



CLEAN  
WATER  
LAND &  
LEGACY  
AMENDMENT

Strategic Communication Plan

For The

Outdoor Heritage Fund

Council adopted: August 23, 2011

## ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

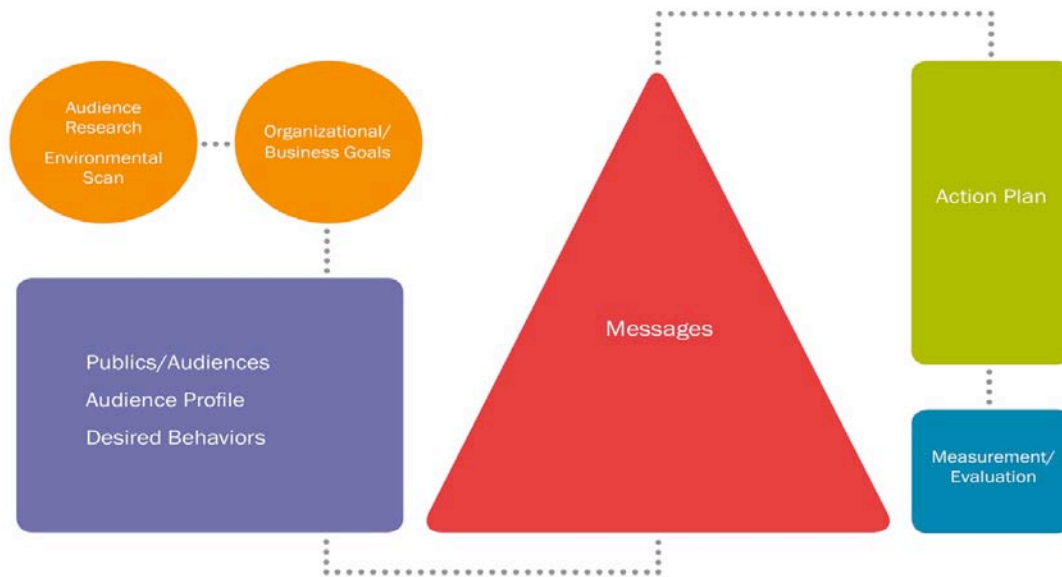
Introduction	3
Executive Summary	4
Current Situation and Plan Rationale	5
Public Information Plan Requirements	9
Research Insights	10
Key Audiences	14
Key Messages	17
Triggering Events	20
Tactical Elements	21
Next Steps	29
Appendix: Media Distribution List	30

## Introduction

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), in early 2011, expressed interest in the issue of a Request for Proposal to complete a public information plan for the Outdoor Heritage Fund to help it achieve its mission as directed by the Minnesota Constitution following passage of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment in the 2009 election.

Upon hearing of the RFP, a group of conservation-minded communication professionals approached the Council staff offering to complete the plan on a volunteer basis. The plan uses the following model:

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While traditional public relations plans typically center on strategies for more effectively communicating through the news media, the volunteer committee expanded the scope to consider multiple channels of communication to build and protect an organization's reputation. Consequently, this plan includes strategies for working with the media as well as other communications strategies able to help tell the story of accomplishments from Outdoor Heritage Fund.

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## **Executive Summary**

The Outdoor Heritage Fund's mission is to recommend allocation of a portion of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment funds to restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitat. The fund has already, in its short history, funded more than 65 programs and 83 small grant projects through Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program (CPL) across the state, totaling over \$231 million.

The Legacy Amendment creating the Outdoor Heritage Fund was approved by a margin of 57% to 43%, one of the largest margins in state history. This margin includes voters who left the measure blank on the ballot within that 43 percent opposition total. Despite clear voter support for the Amendment, there are some lawmakers and interest groups that believe the creation of the Outdoor Heritage Fund is poor public policy.

Outdoor Heritage Fund monies are a long-term investment in the future of the State of Minnesota. The goals that the Outdoor Heritage Fund is trying to achieve are unprecedented. Missouri, Colorado and Michigan are the only other states in the country that have made similar commitments to the outdoors and the environment, and their processes for allocating funds for restoration and rehabilitation projects are significantly different from Minnesota's. As with any new initiative, issues crop up along the way, and when those issues arise, they can create questions about the overall mission of the effort.

This public information plan is intended to educate audiences on the Outdoor Heritage Fund's mission and how the funds are used. It will inform Minnesotans of the benefits and costs of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, and the positive impact its actions are having on Minnesota's environmental landscape. It is NOT intended to push any specific ideology – it is only meant to communicate that the Outdoor Heritage Fund is achieving its constitutional objectives.

In maintaining with the Fund's low administrative expenses, this plan is designed to be executed using largely in-house legislative staff resources as well as to take advantage of the existing communications functions that exist within organizations that support the Fund's efforts.

## Current Situation and Plan Rationale

The Outdoor Heritage Fund, one of four funds created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, receives one-third of the money raised by the Legacy Amendment. The Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations process ensures fund uses that are consistent with the Constitution and state law and that take into consideration the outcomes of, including, but not limited to, the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan, that directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and that prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie.

