

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Laws of Minnesota 2013 Accomplishment Plan

Date: October 19, 2012

Program or Project Title: Conservation Partners Legacy Grants Program

Funds Recommended: \$3,860,000

Manager's Name: Peter Skwira

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Legislative Citation: (to be completed when signed by Governor)

County Locations: No Counties Listed

Ecological Planning Regions:

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

Activity Type:

- Protect in Easement
- Restore
- Enhance
- Protect in Fee

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

Abstract:

The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program (CPL) will be managed by the Department of Natural Resources to provide competitive matching grants of up to

\$400,000 to local, regional, state, and national non-profit organizations, including governments.

Activity Detail

Design and Scope of Work:

The CPL program fulfills MS 97a.056 Subd. 3a, directing LSOHC to establish a conservation partner's grant program encouraging/supporting local conservation efforts. \$3,451,300 of the appropriated \$3,860,000 will be available for grants. This is a stand-alone program, but depends on support/technical advice from public land managers, habitat and acquisition specialists, and support staff.

Grant activities: enhancement, restoration, protection of forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife in Minnesota. A 10% match from nonstate sources is required for all grants. Match: Cash or in-kind, identified at time of application.

CPL Program Staff develops a Request for Proposal/Program Manual incorporating LSOHC priorities, solicits applications, works with applicants to submit scorable applications, oversees grant selection, prepares/executes grant documents, reviews expenditure documentation, ensuring financial integrity, makes payments, monitors grant work, assists recipients with closing out agreements, prepares required reports.

Applicants describe: location of work, activity type and habitat; benefit to habitat, fish, game and wildlife; and duration of benefits. Acquisition projects: applicants describe parcel selection process.

CPL staff complies with the Department of Administration-Office of Grants Management policies.

Stakeholders involved in this program are applicants, reviewers, land managers. No opposition is known.

Application Process

A Request for Proposal/Program Manual is posted on the CPL website in August, 2013. Document contains all grant program information.

Applications are submitted using CPL's Online Grant Application System (OLGA). Applicants use OLGA's mapping tool to map project sites. Applications accepted beginning in August, 2013, until round one deadline in mid-September, 2013. Applications requesting grants up to \$25,000 or Preapproved Project Grants have a shorter application form. The application system will accept Preapproved Project Grant applications year-round. Examples of Preapproved Projects and criteria for each will be on the website.

Grants over or under \$25,000 will be selected for funding up to twice a year.

Preapproved Project Grants will be awarded up to 6 times each year. Remaining funds from the first cycle will be available in a second cycle. DNR may choose to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with DNR and OHF policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available or if a grantee cannot complete a project as planned.

Grant Selection Process

CPL Grant Program Staff will review applications for completeness. Technical Review Committee(s), selected by the Commissioner of Natural Resources, evaluate applications based on criteria listed below. A final score will be given to all applications. Committee(s) include representatives from DNR, BWSR, the University of MN, state universities or private colleges, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, or other appropriate members from government, non-profit and business organizations. A final ranking committee of Directors of the DNR Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Ecological Resources/Waters, and Forestry consider TRC, Division and Regional DNR comments, and recommend projects/funding levels to the Commissioner. Preapproved Project Grants will be reviewed by CPL staff, using criteria established for each type of project, and make recommendations. The Commissioner will make final decisions.

CPL Grant Program staff work with grantees to complete financial reviews, grant agreements, and other paperwork. Work may not begin until grant is executed. Application Criteria Applications will be evaluated on these criteria:

Amount of habitat restored, enhanced, or protected

Local support

Degree of collaboration

Urgency

Multiple benefits

Habitat benefits

Consistency with current conservation science

Adjacent to protected lands

Full funding of project

Budget/ cost effectiveness

Public access for hunting/fishing

Use of native plant materials

Applicants' capacity to successfully complete, sustain work

Project Reviews and Reporting

Grantees submit annual accomplishment reports on forms provided by CPL staff, based on L-SOHC report forms. Reports account for the use of grant/match funds, and outcomes in measures of wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat restored, enhanced, and protected. The report must include an evaluation of these results. A final report is required by all grantees 30 days after project completion.

CPL Grant staff will submit accomplishment reports to L-SOHC as required and post reports on CPL website.

CPL Administration Budget

Grant administration costs total \$408,700, include salary/fringe for grants staff, direct and necessary costs, travel, supplies, and expense. An internal Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be developed with DNR's Management Information Systems to update/manage the online grant application system. (This item is included in the Contracts line in Budget Table.)

