



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

The State of Minnesota

State Office Building, Room G95
100 Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155



May 14, 2013

Members of the Minnesota Senate:

The Star Tribune article published Tuesday, May 14, 2013 titled, "Outdoor Heritage funds: A metro-rural Legacy battle" paints an inaccurate picture of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council recommendations for habitat in the metro area. This inaccurate picture perpetuates a belief that the Council has not recommended reasonable investments in habitat located in metropolitan open spaces. The facts simply do not support this assertion.

Metropolitan Council Parks and Open Space advocates say the Council is biased against the metropolitan area. That's not true. The Met Council proposal submitted to the Lessard-Sams Council, like all proposals, was ranked on ten criteria. The Met Council's proposal did not fare well on the criteria of significance in statewide habitat plans, urgency, or cost-effectiveness associated with habitat restoration and enhancement. Several other applicants in the metropolitan region did receive funding recommendations, such as the University of Minnesota's Landscape Arboretum, the Metro Big Rivers collaboration, and Dakota County's riparian and lakeshore program. Since 2009, the Council has recommended over 10% of Outdoor Heritage Funds, or \$41,570,157 for habitat projects in the Seven County Metropolitan Region. Moreover, there has been significant metro park work accomplished because of recommendations by the Council, including work at Mounds Park, Springbrook Nature Center, Crosby Lake Farm Regional Park and Fish Creek Open Space in Ramsey County, Rosemount Wildlife Preserve and Katherine Ordway Natural History Study Area in Dakota County and Three Rivers Park District in Hennepin County. Work this year in the metro area parks and open spaces includes Vermillion Linear Park, Trillium Nature Sanctuary, Cottage Grove Regional Park, and Martins Meadows Open Space.

I urge the Senate to take a close look at the Outdoor Heritage Fund recommendations and investments in the metro area. They are testimony to the recognition of habitat opportunities in the Seven County Metropolitan Area. These investments will have long-term, positive outcomes on the terrestrial and aquatic habitat in the metropolitan region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hartwell".

David H. Hartwell,
Chair, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council