Key elements of the Statute creating the Outdoor Heritage Fund (Section 97A.056) include the following:

- At least 99 percent of the money appropriated from the fund must be expended to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.
- Funding recommendations are made by a 12-member council made up of legislators and private citizens appointed by a number of legislative and executive bodies, with several restrictions with regard to affiliation.
- Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations are based on “Restoration, Protection and Enhancement” of wetlands, prairies and forests for fish, game and wildlife habitat.
- Evaluation of restoration programs by representatives from the DNR, Board of Soil and Water Resources, The University of Minnesota and institutions within the Minnesota State College and University system.

### *Recent History*

The Legacy Amendment is unique in the history of Minnesota. The culmination of a 10-year effort by legislators, conservation organizations and hunting, fishing and arts advocacy groups, the Constitutional Amendment passed in November, 2008.

- More people voted on this amendment than voted in the presidential election
- According to researchers with The Nature Conservancy, more people voted IN FAVOR of the amendment (57 percent) than any other constitutional amendment vote in the history of the State
- Every congressional district voted in favor of the amendment
- Vote for the amendment was fairly equally distributed across the State

The Fund's key objectives and initiatives for the near-term are as follows:

- Dollars to be allocated for both restoration, protection and enhancement
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of all funds today are being allocated for land protection through outright land acquisition or conservation easements, with the philosophy that land will continue

to increase in value. Easements allow the owner to retain the property, but the State monitors use.

- Money appropriated for both large programs and small projects. Large programs tend to be administered by conservation organizations and area conservation districts (e.g. Soil and Water Conservation, Watershed, etc.). Small projects tend to be administered by individuals, sporting clubs, and local units of government.
- Most large grants have leveraged funds attached to them, usually as a result of efforts by conservation organizations. The Council will want to track the amount of matching funds that are generated to show how dollars are extended

### *Outdoor Heritage Fund Challenges*

The Outdoor Heritage Fund is making progress toward its mission, but because this is a new, unprecedented effort, a number of challenges have arisen, including:

- Following the money and requirements on small grants. Because the work done by these small groups is not administered through a L-SOHC Accomplishment Plan, it can be difficult to track a small-grant project all the way from funding through completion to results. This problem is not as prevalent on large appropriations administered by conservation organizations that submit and follow formal accomplishment plans.
- Overcoming the perception that dollars appear to be substituting for other pre-Amendment funding sources. The Minnesota Constitution makes it abundantly clear that this is not an alternative way for the Legislature to fund the DNR, yet the DNR is critical to the success of acquiring, properly managing acquired lands and supervising restoration projects.
- Confusion over similar funds and initiatives. The Outdoor Heritage Fund sometimes is confused with other initiatives that are similar in scope but have different missions, including:
  - Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (lottery dollars)
  - Clean Water and Arts Fund
  - Parks and Trails Fund
  - DNR biennial funding
  - Federal funding
- Because the effort is relatively early in its execution, there are currently 5 reports of completed programs. The Fund staff expect this volume to increase significantly in the next couple of years.
- Balancing short- and long-term. Because much of the work funded with money from the Outdoor Heritage Fund has long-term benefit, there is a challenge showing

short-term progress on programs that will have payoff measured in years rather than months.

### *Factors Driving Need for a Communications Plan*

Before assuming that a comprehensive communications plan is necessary, it's always healthy to ask what a plan would do to help the Outdoor Heritage Fund. The following key issues have been identified through discussions with Council staff, secondary research and interviews with individuals at a variety of State departments and conservation organizations.

- *Lack of Understanding.* While voters overwhelmingly approved the Legacy Amendment, because the money is being administered by multiple entities, it can be confusing to distinguish the Outdoor Heritage Fund from other Legacy funding or other natural resources funding sources
- *Voter Right to Know.* Voters approved the Legacy Amendment and want to know what is happening with the money and get assurance that it is achieving its intended purpose.
- *Context within the Regular Budget.* It can be difficult for voters to separate long-term investments like the Legacy Funds from current needs (e.g. funding education, health care, infrastructure, etc.).
- *Who Benefits.* Voters need to understand how these Outdoor Heritage Fund supported programs benefit them directly – not just people who hunt and fish, but also citizens with an appreciation for what a healthy environment means for the State.
- *Proper Allocation and Administration.* Voters and their representatives need to be assured that there is extremely strong stewardship in place – including numerous checks and balances, avoiding conflicts of interest and making sure that the Outdoor Heritage Fund money is being applied in the most efficient, effective way possible.
- *Establish a Body of Accurate, Vetted Information.* The Fund needs to include communications as part of its efforts so that a body of accurate public knowledge is available to citizens and the media. This will help reduce misunderstanding about the Fund
- *Maintaining Conservation Options.* An effective communications program will help enable the State to continue to execute on the full range of options, including land acquisition and restoration – with better understanding by voters and their representatives of the value of all of those options.

- *Establishing Conservation and the Great Outdoors as a state resource.*  
Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, habitats, wetlands, parks, and trails need to be thought of as a state resource for its citizens and visitors. Even for those who don't enjoy the Great Outdoors in the state, natural resources contribute money towards tourism, travel, and attracting new citizens and employees to Minnesota. Those contributions are substantial and quantifiable but not often recognized.



