



Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
The State of Minnesota

Centennial Office Building, First Floor
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

January 15, 2025

The Honorable Bobby Joe Champion
Co-Presiding Officer, Minnesota Senate
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3401
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Jeremy Miller
Co-Presiding Officer, Minnesota Senate
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2215
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Presiding Officers Champion and Miller,

It is my honor, on behalf of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and as required by law, to present a bill jacketed for introduction incorporating the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council's recommendations for FY 2026 appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. This proposed legislation contains the Council's 17th annual appropriation recommendations to protect, enhance, and restore Minnesota's prairies, wetlands, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, which are consistent with and effectively address the Council's strategic statewide and regionally-based conservation and habitat priorities from the Outdoor Heritage Fund's 25-Year Framework.

The Council received 53 requests totaling over \$404 million from a cross-section of public and non-profit organizations and levels of government. The Council's FY 2026 recommendations include 50 proposed appropriations with expenditures totaling \$168,512,000.

The Council's recommendations are consistent with constitutionally specified uses of the Outdoor Heritage Fund and promise to have a lasting and positive impact on the state's fish, game, and wildlife habitats. The following outputs are associated with these recommendations:

- 16,095 acres of wetlands and wetland systems protected, restored, and enhanced;
- 59,929 acres of prairies and prairie systems protected, restored, and enhanced;
- 22,879 acres of forest protected, restored, and enhanced;
- 7,875 acres of aquatic and other habitat protected, restored, and enhanced; and
- 68 miles of shoreline protected, restored, and enhanced

Restoration and enhancement of permanently protected lands accounts for approximately 84% of acres impacted by these recommendations. Over 89,000 total acres are to be affected and will improve habitat for a range of species, from waterfowl habitat in the prairie pothole region, to pheasant habitat in the tall grass regions, to trout streams in the southeast and northeast, to various wildlife habitats in the metropolitan region. The Council remains focused on recommending funding for those programs with the potential greatest impact on habitat heritage for future generations.

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council is confident its recommendations will be broadly supported by the citizens of Minnesota. The Council stands prepared to provide any assistance and additional information necessary during the legislative session.

On behalf of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, I thank you for the opportunity to serve the people of Minnesota in improving our state's great outdoors habitat heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Hartwell', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Hartwell
Chair, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

C: Members and staff, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Attachment: Copy of jacketed Outdoor Heritage Fund bill

1.1 A bill for an act
 1.2 relating to natural resources; appropriating money from the outdoor heritage fund;
 1.3 providing for leveraging certain land for federal grant funds; amending Minnesota
 1.4 Statutes 2024, section 97A.056, by adding a subdivision.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. **APPROPRIATIONS.**

1.7 The sums shown in the columns marked "Appropriations" are appropriated to the agencies
 1.8 and for the purposes specified in this act. The appropriations are from the outdoor heritage
 1.9 fund for the fiscal year indicated for each purpose. The figures "2026" and "2027" used in
 1.10 this act mean that the appropriations listed under them are available for the fiscal year ending
 1.11 June 30, 2026, or June 30, 2027, respectively. "The first year" is fiscal year 2026. "The
 1.12 second year" is fiscal year 2027. "The biennium" is fiscal years 2026 and 2027. The
 1.13 appropriations in this act are onetime appropriations.

	<u>APPROPRIATIONS</u>
	<u>Available for the Year</u>
	<u>Ending June 30</u>
	<u>2026</u> <u>2027</u>

1.18 Sec. 2. **OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND**

1.19 <u>Subdivision 1. Total Appropriation</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>168,512,000</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>775,000</u>
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1.20 This appropriation is from the outdoor heritage
 1.21 fund. The amounts that may be spent for each
 1.22 purpose are specified in the following
 1.23 subdivisions.

