

**Main Request for Funding Form**

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Fiscal Year 2012**

**Program or Project Title:** Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program

Funds Requested (\$000s)	Funding Request	OHF Out-Year Projections of Needs		
	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Outdoor Heritage Fund	\$246,650	0	0	0

**Managers' Names:** Steve Wymore, Superintendent and Reed McFarlane, Buildings and Grounds Director  
**Organization:** School Forest Committee for Lake of the Woods School District  
**Street Address:** 236 Ave SW  
**City:** Baudette **State:** MN **Zip:** 56623  
**Telephone:** 218-634-2510 ext 1506  
**E-Mail:** swymore@blw.k12.mn.us  
**Organization Web Site:** <http://lakeofthewoodsschool.org/>

**County Location:** 077

**Ecological Planning Regions:**

- Northern Forest       Forest/Prairie Transition       Southeast Forest  
 Prairie       Metro/Urban

**Activity Type:**

- Protect       Restore       Enhance

**Priority Resources addressed by activity:**

- Wetlands       Forests       Prairie       Habitat

## Project Abstract

This program will restore and enhance 265 acres of forests and wetlands set aside through the MN DNR School Forest Program within the Lake of the Woods School District.

---

## Project Narrative

### Design and scope of work

The Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program is designed to restore and enhance 265 acres of critical habitat which is currently preserved through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources School Forest Program. The program will focus on restoring and enhancing three management units including the Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area, the Baudette School Forest, and the Williams School Forest. These tracts of land are under the management of the Lake of the Woods School Forest Committee.

School Forest lands are set-aside to provide environmental education to students of the Districts who manage them. They are used as outdoor classrooms and provide experiential learning opportunities for K-12 grade students and also for use by the general public. Due to the nature of their designation, these lands are inherently prone to severe degradation. Because of their high traffic usage, it is necessary to guide and direct access to help protect the valuable habitat, flora and fauna that School Forests preserve.

The Lake of the Woods School Forest Committee members have developed a comprehensive restoration and management plan under the direction of the Lake of the Woods Soil and Water Conservation District personnel, MN DNR Forestry and Wildlife personnel, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff. Actions for restoration and enhancement in these three School Forests will be implemented under the technical guidance of these supporting agencies.

### Restoration

The Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area (ALELA) is a mixture of forests and meadowlands, providing openland and forest habitats. This 120-acre tract is surrounded by residential and agricultural land, thus serving as a refuge for eagles, moose, gray wolves and sharp-tailed grouse, which have all been spotted on site. There is a need for restoration and enhancements throughout the ALELA in order to protect and benefit these species.

Restoration work will take place on an 8-acre tract on the northern portion of ALELA. This area was once used as a borrow (gravel) pit and was never restored with topsoil or

## Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program

vegetation after abandonment. The area is severely degraded and lacks sufficient plant life despite 15 years of inactivity. The habitat restored will include a seasonally flooded wetland adjacent to a sedge meadow, which will provide suitable habitat for the elusive yellow rail and Wilson's phalarope. The restored wetland will also benefit water quality in the Rainy River Basin by retaining spring runoff for an extended period of time.

Restoration of this area will entail contouring to create a more natural landscape, replacing topsoil, and seeding with native vegetation. To date, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff has conducted a topographic survey of the site and completed restoration plans and specifications for restoration. Funding has been obtained by the School Forest Committee through a USFWS cost share grant to initiate work on the restoration. By the end of this year (2010), a portion of the restoration area will be contoured and replenished with a minimum of 4" topsoil to provide a sufficient medium for vegetation reestablishment. Additional funds are necessary to contract for remaining topsoil and native seed needed to complete this restoration work.

Follow-up actions will include monitoring for invasive weeds during the critical first years of establishment, and treating as necessary. Following the final grading and seeding work, the local Soil and Water Conservation District staff will install vegetative monitoring plots. The site will be monitored for immediate threats such as invasive species like Canada thistle, reed canary grass and purple loosestrife. Weed management will be conducted by SWCD staff in the first and second years of the project to help ensure successful establishment of native vegetation.

The Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program will also include the reforestation of rare and declining habitats at the Baudette and Williams School Forests. These two separate tracts are part of the Glacial Lake Agassiz Beach Ridge complex. The two forests, close to 150 acres in size, are part of a distinctive landscape type which serves as a refuge for the golden-winged warbler and resident gray wolves. The forest is a mixture of stands of red pine and early-successional jack pine. Mature white pine and red pine, classified as rare and declining habitat, were once the predominant species of this area. This habitat has been degraded through a combination of events such as settlement, logging and wildfires. The long-term forest management recommendations, developed through the MN DNR Forestry, are to return these areas to the original white and red pine forests. Funding from this grant will help to purchase and replant conifer seedlings, install deer exclosures, and remove a stand of invasive caragana.

### **Enhancements**

To reduce human impact in all three School Forests, parking areas, trail networks, footbridges, wildlife viewing blinds and signage will be installed. These enhancements will direct and control traffic in order to minimize impacts on the forests and wetland areas. The enhancements will help protect these areas from the encroachment of invasive species by limiting the spread of weed seeds. They will also protect the

## Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program

wetland areas from disturbance and help to protect the more delicate sandy soils of the Baudette and Williams School Forest from erosion.

Enhancement of the 35-acre southern portion of the ALELA, once a farmed wetland, will create suitable habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. A combination of mechanical removal and prescribed burning will be used to reduce the woody-stemmed brush which has encroached on the wet meadow. In preparation for this work, the County Highway Department established a firebreak around this site during the winter of 2010, and the local DNR Wildlife office has prepared a Prescribed Burn Plan, which has been reviewed by school administration. The shearing operation will occur in the winter following notification of receiving the grant, and the prescribed burn operation will be slated for the following spring, and will be dependent on site conditions. To complete the enhancement efforts, a quarter-acre dump site, located on the northeast edge of the area, will be removed and disposed.

The Lake of the Woods School Forest Committee is made up of local volunteers, School Board members and personnel, and natural resource agency partners. The LOTW School Forest Program has built a strong network of local, state and federal support through public meetings, coverage in local newspapers, and presentations to local hunting, fishing and civic groups. The local Whitetails Unlimited Chapter, Master Gardeners, the Baudette City Council, SWCD Board of Supervisors and County Board of Commissioners have all pledged their support for the project.

The Lake of the Woods School Forests are open to the public. Conventional uses of these lands, including hunting and trapping, are allowed. These areas also serve as valuable land conservation educational tools by engaging the young generations and encouraging future stewards of the land.

We believe our application aligns with the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council goals to "...restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game and wildlife..." Not only does the Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program restore and enhance habitat on public lands, it also builds a legacy by instilling the value of conservation through education and civic engagement.

### Planning

There are four goals in the MNCPP which this project will directly target:

\*Rec-H5 Restoration of wetlands, specifically targeting degraded wetlands

This project will restore a site which was used as a borrow (gravel) pit. Hydrology and vegetation will be restored on this site. It also will enhance a site which was once farmed wetland. Woody vegetation, mainly brushy species, has encroached on the site, limiting the habitat value.

## Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program

### \*Rec-H7 Keep water on the landscape

Restoration of hydrology is included in the north wetland restoration. A large ditch which provides drainage to the school grounds will be re-diverted to outlet into the wetland restoration.

### \*Rec-H13 Education of citizens

This project will be used to educate the general public on the values of wetlands, the various types of wetlands, and the habitat benefits which can be attained through different land management techniques. Interpretive signage will be installed as part of the educational piece. In addition to on-site education, this project will be promoted through local workshops and through various publications such as the SWCD's biannual newsletter and the local newspapers.

### \*Rec-LU2 Support local conservation-based community planning

This project will enhance and restore wetlands just outside the city limits. This project is a good fit for local efforts to maintain green space and provide natural areas near the city. The openland habitat created is within the MN DNR's sharp-tailed grouse habitat corridor for Lake of the Woods County.

This project also fits well with goals of the USFWS. The School Forest Committee is currently working with the private lands specialist from the Rydell Refuge of the USFWS. Through this partnership, the committee will be applying for funds for a separate project component under the USFWS Partners for Wildlife Program.