## Public Information Plan Requirements

Resulting from the rationale described above, the volunteer team developing this plan identified the following key requirements:

- *Alignment* – Must align with Outdoor Heritage Fund mission and long-term objectives
- *Realistic* – Must be able to be implemented with limited internal non-partisan staff and partner resources
- *Non-Partisan* – Must recognize the various voices in the State, and cannot appear to push a single ideology
- *Flexible* – Must support a mix of planned and unplanned communications needs – items that can be put on a calendar as well as items that arise throughout a given year
- *Multi-Channel* - Must take advantage of all appropriate communications channels
- *Information-Centric* – Communications plans emphasize either Education, Information or Persuasion. This plan will focus most heavily on Information, with just enough Education so that audiences understand what the Outdoor Heritage Fund is and just enough Persuasion so audiences understand how the Outdoor Heritage Fund is being used in accordance with the original Legacy Amendment intent.

## Research Insights

### From Conservation Minnesota 2010 Annual Report on Spending

*Polling conducted in the fall of 2010 showed two-thirds of Minnesotans strongly support the Legacy Amendment and oppose raiding those funds to make up for budget shortfalls.*

*Even prior to the recession, spending on conservation had declined dramatically, and by 2006, conservation budgets represented only 1 percent of general fund spending, down from 2.17% in fiscal year 2000. Raids on non-general funds, such as the 2003 elimination of the Future Resources Fund and repeated raids on the Solid Waste Fund, cut environment programs even further. Arts funding saw similar declines.*

*With the implementation of the CWLLA in fiscal year 2010, clean water gained \$75 million in annual funding, habitat \$75 million, \$33 million for parks and trails, and the arts \$43 million. However, after a decade of neglect, even these significant gains in funding have only served to return conservation spending to the share of state spending it represented in 2001.*

*Across all four funds that divided 2010 Legacy dollars, no single type of activity was dominant. Water testing and monitoring received 12.1 percent. Restoration and water treatment got 18.8 percent. Easement acquisition came in at nearly 16 percent, and the arts and history received 19.75 percent. Administrative costs added up to just 3 percent of the funding total. While land acquisition sparked the most debate among politicians, it accounted for just 12.7 percent of expenditures.*

*Similarly, analysis of FY2010 spending shows that Legacy dollars were widely distributed geographically. Seventy-four percent of the funds were allocated to statewide grant programs. The Legacy Amendment is producing results in every region and every county of the state.*

### From the 2010 Minnesota Hunters and Anglers Tapestry Study

- 1.8 million hunting and fishing licenses and stamps sold in Minnesota in 2009
- Largest number of licenses sold to individuals 55 and older, with second-largest groups being 45-55 and 35-45, respectively
- The table below shows the top demographic buying groups for licenses in 2009

**Table 4. Ten largest Tapestry lifestyle segments of buyers of selected fishing and hunting licenses, 2009.**

TAPESTRY	Tapestry Description	Urban/Rural	TOTAL Licenses
17	Green Acres	Rural	188,392
06	Sophisticated Squires	Suburban	153,708
37	Prairie Living	Rural	123,654
12	Up and Coming Families	Suburban	114,537
31	Rural Resort Dwellers	Rural	108,578
25	Salt of the Earth	Rural	92,819
50	Heartland Communities	Rural	75,424
18	Cozy and Comfortable	Suburban	72,666
04	Boomburbs	Suburban	72,569
33	Midlife Junction	Suburban	71,693
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1,074,040</b>

Portrayal in the Media

Portrayal of the Outdoor Heritage Fund and its efforts in the media has been somewhat mixed, due in part to the fact that it does not yet speak with a single outbound voice. Following is a brief summary of recent media coverage:

**Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Outdoor Heritage Fund Sample Media Coverage**

Date	Publication	Headline/Link	Summary
6/7/2010	ABC Minnesota	<a href="#">Acres On Dead Lake Saved From Development</a>	Article that positively points to the Outdoor Heritage Fund saving land
11/16/2010	CBS Minnesota	<a href="#">Program Awards \$3.6M To 35 Projects</a>	Web article stating the allocation of funds for 2010
2/2/2011	Pioneer Press Blog	<a href="#">Star Tribune columnist Ron Schara named to Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Outdoor Heritage Fund</a>	Blog post favoring Ron Schara's appointment, but shading some negativity around Rick Hansen

2/15/2011	Mn.Gov	<a href="#">Appoints to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Outdoor Heritage Fund</a>	News release stating Governor Dayton's appointees to the committee
2/26/2011	Star Tribune	<a href="#">of Interest Questions Arise on Legacy Outdoor Heritage Fund</a>	Article about Scott Rall's involvement in both the Legacy Outdoor Heritage Fund and Pheasants Forever. NOTE: Several other articles and blog posts supporting Rall also appeared.
3/16/2011	Star Tribune	<a href="#">Sams Getting Conflict of Interest Presentation</a>	Blog post reporting on conflict of interest presentation being given to the Outdoor Heritage Fund
4/11/2011	Star Tribune	<a href="#">is, House, Senate natural resources bills warrant veto, Trout Unlimited says</a>	"Sets an alarming precedent for reallocation of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Outdoor Heritage Fund recommendations in the future" confuses Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund with the Outdoor Heritage Fund
5/22/2011	Star Tribune	<a href="#">on acquiring public lands?</a>	Article tells about recent bill prohibiting LSOHC from recommending new land acquisitions outside the TC metro area
5/14/2011	CBS Minnesota	<a href="#">, Senate Meeting For Rare Saturday Sessions</a>	Article sheds negativity on house, senate and "so-called Legacy Amendment"
5/18/2011	Pioneer Press	<a href="#">bill would allow voters to repeal Legacy Amendment</a>	Blog post favoring Ron Schara's appointment, but shading some negativity around Rick Hansen
5/20/2011	Pioneer Press	<a href="#">Cilek: Sale-tax rates don't belong in the Minnesota Constitution</a>	News release stating Governor Dayton's appointees to the committee
5/24/2011	Star Tribune	<a href="#">funds are left hanging at Legislature</a>	Article points to the inefficiency of the amendment, especially at a time when members are unwilling to spend money in the current economy
5/28/2011	Capital Chatter	<a href="#">Target Legacy Amendment</a>	Blog post on groups opposed to amendment