Three FTE's are necessary to run an ongoing grant program with cumulative budget of \$19 million (FY10-FY13). Effective May 15, 2012, 140 active grants are managed (from FY10-FY12). Seventy+ grants are expected from FY13/FY14 appropriations, for 210+ grants managed. Three FTE's plus an increased travel budget provide opportunities to monitor progress on grant-work, evaluate completed projects, help with project planning, grant request process and meeting grant requirements, and attend meetings around Minnesota while providing outreach for the CPL program, achieving our goal of increased personal interaction.

DNR Land Acquisition Costs

Applicants are required to budget for DNR Land Acquisition costs that are necessary to support the land acquisition process for parcels to be conveyed to the DNR. These costs are billed to awarded grants on a professional services basis.

DNR Technical Support

The Division of Fish and Wildlife provides ongoing technical guidance, helping applicants prepare grant proposals and meet requirements for working on state lands. Project development and oversight is provided by area managers and additional guidance is provided for land acquisitions. Grantee Payment

Grantees are paid on reimbursement or "for services rendered" basis, meaning payment is made to the grantee after work has been performed or materials purchased, but before the vendor is paid by the grantee. Grantees provide proof that work is completed or a purchase made to receive payment. Proof that the vendor was paid must be submitted to CPL staff before additional grant payments are made.

Reasonable amounts may be advanced to projects to accommodate cash flow needs, match federal share, or for acquisitions. Advances must be specified in final grant agreement. Partial payments are allowed.

Funds are built into grants for required Legacy logo signage and forms of acknowledgement/notification including, but not limited to, local news

advertisements announcing completion of grantees' projects.

Since the creation of the CPL program, grantees have restored, protected or enhanced nearly 9982 acres of habitat in Minnesota.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H4 Restore and protect shallow lakes
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams
- H7 Keep water on the landscape
- LU8 Protect large blocks of forest land
- LU10 Support and expand sustainable practices on working forested lands

Plans Addressed:

- A Vision for Wildlife and Its Use -- Goals and Outcomes 2006-2012
- Driftless Area Restoration Effort
- Ducks Unlimited Living Lakes Initiative
- Grassland Bird Conservation Area
- Grassland Conservation Plan for Prairie Grouse
- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Long Range Plan for Muskellunge and Large Northern Pike Management Through 2020
- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Long Range Plan for the Wild Turkey
- Lower St. Louis River Habitat Plan
- Managing Minnesota's Shallow Lakes for Waterfowl and Wildlife
- Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership
- Minnesota DNR AMA Acquisition Plan
- Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Plans
- Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area's Long Range Plan
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
- Minnesota Sustainability Framework
- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- Mississippi River Headwaters Comprehensive Plan
- Moose Advisory Committee Report to the Minnesota DNR
- National Audubon Society Top 20 Common Birds in Decline
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan

- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- Northern Plains Prairie Potholes Regional Shorebird Conservation Plan
- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregion: A River and Stream Conservation Portfolio
- Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area (HPA) Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- Partners in Flight Conservation Plans for States and Physiographic Regions
- Partners in Flight Grassland Bird Plan
- Red River of the North Fisheries Management Plan
- Ruffed Grouse in Minnesota: A Long-Range Plan for Management
- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Strategic Plan for Coldwater Resources Management in Southeastern Minnesota
- Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan
- The Nature Conservancy's Superior Mixed Forest Ecoregional Plan
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Habitat Conservation Model
- U.S. Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan
- Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Projects Joint Ventures Plan
- The CPL grantees could possibly impact all of these plans through habitat work

LSOHC Statewide Priorities:

- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Are able to leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation
- Allow public access. This comes into play when all other things about the request are approximately equal
- Address conservation opportunities that will be lost if not immediately acted on
- Restore or enhance habitat on state-owned WMAs, AMAs, SNAs, and state forests
- Use a science-based strategic planning and evaluation model to guide protection, restoration and enhancement, similar to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Habitat Conservation model
- Address wildlife species of greatest conservation need, Minnesota County Biological Survey data, and rare, threatened and endangered species inventories in land and water decisions, as well as permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work
- Target unique Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife

LSOHC Prairie Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna
- Convert agricultural land to wetland/upland to protect, enhance, or restore existing habitat complexes, such as WMAs
- Restore or enhance habitat on public lands
- Protect, restore, and enhance shallow lakes
- Protect expiring CRP lands
- Protect, enhance, and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

LSOHC Forest Prairie Transition Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife
- Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie
- Protect, enhance, and restore migratory habitat for waterfowl and related species, so as to increase migratory and breeding success

