORATION EVALUATION PROGRAM:

- Revisit evaluated sites to inform the accuracy of initial assessments and refine assessment methods.
- Produce stories highlighting decision making, challenges, and successes in project implementation.
- Track environmental, social and operational factors that influence success of projects to guide future policy and practice.
- Track panel recommendations through project data and project manager surveys to gauge application of recommended actions.

# TRACKING PROGRESS: PROGRAM ACTIVITIES (2012-2018)



**89**  
EXPERTS  
ENGAGED



**146**  
PROJECTS  
EVALUATED



**1700**  
MORE THAN  
STAKEHOLDERS  
REACHED

## Restoration Evaluation Program Outcomes

Restorations take time to plan, fund, and implement and the outcomes of the work can take years or decades to fully see. Because of this, the panel recommends we evaluate projects after they are completed to best understand if projects will have the desired impacts. This means that most of the projects we have evaluated were planned before the Restoration Evaluation Program started. Over time, the Evaluation Program will be able to look at newer projects and better understand how restoration practices have shifted and how the Restoration Evaluation Program has impacted these changes. In 2018 we launched a project manager survey to identify how panel recommendations relate to project manager experiences and ask what project managers need from the State Agencies to do their best work. Updates will be shared with the panel and provided in future reports.



## Olmsted County Soil and Water Conservation District – Cascade Creek Stream Channel Restoration

### CLEAN WATER FUND

The rolling hills east of Rochester were historically covered in dense prairies, savannas and wooded valleys. More than a century of development and agricultural drainage improvements changed the character of the landscape and increased the rapid flow of water off the land. These intense flows of water led to flooding and significant streambank erosion along Cascade Creek as it enters the east side of Rochester.

In a targeted effort to stabilize the stream, improve water quality and control

flooding, Olmsted County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) worked with State, local and federal partners to design and build a meandering stream through a former golf course. This project created an entirely new one mile long more natural stream that allows the Creek to flow out of its banks and onto its floodplain during high water events. The new stream is stable, has held up to two big storms, and provides improved habitat for fish in the creek. Strong partnership between the SWCD, City of Rochester and other partners point toward positive outcomes for the stream restoration.

### RESTORATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Stream restoration techniques guided by a thorough assessment of the stream and watershed
- Multidisciplinary project teams utilized throughout planning and design phases
- Documented prioritized, targeted and measureable restoration goals
- Measures for achieving goals are continually assessed through ongoing monitoring





# OHF PROJECT STORY



## Three Rivers Park District—Crow-Hassan Prairie Restoration OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND



Prairie restorations at Crow-Hassan Park Reserve are not a new thing. Over the last 50 years, more than 840 acres of diverse native grasses and forbs have been planted. The newest restorations include 250 acres of prairie made possible by funding from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. These plantings were strategically coordinated with park wide restoration efforts to increase habitat quality, quantity, and connectivity. Through thorough site prep, planting of diverse local seed, and consistent maintenance, park staff have been very successful in creating high quality habitats along the Crow River.

As a part of the coordinated efforts to restore the prairies, park staff have also been reintroducing animals to the park. At Crow-Hassan Bullsnares, a species of special concern, were brought back to the park in 1991 and are thriving today with more than 100 snakes living in the prairies. More recently plains hog-nosed snakes were brought into the park. This species is of special concern in MN and has been designated in greatest conservation need. Parks staff hope that over time these secretive snakes will also thrive in the restored prairies.



## RESTORATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Detailed and organized planning of coordinated Park wide restoration activities
- Comprehensive and ongoing documentation of project goals, methodology and outcomes
- Long-term management is practical for meeting proposed outcomes



## MN DNR—Hayes Lake State Park Jack Pine Restoration

### PARKS AND TRAILS FUND

Since 1967 Hayes Lake State Park has provided recreation opportunities and access to hundreds of square miles of wildlands. Historically twenty five percent of the park was covered with high quality Jack Pine Woodland. This fire dependent system is imperiled in MN. Fires once moved through the landscape about every 42 years burning up dead trees, popping open pine cones, and regenerating Jack Pine. Fire suppression in the area resulted in buildup of dead wood and little to no Jack Pine regeneration. Additionally deer browse has made restoring the aging forest even more challenging.