2.1	<u>Subd. 2. Prairies</u>	<u>34,199,000</u>	<u>-0-</u>
2.2	<u>(a) Martin County DNR WMA Acquisition,</u>		
2.3	<u>Phase 9</u>		
2.4	<u>\$1,363,000 the first year is to the</u>		
2.5	<u>commissioner of natural resources for</u>		
2.6	<u>agreements to acquire land in fee and restore</u>		
2.7	<u>and enhance strategic prairie grassland,</u>		
2.8	<u>wetland, and other wildlife habitat in Martin</u>		
2.9	<u>County for wildlife management area purposes</u>		
2.10	<u>under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,</u>		
2.11	<u>subdivision 8, as follows: \$1,001,000 to Fox</u>		
2.12	<u>Lake Conservation League, Inc., \$327,000 to</u>		
2.13	<u>Ducks Unlimited, and \$35,000 to the</u>		
2.14	<u>Conservation Fund.</u>		
2.15	<u>(b) Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the</u>		
2.16	<u>Southern Red River Valley, Phase 11</u>		
2.17	<u>\$3,690,000 the first year is to the</u>		
2.18	<u>commissioner of natural resources for an</u>		
2.19	<u>agreement with Pheasants Forever, in</u>		
2.20	<u>cooperation with the Minnesota Prairie</u>		
2.21	<u>Chicken Society, to acquire land in fee and</u>		
2.22	<u>restore and enhance lands in the southern Red</u>		
2.23	<u>River Valley for wildlife management</u>		
2.24	<u>purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section</u>		
2.25	<u>86A.05, subdivision 8, or to be designated and</u>		
2.26	<u>managed as waterfowl production areas in</u>		
2.27	<u>Minnesota, in cooperation with the United</u>		
2.28	<u>States Fish and Wildlife Service. Subject to</u>		
2.29	<u>evaluation criteria in Minnesota Rules, part</u>		
2.30	<u>6136.0900, priority must be given to</u>		
2.31	<u>acquisitions of lands that are eligible for the</u>		
2.32	<u>native prairie bank under Minnesota Statutes,</u>		
2.33	<u>section 84.96, or lands adjacent to protected</u>		
2.34	<u>native prairie.</u>		
2.35	<u>(c) RIM Grasslands Reserve, Phase 6</u>		

3.1 \$3,452,000 the first year is to the Board of
 3.2 Water and Soil Resources to acquire
 3.3 permanent conservation easements and to
 3.4 restore and enhance grassland habitat under
 3.5 Minnesota Statutes, sections 103F.501 to
 3.6 103F.531. Of this amount, up to \$70,000 is to
 3.7 establish a monitoring and enforcement fund
 3.8 as approved in the accomplishment plan and
 3.9 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 3.10 97A.056, subdivision 17. Subdivision 8,
 3.11 paragraph (b), does not apply to this project.
 3.12 A list of permanent conservation easements
 3.13 must be provided as part of the final report.

3.14 **(d) RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water, Phase**
 3.15 **11**

3.16 \$4,092,000 the first year is to the Board of
 3.17 Water and Soil Resources to acquire
 3.18 permanent conservation easements and restore
 3.19 habitat under Minnesota Statutes, section
 3.20 103F.515, to protect, restore, and enhance
 3.21 habitat by expanding the riparian buffer
 3.22 program under the clean water fund for
 3.23 additional wildlife benefits from buffers on
 3.24 private land. Of this amount, up to \$60,000 is
 3.25 to establish a monitoring and enforcement
 3.26 fund as approved in the accomplishment plan
 3.27 and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 3.28 97A.056, subdivision 17. Subdivision 8,
 3.29 paragraph (b), does not apply to this project.
 3.30 A list of permanent conservation easements
 3.31 must be provided as part of the final report.

3.32 **(e) Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area**
 3.33 **Program, Phase 17**

3.34 \$4,974,000 the first year is to the
 3.35 commissioner of natural resources for an
 3.36 agreement with Pheasants Forever to acquire

4.1 in fee and restore and enhance lands for
4.2 wildlife management area purposes under
4.3 Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,
4.4 subdivision 8. Subject to evaluation criteria
4.5 in Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority
4.6 must be given to acquisition of lands that are
4.7 eligible for the native prairie bank under
4.8 Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands
4.9 adjacent to protected native prairie.

4.10 **(f) Minnesota Prairie Recovery Program, Phase**
4.11 **14**

4.12 \$2,489,000 the first year is to the
4.13 commissioner of natural resources for an
4.14 agreement with The Nature Conservancy to
4.15 acquire land in fee and restore and enhance
4.16 native prairie, grasslands, wetlands, and
4.17 savanna. Subject to evaluation criteria in
4.18 Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority
4.19 must be given to acquiring lands that are
4.20 eligible for the native prairie bank under
4.21 Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands
4.22 adjacent to protected native prairie. Annual
4.23 income statements and balance sheets for
4.24 income and expenses from land acquired with
4.25 this appropriation must be submitted to the
4.26 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council no
4.27 later than 180 days following the close of The
4.28 Nature Conservancy's fiscal year. A list of
4.29 proposed land acquisitions, restorations, and
4.30 enhancements must be provided as part of the
4.31 required accomplishment plan and must be
4.32 consistent with the priorities identified in
4.33 Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan.