It also fits into the priorities of the Northern Forest Section priorities through the restoration of rare and declining habitat through the restoration of the white and red pine forests.

### **Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds**

This funding will restore and enhance habitat on designated School Forest Lands. There are currently no other constitutional funding programs available for habitat management within School Forests.

### **Relationship to Current Organizational Budget**

The only funding currently in place for projects within the School Forests consists of timber sales revenue. This revenue is extremely limited, and is typically designated for educational purposes such as transportation costs and teaching aids. The OHF would allow for additional projects to restore and enhance habitat on School Forest lands.

## Sustainability and Maintenance

The DNR Forestry staff has developed a Woodland Stewardship Plan for the Baudette and Williams School Forests.

School maintenance staff will periodically mow the firebreak on the south wetland enhancement. Prescribed burns will be applied as needed to suppress the growth of woody vegetation. If assistance is needed to conduct the burns, the local volunteer fire departments and the DNR Forestry staff will be asked to incorporate this site into their spring training regimen.

The wetland restoration will be self-maintaining once it establishes successfully. Monitoring for noxious weeds will be conducted annually by the high school science classes. The school maintenance staff will work with the County Weed Inspector to treat problem areas as necessary.

The School Forest Committee members and other local volunteer organizations have committed to long-term maintenance of this project. The purchase of equipment for maintenance is included in our budget.

## Types of Projects

### Fee Acquisition Projects

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

### Easement Acquisition Projects

Will the eased land be open for public use?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Will the conservation easement be permanent?

Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program

Restoration and Enhancement Projects

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters?

- Yes                       No, please explain                       not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Does the activity take place on an Aquatic Management Area (AMA), Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Wildlife Management Area (WMA), or State Forests?

- Yes, which ones                       No, please explain                       not applicable

\*The activities will take place on lands owned by the School District and designated as MN School Forests under the MN DNR School Forest Program.

If so, please indicate which ones:

**Accomplishment Timeline**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date</b>
Wetland restoration on the northern portion of ALELA	Restore an 8-acre tract of degraded wetland by replacing topsoil, contouring and seeding with native wetland vegetation.	Completed by October 2011
Enhance sedge meadow to provide sharp-tailed grouse and short eared owl habitat on the southern portion of the ALELA	Reduce woody stem count and convert to openland habitat with a combination of shearing and prescribed burning on the southern 35 acres. Remove dump-site debris.	Completed by July 2013
Reforest rare and declining habitats of the Baudette and Williams School Forests	Reforest acres within the Baudette and Williams School Forests with white and red pine according to the guidelines of the Woodland Stewardship Plan. Installation of tree shelters on pine seedlings to protect from deer browse.	Completed by June 2012
Install protective infrastructure to refuge sites	Designate and develop 3 parking areas at each School Forest site,	Completed by October 2013
Install protective infrastructure to refuge sites	Develop trail systems and signage on all three sites to direct foot traffic	Completed by October 2013

Lake of the Woods School Forest Restoration Program

Install protective infrastructure to refuge sites	Build foot bridges to transverse low/wet areas along trails	Completed by October 2013
Install protective infrastructure to refuge sites	Construct and install wildlife viewing blinds on sites	Completed by October 2013
Invasive species control	Establish monitoring plots in newly restored wetland at ALELA. Remove caragana, using a combination of chemical and mechanical removal techniques, within the Baudette School Forest	Initiated July 2012, ongoing effort
Development of long-term maintenance plan which will direct efforts within the 3 School Forests	School Forest Committee will meet 3 times annually to work on monitoring and maintaining the enhancements and restoration work completed. Technical guidance will be provided by the LOTW SWCD, local DNR staff and USFWS staff.	Initiated July 2011 and ongoing through process

**Attachments:**

- A. Budget**
- B. Proposed Outcome Tables 1-5**
- C. Map**
- D. Parcel List**

**Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet**

[Link Here to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

**Total Amount of Request**      \$ 246,650 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

**Personnel**

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
<i>Manager of Programs</i>	0.05	3	\$ 8,400	\$ -		\$ 8,400
<i>Admin Asst</i>	0.05	3	\$ 9,900	\$ -		\$ 9,900
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
<b>Total</b>	0.1		\$ 18,300	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,300