Between 2005 and 2007 large numbers of deer were harvested in the area to control bovine tuberculosis. This created an opportunity to regenerate the aging Jack Pine stands with limited pressure of deer browse. Park resource managers mobilized accelerating logging and planting plans for two areas in the Park to take advantage of reduced deer populations. Through this adaptive management, resource staff were able to maximize the impact of MN taxpayer Legacy dollars. The restoration work done with Legacy Funds is on track to meet the stated goals and resource staff continue to thoughtfully manage the resources in the park in the larger landscape.

### RESTORATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Detailed and organized documentation of Park wide restoration activities
- Restoration activities timed to maximize outcomes and minimize costs
- Appropriate restoration training for staff and contractors
- Strategic planning including long-term management is practical for meeting proposed outcomes



# APPENDIX A: STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS



## **Parks and Trails Fund: M.S. 85.53, Subd. 5.**

The commissioner of natural resources may convene a technical evaluation panel comprised of five members, including one technical representative from the Board of Water and Soil Resources, one technical representative from the Department of Natural Resources, one technical expert from the University of Minnesota or the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and two other representatives with expertise related to the project being evaluated. The commissioner may add a technical representative from a unit of federal or local government. The members of the technical evaluation panel may not be associated with the restoration, may vary depending upon the projects being reviewed, and shall avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Each year, the commissioner may assign a coordinator to identify a sample of up to ten habitat restoration projects completed with parks and trails funding. The coordinator shall secure the restoration plans for the projects specified and direct the technical evaluation panel to evaluate the restorations relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the restoration plan and, when applicable, to

the Board of Water and Soil Resources' native vegetation establishment and enhancement guidelines. The coordinator shall summarize the findings of the panel and provide a report to the chairs of the respective house of representatives and senate policy and finance committees with jurisdiction over natural resources and spending from the parks and trails fund. The report shall determine if the restorations are meeting planned goals, any problems with the implementation of restorations, and, if necessary, recommendations on improving restorations. The report shall be focused on improving future restorations. Up to one-tenth of one percent of forecasted receipts from the parks and trails fund may be used for restoration evaluations under this section.

## Outdoor Heritage Fund: M.S. 97A.056, Subd. 10.

The commissioner of natural resources and the Board of Water and Soil Resources must convene a technical evaluation panel comprised of five members, including one technical representative from the Board of Water and Soil Resources, one technical representative from the Department of Natural Resources, one technical expert from the University of Minnesota or the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and two representatives with expertise in the project being evaluated. The board and the commissioner may add a technical representative from a unit of federal or local government. The members of the technical evaluation panel may not be associated with the restoration or enhancement, may vary depending upon the projects being reviewed, and shall avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Each year, the board and the commissioner may assign a coordinator to identify habitat restoration or enhancement projects completed with outdoor heritage funding. The coordinator shall secure the plans for the projects specified and direct the technical evaluation panel to evaluate the restorations and enhancements relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the

project plan and, when applicable, to the Board of Water and Soil Resources' native vegetation establishment and enhancement guidelines. The coordinator shall summarize the findings of the panel and provide a report to the chair of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and the chairs of the respective house of representatives and senate policy and finance committees with jurisdiction over natural resources and spending from the outdoor heritage fund. The report shall determine if the restorations and enhancements are

meeting planned goals, any problems with the implementation of restorations and enhancements, and, if necessary, recommendations on improving restorations and enhancements. The report shall be focused on improving future restorations and enhancements. At least one-tenth of one percent of forecasted receipts from the outdoor heritage fund must be used for restoration and enhancements evaluations under this section.