### Additional Research Opportunities

In addition to the information described above, the communications team identified a number of areas where more data would help refine messages and better-inform the plan. Our recommendation would be for the Outdoor Heritage Fund to conduct telephone or email polling to answer the following questions:

- Outdoor Heritage Fund awareness
- What motivates interest in use of Legacy funds?
- Any changes in attitudes with the current economy/recent legislative session
- What people want to know about the uses and outcomes of the Outdoor Heritage Fund
- Polling in neighboring states to gauge the public opinion of Minnesota's outdoors as a destination, possible relocation

## Key Audiences

One of the big challenges associated with developing a communications plan for the Outdoor Heritage Fund with limited staff resources and limited budget is the diversity of audiences it could reach, and the behaviors of those audiences.

From a broad perspective, every voting citizen in Minnesota is a potential audience, but that's simply not practical. The communications planning team identified the following key audience types:

Types:

- Primary – people who need to take direct action for the Outdoor Heritage Fund to produce desired outcomes
- Intervening – people who influence the primary audiences
- Complementary – those inclined to support the Outdoor Heritage Fund's uses, initiatives and outcomes
- Detractors – those inclined to be opposed to the Outdoor Heritage Fund's uses and outcomes

Audience	Behavior
Public Officials	Advocate for Outdoor Heritage Fund's uses and outcomes, approve funding recommendations and ensure accurately informed points of view
Sportsmen	Let legislators know that you support the Outdoor Heritage Fund's efforts
Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts	Let legislators know that you support the uses and outcomes of the Outdoor Heritage Fund
Outdoors Media	Report accurately on Outdoor Heritage Fund uses and outcomes
Legislative Media	Report accurately on Outdoor Heritage Fund uses and outcomes
Local Media	Report accurately on Outdoor Heritage Fund actions and progress, report on local projects
Conservation Groups	Let legislators know that your members support the Outdoor Heritage Fund's uses and outcomes, promote the projects you are helping to administer
Farmers	Let legislators know that you support the Council's uses and outcomes
Rural Government/Local Government	Become better informed, use of and demand for Outdoor Heritage Fund's outcomes
Tourism/Resort Groups	Let legislators know that your members support the Outdoor Heritage Fund's uses and outcomes, promote the projects you are helping to administer.

Program Recipients	Promote the projects you are helping to administer
Council Members	Accurately portray uses and outcomes of the Outdoor Heritage Fund
DNR	Promote the projects you are helping to administer, help educate citizens on the uses and outcomes of the Outdoor Heritage Fund
Legislators – Metro	Understand mission of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, listen to constituents, understand the issues
Legislators – Rural	Understand mission of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, listen to constituents, understand the issues
Governor/Staff	Understand mission of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, listen to constituents, understand the issues
“No-Big-Government” Groups	Understand the issues, become better informed on Outdoor Heritage Fund’s uses and benefits – including ability to remove the burden from State budgets
Arts and Clean Water Groups	Work with legislature and public to demonstrate good stewardship of all Legacy funds

*Ardent Supporters*

Make no mistake – this is a large list of audiences. From a voter standpoint, the Outdoor Heritage Fund supporters share the following attributes:

- Purchase hunting or fishing licenses, boat registrations, park stickers or pay other outdoor usage fees
- Belong to one or more conservation, tourism, or arts organizations
- Voted in the last election and intend to vote in the next election
- Are “Conservation Curious” or “Conservation Interested”

The heads of communications for the state’s leading conservation and environmental organizations represent the best opportunity for communicating the Outdoor Heritage Fund message efficiently and effectively. They have like-minded goals and a vested interest in seeing the Outdoor Heritage Fund succeed. These organizations include, but are not limited to:

- The Nature Conservancy
- Conservation Minnesota
- Ducks Unlimited

- Pheasants Forever
- Ruffed Grouse Society
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Minnesota Land Trust
- Sierra Club
- The Trust for Public Land
- Minnesota Waterfowl Association
- Minnesota Deer Hunters Association
- Minnesota DNR (communications staff)
- Trout Unlimited
- Delta Waterfowl
- Minnesota Arboretum
- Anglers for Habitat
- Minnesota Waters/Lake Association Owners
- Sportsmen for Change
- Minnesota Resort and Campground Association
- Isaac Walton League
- The Conservation Fund