4.34 **(g) Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife**
4.35 **Refuge, Phase 15**

5.1 \$3,742,000 the first year is to the
 5.2 commissioner of natural resources for an
 5.3 agreement with The Nature Conservancy, in
 5.4 cooperation with the United States Fish and
 5.5 Wildlife Service, to acquire land in fee or
 5.6 permanent conservation easements and to
 5.7 restore and enhance lands in the Northern
 5.8 Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area in
 5.9 western Minnesota for addition to the Northern
 5.10 Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge.
 5.11 Subject to evaluation criteria in Minnesota
 5.12 Rules, part 6136.0900, priority must be given
 5.13 to acquiring lands that are eligible for the
 5.14 native prairie bank under Minnesota Statutes,
 5.15 section 84.96, or lands adjacent to protected
 5.16 native prairie.

5.17 **(h) DNR Wildlife Management Area and**
 5.18 **Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition, Phase**
 5.19 **17**

5.20 \$1,960,000 the first year is to the
 5.21 commissioner of natural resources to acquire
 5.22 in fee and restore and enhance lands for
 5.23 wildlife management purposes under
 5.24 Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,
 5.25 subdivision 8, and to acquire land in fee for
 5.26 scientific and natural area purposes under
 5.27 Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,
 5.28 subdivision 5. Subject to evaluation criteria
 5.29 in Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority
 5.30 must be given to acquisition of lands that are
 5.31 eligible for the native prairie bank under
 5.32 Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands
 5.33 adjacent to protected native prairie.

5.34 **(i) Enhanced Public Land - Grasslands, Phase**
 5.35 **8**

6.1 \$3,519,000 the first year is to the
 6.2 commissioner of natural resources for an
 6.3 agreement with Pheasants Forever to enhance
 6.4 and restore grassland and wetland habitat on
 6.5 public lands in the forest prairie transition,
 6.6 metro urban, and prairie ecoregions of
 6.7 Minnesota.

6.8 **(j) Accelerating the USFWS Habitat**
 6.9 **Conservation Easement Program, Phase 5**

6.10 \$4,918,000 the first year is to the
 6.11 commissioner of natural resources for
 6.12 agreements to restore and enhance wetland
 6.13 and prairie habitat on habitat easements of the
 6.14 United States Fish and Wildlife Service as
 6.15 follows: \$3,170,000 to Ducks Unlimited and
 6.16 \$1,748,000 to Pheasants Forever.

6.17 **Subd. 3. Forests**

20,414,000

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6.18 **(a) Minnesota Forest Recovery Project, Phase**
 6.19 **3**

6.20 \$3,543,000 the first year is to the
 6.21 commissioner of natural resources for an
 6.22 agreement with The Nature Conservancy in
 6.23 cooperation with the Department of Natural
 6.24 Resources and Minnesota Land Trust to
 6.25 acquire permanent conservation easements
 6.26 and to restore and enhance degraded forests
 6.27 in Beltrami, Cass, Cook, Itasca, Lake,
 6.28 Koochiching, and St. Louis Counties. Of this
 6.29 amount, up to \$84,000 is to the easement
 6.30 holder to establish a monitoring and
 6.31 enforcement fund as approved in the
 6.32 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
 6.33 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.

6.34 **(b) Itasca County Memorial Forest Project**

7.1 \$2,782,000 the first year is to the
7.2 commissioner of natural resources for an
7.3 agreement with Itasca County to acquire
7.4 priority forest habitat lands in fee as county
7.5 forests.

7.6 **(c) Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation**
7.7 **Program, Phase 2**

7.8 \$1,844,000 the first year is to the
7.9 commissioner of natural resources for
7.10 agreements to acquire permanent conservation
7.11 easements and to restore and enhance forest
7.12 habitats in the hardwood hills ecological
7.13 section of west-central Minnesota as follows:
7.14 \$100,000 to St. John's University and
7.15 \$1,744,000 to Minnesota Land Trust. Of the
7.16 amount to Minnesota Land Trust, \$196,000 is
7.17 to establish a monitoring and enforcement
7.18 fund as approved in the accomplishment plan
7.19 and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
7.20 97A.056, subdivision 17.