# APPENDIX A: STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

## Clean Water Fund: M.S. 114D.50, Subd. 6.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources may convene a technical evaluation panel comprised of five members, including one technical representative from the Board of Water and Soil Resources, one technical representative from the Department of Natural Resources, one technical expert from the University of Minnesota or the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and two representatives with expertise related to the project being evaluated. The board may add a technical representative from a unit of federal or local government. The members of the technical evaluation panel may not be associated with the restoration, may vary depending upon the projects being reviewed, and shall avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Each year, the board may assign a coordinator to identify a sample of habitat restoration projects completed with clean water funding. The coordinator shall secure the restoration plans for the projects specified and direct the technical evaluation panel to evaluate the restorations

relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the restoration plan and, when applicable, to the Board of Water and Soil Resources' native vegetation establishment and enhancement guidelines. The coordinator shall summarize the findings of the panel and provide a report to the chairs of the respective house of representatives and senate policy and finance committees with jurisdiction over natural resources and spending from the clean water fund. The report shall determine if the restorations are meeting planned goals, any problems with the implementation of restorations, and, if necessary, recommendations on improving restorations. The report shall be focused on improving future restorations. Up to one-tenth of one percent of forecasted receipts from the clean water fund may be used for restoration evaluations under this section.





# APPENDIX B: EVALUATION PROCESS

## 25-Year Investment in Restorations through Minnesota's Legacy Amendment

State law directs the DNR and BWSR to convene an expert panel to evaluate restorations completed with Clean Water Land and Legacy Funds. The evaluations directly engage project managers and are completed by third party experts to

identify gaps and capture lessons learned from restorations.

The Restoration Evaluation Program was developed with the ultimate goal of improving restorations throughout the State.

The diagram below outlines the inputs, activities, and outcomes of the program and our continued investment in improving restorations.

### Improving Restorations Throughout the State of Minnesota



# APPENDIX B: EVALUATION PROCESS CONTINUED

## Roles and Responsibilities

### EVALUATION PANEL

Statute directs the evaluation panel to:

- Evaluate restorations relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the restoration plan
- Provide findings on the evaluations, determining whether restorations are meeting planned goals, identify problems with implementation of restorations and, provide recommendations on improving restorations

Members of the panel are unpaid experts chosen to fulfill statutory requirements and provide needed expertise in a variety of ecosystems and restoration techniques.

### PROGRAM STAFF

The program staff are responsible for coordinating site assessments, program administration and managing the work of the panel. They are directed in statute to:

- Identify restoration projects completed with Parks and Trails, Outdoor Heritage, and Clean Water Funds
- Secure restoration plans for selected projects
- Summarize the findings of the panel
- Provide reports to the legislature

The staff also promote and document continuous improvement in restorations. Staff work with the panel and agencies to identify and promote actions and provide guidance for implementing improved restorations. DNR and BWSR have assigned staff to ensure consistency in program implementation. The staff are currently housed in DNR's Ecological and Water Resources Division.

### SITE ASSESSORS

The site assessors are responsible for conducting site assessments. Site assessors are selected based on knowledge of restoration practices and work closely with program staff in assessing project plans, conducting field evaluations, and participating in panel reviews. Site assessors include:

- State agency staff
- Local government staff
- Federal agency staff
- Private contractors

Services provided by assessors are negotiated through the use of contracts, State Interagency Agreements, or work assignments.

### PROJECT MANAGERS

Project managers are expected to actively participate in the evaluation process. Project managers provide the necessary project background and attend field evaluations when possible to:

- Identify project work sites
- Provide project context
- Answer assessor questions

## EXAMPLE PROJECT MANAGERS FOR THE THREE LEGACY FUNDS

Clean Water Fund	Outdoor Heritage Fund	Parks and Trails Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil and Water Conservation District manager or technician</li> <li>• Watershed District staff</li> <li>• Watershed Management Organization staff</li> <li>• County Water Resources or Environmental Services staff</li> <li>• City Water Resource staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State agency staff (DNR, BWSR)</li> <li>• Federal agency staff (USFWS)</li> <li>• County conservation and land management staff</li> <li>• Watershed District staff</li> <li>• Nongovernmental wildlife organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MN DNR Parks and Trails Division, resource management staff</li> <li>• Metro Regional Parks managers, including county park systems and Three Rivers Park District</li> <li>• Greater Minnesota park managers</li> </ul>

## Evaluation Methods

### PROJECT SELECTION

Program staff update the pool of eligible restoration projects on an annual basis. For each fund projects are considered to be eligible if they are complete and contain restoration or enhancement work. Projects evaluated represent a variety of habitat types and geographic distributions of restorations in the State.