*Other Opinion Leaders*

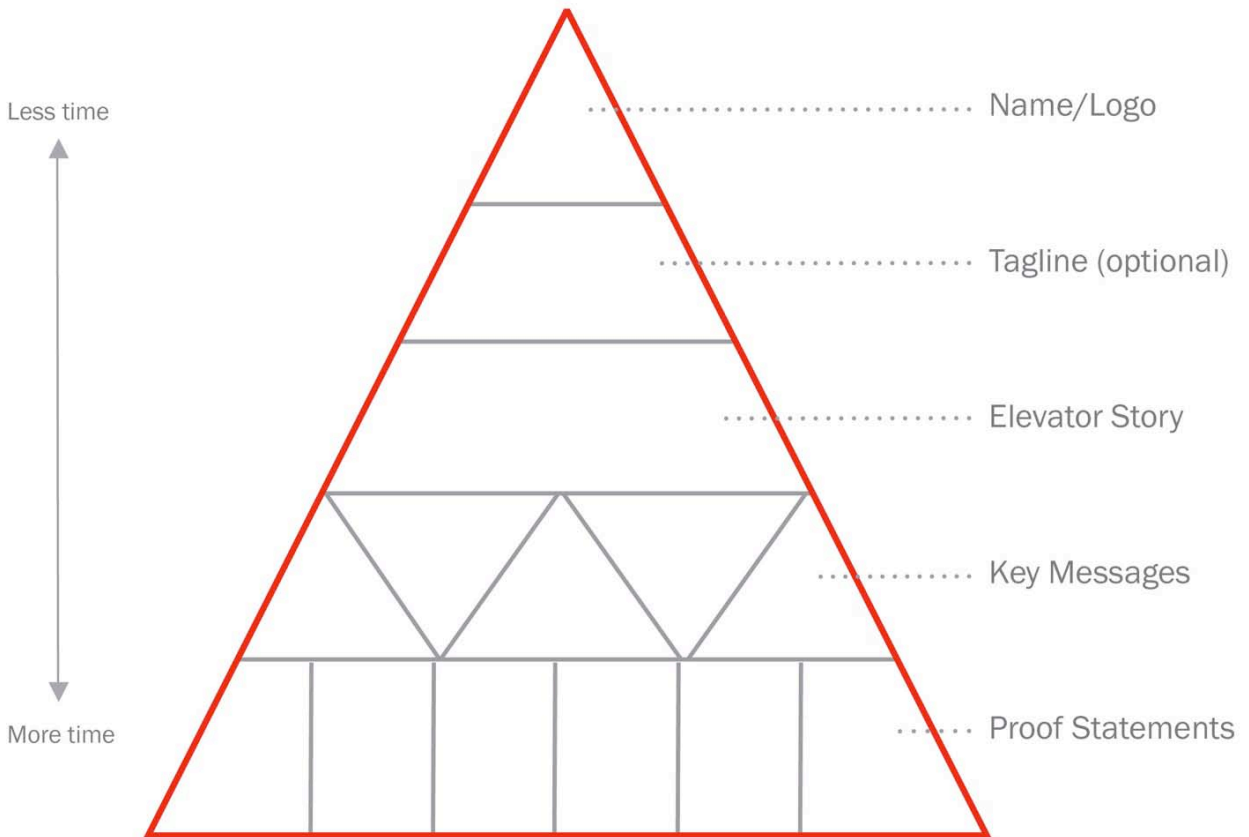
Just as there are supporters, there are individuals who may not fully support the Legacy Amendment. This public information effort needs to recognize that these individuals exist, and make sure to factually inform them.

- Agri-business groups (that don't want land taken out of production)
- Rural/Local government (who perceive revenue loss due to property taken off the tax rolls)
- Farm Groups
- Small-government proponents
- Low-tax proponents
- Property rights groups
- Real estate developers
- Legislators who feel the amendment usurps their role in decision-making



## Key Messages

The public information planning team recommends organizing messages into a pyramid structure similar to the following:



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Applying this structure, the following pages summarize a recommended Message Pyramid for the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

**Name and Logo:**

**The Outdoor Heritage Fund of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment**



While technically this logo represents all parts of the Legacy Amendment, the communications planning team does NOT think it is in the Outdoor Heritage Fund's interest to develop an additional logo specifically for the fund. Instead, this logo should be used on all information materials and signage as a way to demonstrate that the Legacy Amendment dollars are going to good use.

**Central Theme/Idea:**

*“Responsible Use of Taxpayer Dollars  
For Minnesota’s Outdoor Legacy”*

**Elevator Story:**

*In 2008, Minnesota’s voters overwhelmingly approved the Legacy Amendment, which dedicated a small portion of our sales tax to go toward Clean Water, Habitat Restoration, Arts and Parks and Trails.*

*A non-partisan board evaluates requests for Habitat Restoration from private citizens, government agencies, conservation groups, and legislative interests and recommends where the funds should be spent before passing those recommendations on to the Legislature.*

*The Fund is fulfilling the wishes of Minnesota voters through a well-planned, open process with numerous checks and balances to assure that the funds are spent effectively.*

*Through this process, Minnesotans have made a long-term investment to restore and protect the wildlife habitat that has been critical to the State leaving a legacy for the next generation.*