7.21 **(d) Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Protection**
7.22 **Program ACUB, Phase 13**

7.23 \$2,233,000 the first year is to the Board of
7.24 Water and Soil Resources, in cooperation with
7.25 the Morrison County Soil and Water
7.26 Conservation District, to acquire permanent
7.27 conservation easements and to restore and
7.28 enhance forest wildlife habitat within the
7.29 boundaries of the Minnesota National Guard
7.30 Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape and Army
7.31 Compatible Use Buffer. Of this amount, up to
7.32 \$110,000 is to establish a monitoring and
7.33 enforcement fund as approved in the
7.34 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
7.35 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.
7.36 Subdivision 8, paragraph (b), does not apply

8.1 to this project. A list of permanent
8.2 conservation easements must be provided as
8.3 part of the final report.

8.4 **(e) Minnesota Forests for the Future, Phase 5**

8.5 \$5,361,000 the first year is to the
8.6 commissioner of natural resources to acquire
8.7 lands in conservation easements and to restore
8.8 and enhance forests, wetlands, and shoreline
8.9 habitat through working forest permanent
8.10 conservation easements under the Minnesota
8.11 forests for the future program according to
8.12 Minnesota Statutes, section 84.66. A
8.13 conservation easement acquired with money
8.14 appropriated under this paragraph must
8.15 comply with Minnesota Statutes, section
8.16 97A.056, subdivision 13. The accomplishment
8.17 plan must include an easement monitoring and
8.18 enforcement plan. Of this amount, up to
8.19 \$400,000 is to establish a monitoring and
8.20 enforcement fund as approved in the
8.21 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
8.22 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.

8.23 **(f) DNR Forest Habitat Enhancement, Phase 5**

8.24 \$2,601,000 the first year is to the
8.25 commissioner of natural resources to restore
8.26 and enhance forest wildlife habitats on public
8.27 lands throughout Minnesota.

8.28 **(g) Moose Habitat Collaborative - Northeast**
8.29 **Minnesota Forest Habitat Enhancement, Phase**
8.30 **5**

8.31 \$2,050,000 the first year is to the
8.32 commissioner of natural resources for an
8.33 agreement with the Ruffed Grouse Society to
8.34 restore and enhance public forest lands in the

9.1 northern forest region for moose habitat
9.2 purposes.

9.3 **Subd. 4. Wetlands** 29,695,000 -0-

9.4 **(a) Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration**
9.5 **Program, Phase 10**

9.6 \$2,918,000 the first year is to the
9.7 commissioner of natural resources for an
9.8 agreement with Minnesota Land Trust to
9.9 acquire permanent conservation easements
9.10 and to restore and enhance prairie, wetland,
9.11 and other habitats on permanently protected
9.12 conservation easements in high-priority
9.13 wetland habitat complexes in the prairie,
9.14 forest/prairie transition, and forest ecoregions.

9.15 Of this amount, up to \$168,000 is to establish
9.16 a monitoring and enforcement fund as
9.17 approved in the accomplishment plan and
9.18 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
9.19 97A.056, subdivision 17.

9.20 **(b) Shallow Lake and Wetland Protection and**
9.21 **Restoration Program, Phase 14**

9.22 \$5,803,000 the first year is to the
9.23 commissioner of natural resources for an
9.24 agreement with Ducks Unlimited to acquire
9.25 land in fee for wildlife management purposes
9.26 under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,
9.27 subdivision 8, or to be designated and
9.28 managed as waterfowl production areas or
9.29 national wildlife refuges in Minnesota, in
9.30 cooperation with the United States Fish and
9.31 Wildlife Service, and to restore and enhance
9.32 prairie lands, wetlands, and land-buffering
9.33 shallow lakes.

9.34 **(c) RIM Wetlands - Restoring the Most**
9.35 **Productive Habitat in Minnesota, Phase 14**

10.1 \$4,389,000 the first year is to the Board of
 10.2 Water and Soil Resources to acquire
 10.3 permanent conservation easements and to
 10.4 restore wetlands and native grassland habitat
 10.5 under Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515.
 10.6 Of this amount, up to \$70,000 is for
 10.7 establishing a monitoring and enforcement
 10.8 fund as approved in the accomplishment plan
 10.9 and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 10.10 97A.056, subdivision 17. Subdivision 8,
 10.11 paragraph (b), does not apply to this project.
 10.12 A list of permanent conservation easements
 10.13 must be provided as part of the final report.

10.14 **(d) Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area**
 10.15 **Acquisition Program, Phase 17**

10.16 \$5,238,000 the first year is to the
 10.17 commissioner of natural resources for an
 10.18 agreement with Pheasants Forever, in
 10.19 cooperation with the United States Fish and
 10.20 Wildlife Service, to acquire land in fee and to
 10.21 restore and enhance wetlands and grasslands
 10.22 to be designated and managed as waterfowl
 10.23 production areas in Minnesota.