Projects are selected in relative proportion to each Fund's appropriation to restoration evaluations. Many grants and appropriations fund restoration activities at multiple project sites. A smaller subsample of project sites is typically evaluated.

# APPENDIX B: EVALUATION PROCESS CONTINUED



## SITE ASSESSMENTS

DNR, BWSR and the panel developed a simple and consistent process to facilitate evaluations. To the extent possible the evaluation process engages project managers in conducting site visits and communicating lessons learned. Facilitating an inclusive evaluation process with project managers increases the transfer of knowledge between field practitioners and agencies, ultimately improving restorations.

A site evaluation form was developed to provide project information and address evaluation requirements directed by law. This form describes site assessors' observations of project effectiveness, estimated outcomes based on current conditions and application of current science.

Project sites are evaluated by third party assessors. Field visits include inspecting the project's structural components and plant communities. Restored plant communities may take several years or even decades to mature. Evaluations are based on observations of the present and projected conditions relative to the project goals. Assessments of project sites do not represent an overall evaluation of the larger program or Fund.

Restoration science is continually improving. Best practices are an area of ongoing discussion between practitioners, researchers, agencies and stakeholders. Site assessors and the panel evaluate projects based on methods commonly considered to be within the range of current science.



## LEGACY FUND ATTRIBUTES AND REQUIREMENTS

Each of the Legacy Funds has a distinct focus on restoration and specific requirements for projects.

	<b>Clean Water Fund</b>	<b>Outdoor Heritage Fund</b>	<b>Parks and Trails Fund</b>
Fund purpose	<i>Protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and protect groundwater from degradation</i>	<i>Restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife</i>	<i>Support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance</i>
Primary restoration goal	Restore water quality	Restore specific wildlife habitat types	Ecological restoration of specific habitat types
Guidance for project types and locations	Local water management plan, Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation plans, or Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies	Statewide or national wildlife habitat plans	State or Regional Park natural area management plans
Funding source for restoration projects	Competitive grants administered by BWSR	Appropriation to project manager; recommended by Outdoor Heritage Council, or Conservation Partners grants administered by DNR	MN DNR appropriation: resource management, or Met Council appropriation: County Regional Park System, Three Rivers Park District

Continued on page 30

# APPENDIX B: EVALUATION PROCESS CONTINUED

## LEGACY FUND ATTRIBUTES AND REQUIREMENTS Continued from page 29

	Clean Water Fund	Outdoor Heritage Fund	Parks and Trails Fund
Statutory Requirements	<p>MS 114D.50 Subd. 4. (a)</p> <p>Include measurable outcomes, as defined in section 3.303, subdivision 10, and a plan for measuring and evaluating the results. A project must be consistent with current science and incorporate state-of-the-art technology.</p>	<p>Different appropriation years are subject to different requirements but all include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prepare and retain an ecological restoration and management plan</i></li> <li>• <i>Use current conservation science to achieve the best restoration</i></li> <li>• <i>Establishment of diverse plant species</i></li> </ul> <p>Appropriations in 2009 and 2010 also included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Plant vegetation or sow seed only of ecotypes native to Minnesota</i></li> </ul>	<p>MS 85.53 Subd. 2</p> <p>Include measurable outcomes, as defined in section 3.303, subdivision 10, and a plan for measuring and evaluating the results. A project or program must be consistent with current science</p>

# APPENDIX C: PROJECT EVALUATIONS

APPENDIX C: PROJECT EVALUATIONS is available online at:  
[leg.state.mn.us/edocs/edocs?oclcnumber=823766285](http://leg.state.mn.us/edocs/edocs?oclcnumber=823766285)





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