LSOHC Northern Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas
- Protect forestland though acquisition or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties
- Restore and enhance habitat on existing protected properties, with preference to habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened species identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey
- Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline in area in recent decades

LSOHC Metro Urban Section Priorities:

- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity
- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)
- Enhance and restore coldwater fisheries systems
- Protect, enhance, and restore riparian and littoral habitats on lakes to benefit game and nongame fish species

LSOHC Southeast Forest Section Priorities:

- Protect forest habitat though acquisition in fee or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties
- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat
- Protect, enhance, and restore remnant goat prairies
- Restore forest-based wildlife habitat that has experienced substantial decline

in area in recent decades

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund
- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Clean Water Fund
- Parks and Trails Fund

The CPL grant program has the potential to complement all of these other programs and projects supported with constitutional funds by allowing organizations to access Outdoor Heritage Funds for smaller, local projects. Lack of funding is consistently listed in many plans as one of the largest issues limiting the amount of habitat work and protection that is completed each year. Specific benefits are dependent upon projects submitted by applicants.

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

Currently, the CPL program staff is managing 140 grants, from three years of appropriations, that have impacted every habitat type and every area of the State. 9982 acres have been restored, enhanced or protected since the CPL program was established. Offering another year of CPL grants to conservation clubs in Minnesota makes it possible to fund more projects that will increase the number of acres that enhance, restore and protect Minnesota's fish, game and wildlife habitat. Lack of funding is consistently listed in many plans as one of the largest issues limiting the amount of habitat work and protection that is completed each year. Specific benefits are dependent upon projects submitted by applicants.

Sustainability and Maintenance:

Projects on public lands will be the responsibility of the government entity that owns or accepts the land. Projects on private lands will be the responsibility of the private land owner and easement holder. Stewardship plans must identify the sources and amount of funding for monitoring and identify the parties responsible for monitoring and enforcing the easement agreement.

Because the actual projects have not been identified at this time, it is not possible to provide specific details on the cost, schedule, and sources of funding needed to sustain CPL projects.

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition? - Yes

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

Is this land open for hunting and fishing? - Yes

Public access will depend upon the requirements of the title holder.

Will the eased land be open for public use? - Yes

Public access will depend upon the requirements of the easement holder.

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

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - Yes (WMA, WPA, AMA, Private Land, County/Municipal, Refuge Lands, Public Waters, State Wilderness Areas, State Restoration Areas, State Forests, CPL projects have the potential to take place on any of these lands)

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Solicit grant applications: Request for Proposal and Program Manual are posted on-line.	August 2013
First-round applications due (Preapproved Project grant applications are accepted continuously)	Mid-Sept 2013
First-round FY14 grantees announced	Dec 2013
First-round grants encumbered	Jan 2014
Grantees start work: First-round grants executed	March 2014
Solicit round-two, if needed. Second-round applications due	Jan 2014
Second-round FY13 grantees announced	March 2014
Second-round grants encumbered	May 2014
Grantees start work: Second-round grants executed	July 2014
Grant monitoring continues, per OGM policy	April 2014
Annual grantee reports due: Reports received	Sept 2014
Program Report to the Council: Report will be submitted	August 2014
Program Report to the Council: Report will be Submitted	Feb 2015

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

- All outcomes are dependent on grantees' project choices

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- All outcomes are dependent on grantees' project choices

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- All outcomes are dependent on grantees' project choices

Programs in southeast forest region:

- All outcomes are dependent on grantees' project choices

Programs in prairie region:

- All outcomes are dependent on grantees' project choices

Budget Spreadsheet

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan

Total Amount of Request: \$3,860,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$366,000	\$0		\$366,000
Contracts	\$3,451,300	\$345,100	Match	\$3,796,400
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel (in-state)	\$5,000	\$0		\$5,000
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$33,600	\$0		\$33,600
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$2,100	\$0		\$2,100
Supplies/Materials	\$2,000	\$0		\$2,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$3,860,000	\$345,100	-	\$4,205,100

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Grants Coordinator	1.00	2.00	\$135,000	\$0		\$135,000
Grants Specialist	1.00	2.00	\$100,000	\$0		\$100,000
NR Specialist	1.00	2.00	\$131,000	\$0		\$131,000
Total	3.00	6.00	\$366,000	\$0	-	\$366,000

Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

0 miles

Parcel List

For restoration and enhancement programs ONLY: Managers may add, delete, and substitute projects on this parcel list based upon need, readiness, cost, opportunity, and/or urgency so long as the substitute parcel/project forwards the constitutional objectives of this program in the Project Scope table of this accomplishment plan. The final accomplishment plan report will include the final parcel list.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.