## Key Messages:

- *Fulfilling the Wishes of the Voters.* Minnesotans overwhelmingly approved the Legacy Amendment, and the legislature is delivering on the voters' wishes
- *Uniquely Minnesotan.* No other state in the country has as strong a commitment to protecting its outdoor heritage. We're creating a model that raises us above other states.
- *Money Well-Spent, Responsibly Spent.*
  - 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.
  - Private citizens are part of the public process to ensure Outdoor Heritage Fund money is going to the right place.
  - These dollars go into programs, not into pockets. The state's leading conservation organizations leverage and make sure the dollars have real, direct public impact.
- *A Necessary Investment.* Conservation needs a long-term view. The funds generated by the Legacy Amendment should be used to restore the vibrant Minnesota environmental landscape so a pristine and productive outdoors is passed on to future generations.

## Triggering Events

Public Information programs always should start by taking an inventory of triggering events – those events that happen throughout the year that are occasions to communicate messages about the organization. For the Outdoor Heritage Fund, these events fall into Planned and Unplanned categories:

### *Planned:*

- Issue of Call for Request – June
- Outdoor Heritage Fund Funding Recommendations – November
- Bill Introduction – February / March
- Bill Progression – notification of hearings, update on hearing conversation information changes, motions, discussion -- February through May
- Final Bill Passage / Appropriations approved – May/June
- Environmental “holidays”
  - Earth Day (April 22)
  - Arbor Day (April 29)
  - Fishing Opener (May)
  - Hunting Openers (Spring, Fall)
  - National Hunting and Fishing Day (September 24, 2011)
- Legislative Meeting Agenda Notices – various throughout year
- Completion of land purchase/restoration– various throughout the year
- Legacy Weekends – Monthly planned weekends in communities throughout Minnesota as organized by Explore Minnesota, Conservation Minnesota, and Minnesota Citizens for the Arts

### *Unplanned:*

The following are events that may occur throughout the year that do not fit into any particular time frame. The communications planning team recommends a factual response where possible.

- Negative blog post
- Negative comment from detractor in the media
- Completed restoration or enhancement project
- Announcement by “sister” organization (Clean Water, Arts, Parks and Trails)

## Tactical Elements

### Current Activities

Tool	Description	Timeline / Frequency
Legislative Listserve	<p>Updates of legislative activity of appropriation bill, Outdoor Heritage Fund related activities, meetings and fact tours, meeting notices/agendas and other relevant information.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION – once-a-month Council member profile to demonstrate citizen-legislative makeup.</p>	<p>Weekly from start of the year through May. Every 4-8 weeks after the session, or as necessary.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION – produce weekly during the Session, monthly during non-session.</p>
Annual Report	<p>Provide information about relevant statistics as well as programs funded to date.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Incorporate key messages from plan and continue to include descriptions of Outdoor Heritage Fund mission and operations.</p>	<p>February / March annually</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION – continue but publish to Web site</p>
Status Report Summaries	<p>Provide summary on the status of appropriations, spending and accomplishments for that funding year. Reports are posted to the Council web site twice per year and also noticed in an update with link provided</p>	<p>February and August bi-annually</p>
Press Releases	<p>Releases on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notification of Call for Request</li> <li>• Recommendation package to the Legislature</li> <li>• Final Bill passage</li> </ul> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Periodic releases through the year on “profile projects” including a mix of land acquisitions, large grants and small grants. Rely on grant recipients for content. In addition to wire distribution, direct-send press releases to broader outreach list (see appendix). If not already doing so, releases also should go out through the listserv, and should include links back to legislative staff and other relevant web sites.</p> <p>NEED TO HAVE RELEASED OVER THE WIRE...</p>	<p>Call for Request June / July            Recommendation Dec / Jan            Final Bill May /June</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Require grant recipients to submit “project update” worksheet as basis for news release.            Ask outdoors organizations to republish updates to their members.</p>

Website	<p>Content currently on the Web site includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting notices and materials</li> <li>• Planning effort updates</li> <li>• Member information</li> <li>• Program Funding accomplishments</li> <li>• Interactive map with project locations</li> <li>• Media submissions and press releases from program managers</li> <li>• Audio recordings of meetings</li> </ul> <p>RECOMMENDATION: While challenging to do too much with the site given legislative standards, re-organize the information so that Outdoor Heritage Fund accomplishments are more prominently featured. Interactive map is great, but keep tabs on functionality to make sure it is working properly.</p>	Continuous, as necessary
Legacy Funds Website	<p>Information about the Outdoor Heritage Fund also is available on the Legacy Funds Website, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed program funding accomplishments</li> <li>• Searchable information by location, region, county and type of project</li> </ul> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Incorporate updated key messaging into the Outdoor Heritage Fund portion of the site; maintain website more frequently; make projects searchable by communities rather than counties</p>	Ongoing
Legislative Testimony	<p>Testimony before the legislature on recommendations detail and historical information</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Incorporate key messaging into testimony so it becomes part of public record. Use as an opportunity to educate less informed legislators on Outdoor Heritage Fund success and progress.</p>	February - May
Presentations to groups	<p>Infrequent presentations to citizen groups on the functions of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Review presentation to incorporate key messaging, insert strong calls to action for participants</p>	On request

