

June 21, 2024

Mark Johnson, Executive Director  
Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 55  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Director Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR's) proposals to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) in response to the FY2026 Call for Funding Requests. A list of DNR proposals is enclosed with this letter.

As in prior years, our diverse portfolio of programs and projects includes those that restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife. Our proposals apply successful programmatic approaches to additional project phases by:

- continuing to implement seven proven conservation programs that restore and enhance rivers and streams, lakes, wetlands and shallow lakes, riparian areas, forests, and grasslands across the state;
- strategically acquiring additional Wildlife Management Area and Scientific and Natural Area lands; and
- protecting private lands through easements on high conservation and recreation value forest, riparian, and prairie habitats.

Programmatic proposals have the benefits of building ongoing partnerships, community support, and financial leverage. These multiyear investments are the only way we accomplish the highest impact outcomes like the return of Lake Sturgeon and the Dakota Skipper or restoring ecosystem function to the St. Louis River Estuary. Our package also includes four proposals the DNR administers on behalf of the LSOHC and conservation partners. OHF has created and strengthened partnerships between the DNR, other agencies, and NGOs, as we work together on large projects and coordinate smaller projects to provide landscape benefits.

Please note that we will not be submitting proposals this year for some ongoing programs that have sufficient funding through at least the next funding cycle. OHF funding has been critical to these projects in the past, and we will strategically assess opportunities to request funding for additional phases in the future.

We appreciate the LSOHC's consideration of DNR's proposals and look forward to working together throughout the Council's evaluation process. If you have any questions about this letter or our proposals, please contact Bob Meier (Assistant Commissioner for Legislative Affairs, 651-259-5024) or Kelly Wilder (DNR Liaison to LSOHC, 651-259-5182).

Sincerely,



Sarah Strommen  
Commissioner

Enclosure: DNR's FY 2026 OHF Project Proposal List

# **DNR's proposals in response to the LSOHC FY 2026 Call for Funding Request**

## **DNR programs/projects**

- Roving Crews
- Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Enhancement – Phase 8
- Statewide Forest Enhancement and Restoration – Phase 5
- Minnesota Forests for the Future – Phase 10
- Accelerated Shallow Lakes and Wetland Enhancements – Phase 17
- WMA and SNA Acquisition – Phase 17
- Trout Stream Conservation Easements – Phase 4

## **DNR administrative requests**

- Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program – Phase 17
- DNR Core Functions in Partner-led OHF Acquisitions
- Restoration Evaluation
- Contract Management