10.24 **(e) Nelson Slough - East Park Wildlife**
 10.25 **Management Area, Phase 2**

10.26 \$1,578,000 the first year is to the
 10.27 commissioner of natural resources for an
 10.28 agreement with the Middle-Snake-Tamarac
 10.29 Rivers Watershed District to restore and
 10.30 enhance wetland and upland wildlife habitat
 10.31 in Nelson Slough and the East Park Wildlife
 10.32 Management Area in Marshall County.

10.33 **(f) Living Shallow Lakes and Wetlands**
 10.34 **Enhancement and Restoration Initiative, Phase**
 10.35 **11**

11.1 \$5,729,000 the first year is to the
 11.2 commissioner of natural resources for an
 11.3 agreement with Ducks Unlimited to restore
 11.4 and enhance shallow lakes and wetlands on
 11.5 public lands and wetlands under permanent
 11.6 conservation easement for wildlife
 11.7 management.

11.8 **(g) Big Swamp North**

11.9 \$1,475,000 the first year is to the
 11.10 commissioner of natural resources for an
 11.11 agreement with the Roseau River Watershed
 11.12 District to restore and enhance wetland,
 11.13 stream, and other related wildlife habitat on
 11.14 public lands in the Big Swamp area in Roseau
 11.15 County.

11.16 **(h) DNR Accelerated Shallow Lakes and**
 11.17 **Wetland Enhancement, Phase 17**

11.18 \$2,565,000 the first year is to the
 11.19 commissioner of natural resources to enhance
 11.20 and restore shallow lakes and wetland habitat
 11.21 statewide.

11.22 **Subd. 5. Habitats**

82,150,000

-0-

11.23 **(a) Cannon River Watershed Habitat**
 11.24 **Restoration and Protection Program, Phase 14**

11.25 \$2,724,000 the first year is to the
 11.26 commissioner of natural resources for
 11.27 agreements to acquire land in fee and to
 11.28 restore and enhance wildlife habitat in the
 11.29 Cannon River Watershed as follows: \$62,000
 11.30 to Clean River Partners; \$1,228,000 to Great
 11.31 River Greening; and \$1,434,000 to the Trust
 11.32 for Public Land.

11.33 **(b) Spring Road Conservation Project**

12.1 \$2,027,000 the first year is to the
 12.2 commissioner of natural resources for an
 12.3 agreement with the Riley Purgatory Bluff
 12.4 Creek Watershed District to acquire priority
 12.5 wildlife habitat lands in fee in Hennepin
 12.6 County.

12.7 **(c) Anoka Sand Plain Habitat Conservation,**
 12.8 **Phase 10**

12.9 \$3,599,000 the first year is to the
 12.10 commissioner of natural resources for
 12.11 agreements to acquire permanent conservation
 12.12 easements and to restore and enhance wildlife
 12.13 habitat on public lands and easements in the
 12.14 Anoka Sand Plain ecoregion and intersecting
 12.15 minor watersheds as follows: \$599,000 to
 12.16 Anoka Conservation District; \$1,404,000 to
 12.17 Great River Greening; \$300,000 to The Nature
 12.18 Conservancy; and \$1,296,000 to Minnesota
 12.19 Land Trust. Up to \$112,000 to Minnesota
 12.20 Land Trust is to establish a monitoring and
 12.21 enforcement fund as approved in the
 12.22 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
 12.23 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.

12.24 **(d) Integrating Habitat and Clean Water, Phase**
 12.25 **3**

12.26 \$2,753,000 the first year is to the Board of
 12.27 Water and Soil Resources to acquire
 12.28 permanent conservation easements and restore
 12.29 and enhance wildlife habitat identified in One
 12.30 Watershed, One Plan for stacked benefit to
 12.31 wildlife and clean water. Of this amount, up
 12.32 to \$80,000 is for establishing a monitoring and
 12.33 enforcement fund as approved in the
 12.34 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
 12.35 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.
 12.36 Subdivision 8, paragraph (b), does not apply

13.1 to this project. A list of permanent
13.2 conservation easements must be provided as
13.3 part of the final report.