### Additional Recommendations

In addition to leveraging the existing communications tactics with modifications, the communications planning team also recommends these additional incremental tactics to leverage the “voice” of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Tool	Description	Timeline / Frequency
Spokesperson Training	All formal spokespeople for the Outdoor Heritage Fund should be trained on the organization’s salient facts and key messages for accurate portrayal in the media.	As new spokespeople become available
Key Message Guide	One-page message guide that summarizes the LSOHC story, key messages and relevant proof statements/reasons to believe. Important as a reference for spokespeople, staff and partner organizations	Immediately
Issues Monitoring and Response	<p>Legislative staff should use Google Alerts and other free monitoring tools to identify any media articles and blog posts that are inaccurate or slanted in their portrayal.</p> <p>Respond with factual corrections. NOTE: Not all articles require a response – only those with inaccurate information.</p> <p>If for example a reporter writes that “The Outdoor Heritage Fund is responsible for spending lottery dollars,” staff would respond with a correction.</p> <p>However, staff should NOT respond to situations where the facts are correct but the story is negative. An article or editorial saying “The Outdoor Heritage Fund is a poor use of conservation dollars” would not warrant a response.</p>	Ongoing
Simple Social Media Extensions	We do not recommend a robust social media program at this time, but do recommend that the legislative staff establish a Twitter Feed (e.g. @LessardSams) and Facebook page for re-distribution of Outdoor Heritage Fund news and information so that stakeholders can “follow” the Outdoor Heritage Fund’s uses and outcomes. This site would not be used to post opinions – only to share facts already being developed. In addition, these sites should “follow” partner sites such as @MNOOutdoors, @mndnr, @mnstateparks, @ODN_editor, etc	Establish in summer, 2011 – use consistently.
Partner Communication	See below – recommendation from conservation organizations on a “toolkit” they would like to help promote their funded projects.	Kit completed as soon as possible. Orientation meeting to occur within one month after funds are

Toolkit	Available on web site and shared during a “project orientation kickoff” webcast or in-person meeting.	granted/approved.
LSOHC Project Signage	The staff should accelerate completion of signage to be used on all funded projects	As soon as possible – distribute to those who received funding.
Project-of-the-Month Profile	Have recipients highlight at least one large project and one small grants project every month as part of regular listserv.	Ongoing
Guest Columns in Conservation Publications/Web Sites	Several state conservation organizations, including Minnesota Waterfowl, Pheasants Forever, and the DNR have regular online and print publications that could include articles about the progress and success of the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Approach those organizations about article ideas relevant to their members and readers.	Goal of one article per quarter
Repurpose Organization Press Releases	When an organization leading a project issues a press release announcing its project completion, legislative staff should re-send that release to its own listserv.	Ongoing



## *Partner Communication Toolkit*

With the limited staff and budget resources available to the Outdoor Heritage Fund, it is critical to use the resources and voice of organizations that help to administer the Outdoor Heritage Fund funds. Each grant recipient should be equipped with a “Partner Communication Toolkit” to help them more effectively explain their project(s). The toolkit contents below are based on feedback from several conservation organization communications representatives.

- High resolution Legacy Funds logo for use in conjunction with magazine, press release, newsletter, website stories.
- Signage and clear guidance for use of signage on projects (acquisition, easements, restoration). Signage can consist primarily of the logo, but could also include verbiage saying *“Restoration of This Habitat Made Possible Through Your Tax Dollars and the Outdoor Heritage Fund”* and include the web site address.
- Key Message Guide and boilerplate paragraph about Outdoor Heritage Fund, Legacy Amendment, and historical accomplishments (habitat acres in total with major subcategories - permanent acres open to the public, wetland restorations, upland acres, buffers, etc.)
  - Legislative staff will have to define the categories and provide guidance to organizations.
  - It’s important to note that organizations who receive grant dollars should be instructed to refer to themselves as program administrators as opposed to grant recipients. This is a more accurate designation, as the dollars do not go to the organization – they go toward a program with sub-project. This supports the “public benefits, not pockets” key message and corrects a significant misperception/criticism.
- Easier-to-reference LSOHC website featuring historical habitat accomplishments with an interactive Minnesota hover map that illustrates breadth of accomplishments (searchable by county) with a short description of each project - Linkable for organization use. In the future, add a project status to each, classifying them as approved, started or completed.
- Simple tri-fold or one-sheet summary that can be used in organization event booths and exhibits (e.g. Game Fair, State Fair DNR Pavilion, Boat and Travel shows, etc.). Available both in print and as a .pdf on the web site.
- Sign-ups to automatically receive OHC press releases about new projects for re-publishing
- RSS feed links for organizations to incorporate into websites or newsletters
- 300 dpi images of any available on-going projects for use by organization’s website or newsletters

### **All project administrators should be encouraged to perform the following:**

- Submission of a “project completion worksheet” that summarizes the work performed and expected outcomes of the project. This will be used as a basis for development of profile articles by the legislative, non-partisan staff.