**Budget and Cash Leverage** *(All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)*

*Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.*

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
<b>Personnel - auto entered from above</b>	\$ 18,300	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,300
<b>Contracts</b>	\$ 202,250	\$ 10,000	<i>local/federal match</i>	\$ 212,250
<b>Fee Acquisition w/ PILT</b> <i>(breakout in table 6 &amp; 7)</i>	\$ -			\$ -
<b>Fee Acquisition w/o PILT</b> <i>(breakout in table 6 &amp; 7)</i>	\$ -			\$ -
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>	\$ -			\$ -
<b>Easement Stewardship</b>	\$ -			\$ -
<b>Travel (in-state)</b>	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,000	<i>local match</i>	\$ 3,000
<b>Professional Services</b>	\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000
<b>DNR Land Acquisition Costs</b>	\$ -			\$ -
<b>Other</b>				\$ 22,600
Capital Equipment	\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000
Other Equipment/Tools	\$ -			\$ -
Supplies/Materials	\$ 15,100	\$ 2,500	<i>local fundraising</i>	\$ 17,600
	\$ 246,650	\$ 13,500	\$ -	\$ 260,150

## Attachment B. Proposed Outcome Tables

Only enter data in the outlined cells

*Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same*

*If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:*

*Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides*

**Table 1. Acres by Resource Type**

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	8		10	35	53
Protect					0
Enhance	69		143		212
<b>Total</b>	77		153	35	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

265 *These two cells should be the same figure.*

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

265

**Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$ 19,842		\$ 10,798	\$ 27,033	\$ 57,673
Protect					\$ -
Enhance	\$ 74,197		\$ 114,780		\$ 188,977
<b>Total</b>	\$ 94,039	\$ -	\$ 125,578	\$ 27,033	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 246,650 *These two cells should be the same figure.*

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 246,650

Check to make sure this amount is the same

as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore					53	53
Protect						0
Enhance					212	212
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	265	

Total Acres (sum of Total column)

265 *These three cells should be the same figure.*

Total Acres (sum of Total row)

265

Total Acres from Table 1.

265

## Attachment B. Proposed Outcome Tables

**Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section**

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore					\$ 57,673	\$ 57,673
Protect						\$ -
Enhance					\$ 188,977	\$ 188,977
<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 246,650	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column)

\$ 246,650

*These two cells should be the same figure.*

Total Dollars (sum of Total row)

\$ 246,650

Check to make sure these amounts are the same

as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

**Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles**

# miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

**Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		380			380
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement NO State PILT Liability					0