- Press Release announcing each project's completion & fish, wildlife & habitat benefits, using Outdoor Heritage Fund key messages/language and distributed by both the project coordinator and the Outdoor Heritage Fund
- Shooting of “before and after” photos for projects with strong visual element to them
- Posting of appropriate signage at project site during execution and after completion
- Inclusion of Outdoor Heritage Fund collateral materials in shows and exhibit booths

### *Future Considerations*

The recommendations listed above are base-level and most can be implemented with incremental effort and budget. In addition, upon completion of the majority of the actions recommended above, the communications planning team also offered the following next-level tactics for consideration down the road.

- Regionalized/localized press releases and feature articles for pitching to targeted media outlets
- County or Regional Highlight sheets that provide information on what has been done in that region/county, map specific info on additions to WMA, stream restoration etc. This would allow voters to more readily see what has been done in their “back yard”
- Outdoor Heritage Fund booth for use at Game Fair, State Fair DNR pavilion, Sport Show, etc.
- Single-question survey on Outdoor Heritage Fund web site asking a “question of the month” to gain continuous feedback from voters.
- Citizen poll/survey prior to 2014 review by legislature – conducted either via phone, email or in-person at State Fair
- Include Outdoor Heritage Fund-funded projects on the DNR WMA/WPA web site and in for-profit hunting and fishing maps.
- More robust social networking – Twitter handle to be used for information dissemination, more robust Facebook site, LinkedIn site.

In addition to these considerations, the communications team also identified two “bigger ideas” that are worth exploring long-term.

**IDEA: “State of the Outdoors” Event**

What is it?

- An event to communicate the Outdoor Heritage Fund’s role in the positive advancement of the outdoors

Why do it?

- Given the broad range of stakeholders the Outdoor Heritage Fund has, this will inform and update everyone from the environmental crowd to the hardcore outdoorsmen of the Outdoor Heritage Fund’s progress and development

How it works?

- At the Minnesota State Fair (DNR building), provide information on clean water, water fowl populations, park and reserve conceptions, impact on the state economy, etc. in a forum that represents information from government offices, outdoor organizations, local and state politicians and environmental institutions
- Suggested agenda
  - Welcome from Governor Dayton
  - Highlight of the State of the Outdoors report from Bill Becker, executive director
  - Speech from key Outdoor Heritage Fund funding recipients
  - Panel discussion with Q&A
    - Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Minnesota Land Trust, etc.
- Media extensions
  - Offer to KFAN’s Fan Outdoors to cover the event live
  - Invite key media to the event and provide content such as highlights of the report, interview opportunities, key facts and visuals (photos, b-roll, etc.)
  - Create a hashtag (#MNStateOutdoors11) and live tweet from the event, mention various other high-profile Twitter accounts and members including @MNOOutdoors, @mndnr, @mnstateparks, @ODN\_editor, etc.

**IDEA: Outdoor Heritage Fund Caravan Tour**

What is it?

- A statewide tour of communities in which the Outdoor Heritage Fund recipients will meet with necessary publics, including media and key

stakeholders, to mobilize local organizations and educate outstate citizens on the effect of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Why do it?

- To regionalize and publicize the efforts of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

How it works?

- Key representatives from the Outdoor Heritage Fund portfolio of recipients would travel throughout the state for a two-week span, during which it will visit select cities, hold desk-side media briefings with local reporters, and meet with representatives from key local chapters of conservation organizations. The Outdoor Heritage Fund could also hold small public events at each site to detail the Outdoor Heritage Fund's impact (or planned impact) on that region.
- The Outdoor Heritage Fund recipients could cooperate with local chapters of conservation organizations to help plan and facilitate the visit to that community.
- A kick-off or welcome home event or press conference should also be planned to take place at the Capitol.

## Next Steps

<u>Action</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
<i>First-level review by Outdoor Heritage Fund Staff</i>	<i>June 14 (COMPLETE)</i>
<i>Refine Recommendations</i>	<i>July 15 (COMPLETE)</i>
<i>Review by Communications Planning Team</i>	<i>July 30 (COMPLETE)</i>
<i>Presentation to Outdoor Heritage Fund</i>	<i>August Meeting</i>

## **Appendix: Media Distribution List (in addition to Wire Distribution)**

### **Media Contact Name**

Dennis Anderson  
Doug Smith  
Rob Drieslein  
Joe Albert  
Tim Spielman  
Billy Hildebrand  
Tim Lesmeister  
Sam Cook  
John Cross  
TBD  
Jerry Carlson  
Jason Lewis  
Joe Soucheray  
Bill Sherck  
John Weiss  
Tom Cherveney  
Brian S. Peterson  
Jeff Brown  
Bob Lamb  
Brad Dokken  
Doug Leier  
Don Shelby

### **Outlet**

Star Tribune  
Star Tribune  
Outdoor News & KTLK  
Outdoor News  
Outdoor News  
KFAN  
KTLK  
Duluth News Tribune  
Mankato Free Press  
St. Paul Pioneer Press  
St. Cloud Times  
KTLK  
KSTP-AM1500  
Due North Outdoors & KFAN  
Rochester Post Bulletin  
West Central Tribune  
Brainerd Dispatch  
Winona Daily News  
LaCrosse Tribune (Wisconsin)  
Grand Forks Herald (North Dakota)  
 Fargo Forum (North Dakota)  
MINNPOST  
Minnesota Public Radio

### **Other Influencers**

State Elected Officials  
County Commissioners  
Farm Bureau  
Communications contacts at all conservation organizations