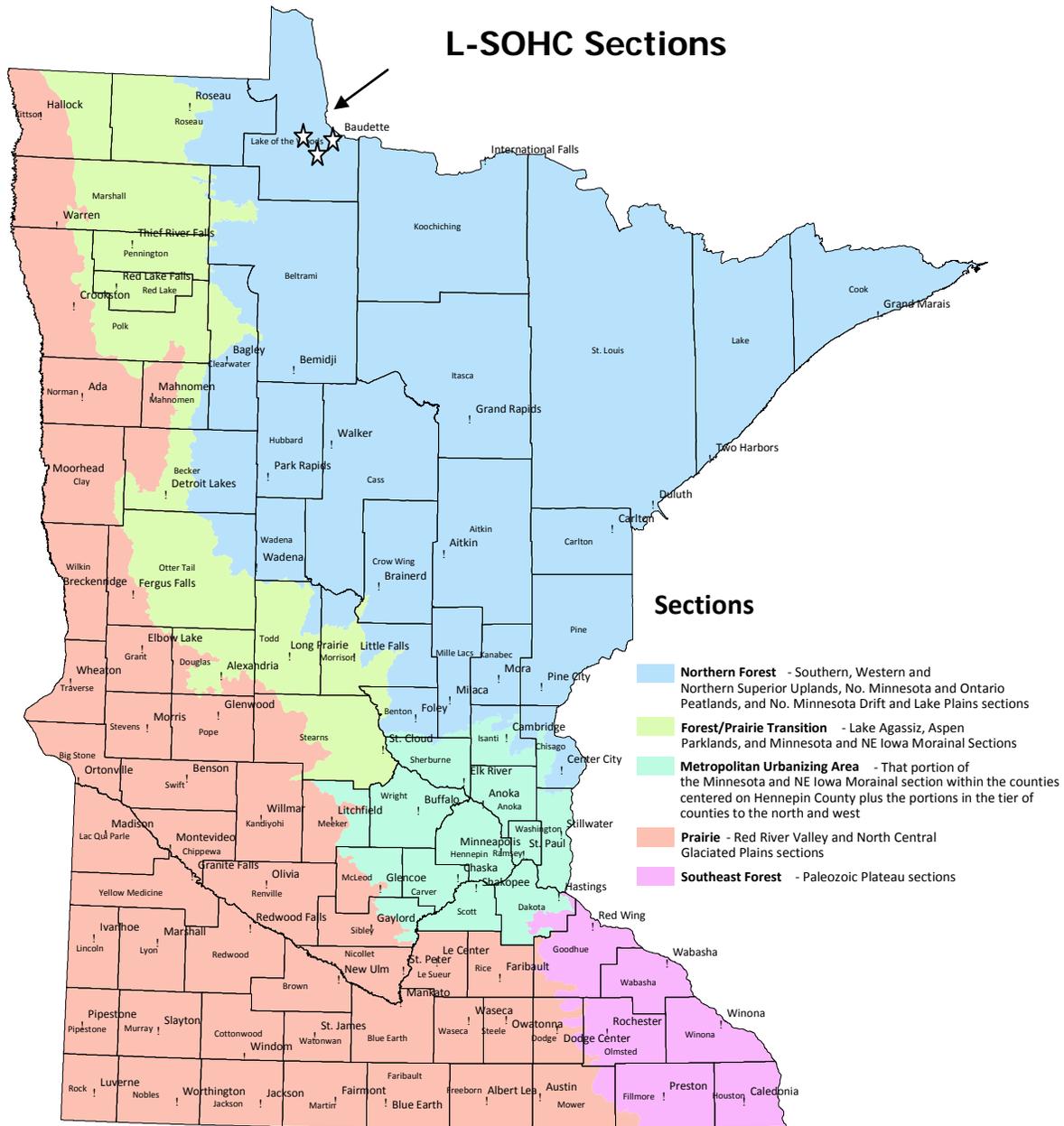
**Table 7. Estimated Value of Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)**

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability		\$ 1,500,000			\$ 1,500,000
Acquired in Fee without State PILT Liability					\$ -
Permanent Easement NO State PILT Liability					\$ -

## Attachment C.

**Instructions:** Double left click to bring up the map editor. Symbols should be on the left side of the pop-up banner at the top of your screen or at the bottom left depending on your software.

If you can't bring up the interactive map editor: 1) Make a paper copy of the map, 2) By hand place symbols on the map corresponding to the location of the projects in your proposal, 3) Scan the marked map to a pdf, 4) Attach to web form.



### Attachment D. Parcel List

Program Title	County	Township	Range	Direction	Section	TRDS	# of acres	Estimated Cost to OHF	Description	Activity R=Restore P=Protect E=Enhance	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)
Parcel Name												
Agassiz Lowlands Environmental Learning Area	Lake of the Woods	160	31	0	4	16031004	112	\$129,000	Wetland restoration, openland habitat enhancement; use area enhancements	R, E	yes	yes
Baudette School Forest	Lake of the Woods	160	32	0	6	16032006	40	\$30,000	Red and white pine reestablishment; use area enhancements	R, E	yes	yes
Baudette School Forest	Lake of the Woods	160	32	0	7	16032007	40	\$30,000	Red and white pine reestablishment; use area enhancements, invasives removal	R, E	yes	yes
Williams School Forest	Lake of the Woods	161	34	0	9	16134009	65	\$58,000	Red and white pine reestablishment; use area enhancements	R, E	yes	yes