13.4 **(e) St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and**
13.5 **Restoration, Phase 6**

13.6 \$3,257,000 the first year is to the
13.7 commissioner of natural resources for
13.8 agreements to acquire land in fee and
13.9 permanent conservation easements and to
13.10 restore and enhance natural habitat systems in
13.11 the St. Croix River Watershed as follows:
13.12 \$1,236,000 to the Trust for Public Land;
13.13 \$121,000 to Wild Rivers Conservancy; and
13.14 \$1,900,000 to Minnesota Land Trust. Up to
13.15 \$168,000 to Minnesota Land Trust is to
13.16 establish a monitoring and enforcement fund
13.17 as approved in the accomplishment plan and
13.18 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
13.19 97A.056, subdivision 17.

13.20 **(f) Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor**
13.21 **Project, Phase 9**

13.22 \$2,832,000 the first year is to acquire lands in
13.23 fee and permanent conservation easements
13.24 and to restore wildlife habitat in the
13.25 Mississippi headwaters. Of this amount: (1)
13.26 \$1,768,000 is to the commissioner of natural
13.27 resources for agreements as follows: \$60,000
13.28 to the Mississippi Headwaters Board and
13.29 \$1,708,000 to the Trust for Public Land; and
13.30 (2) \$1,064,000 is to the Board of Water and
13.31 Soil Resources, of which up to \$50,000 is to
13.32 establish a monitoring and enforcement fund
13.33 as approved in the accomplishment plan and
13.34 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
13.35 97A.056, subdivision 17.

14.1 **(g) Southeast Minnesota Protection and**
14.2 **Restoration, Phase 13**

14.3 \$2,387,000 the first year is to the
14.4 commissioner of natural resources for an
14.5 agreement with Minnesota Land Trust to
14.6 acquire permanent conservation easements
14.7 and to restore and enhance wildlife habitat on
14.8 public lands and permanent conservation
14.9 easements in southeast Minnesota. Of this
14.10 amount, up to \$140,000 is to establish a
14.11 monitoring and enforcement fund as approved
14.12 in the accomplishment plan and subject to
14.13 Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056,
14.14 subdivision 17.

14.15 **(h) Protecting Coldwater Fisheries on**
14.16 **Minnesota's North Shore, Phase 3**

14.17 \$2,237,000 the first year is to the
14.18 commissioner of natural resources for an
14.19 agreement with Minnesota Land Trust to
14.20 acquire permanent conservation easements
14.21 and to restore and enhance wildlife habitat in
14.22 priority coldwater tributaries to Lake Superior.
14.23 Of this amount, up to \$196,000 is to establish
14.24 a monitoring and enforcement fund as
14.25 approved in the accomplishment plan and
14.26 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
14.27 97A.056, subdivision 17.

14.28 **(i) Metro Big Rivers, Phase 15**

14.29 \$6,949,000 the first year is to the
14.30 commissioner of natural resources for
14.31 agreements to acquire land in fee and
14.32 permanent conservation easements and to
14.33 restore and enhance natural habitat systems
14.34 associated with the Mississippi, Minnesota,
14.35 and St. Croix Rivers and their tributaries in

15.1 the metropolitan area as follows: \$1,000,000
 15.2 to Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
 15.3 Trust, Inc.; \$529,000 to Friends of the
 15.4 Mississippi River; \$1,015,000 to Great River
 15.5 Greening; \$2,185,000 to the Trust for Public
 15.6 Land; and \$2,220,000 to Minnesota Land
 15.7 Trust. Up to \$168,000 to Minnesota Land
 15.8 Trust is to establish a monitoring and
 15.9 enforcement fund as approved in the
 15.10 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
 15.11 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.

15.12 **(j) Minnesota River Watershed Habitat**
 15.13 **Conservation Program**

15.14 \$3,148,000 the first year is to the
 15.15 commissioner of natural resources for
 15.16 agreements to acquire land in fee and
 15.17 permanent conservation easements and to
 15.18 restore and enhance priority habitat in the
 15.19 Minnesota River watershed as follows:
 15.20 \$1,395,000 to Great River Greening and
 15.21 \$1,753,000 to Minnesota Land Trust. Up to
 15.22 \$168,000 to Minnesota Land Trust is to
 15.23 establish a monitoring and enforcement fund
 15.24 as approved in the accomplishment plan and
 15.25 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 15.26 97A.056, subdivision 17.

15.27 **(k) Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat**
 15.28 **Restoration Program, Phase 14**

15.29 \$2,190,000 the first year is to the
 15.30 commissioner of natural resources for an
 15.31 agreement with the Shell Rock River
 15.32 Watershed District to acquire land in fee and
 15.33 to restore and enhance habitat in the Shell
 15.34 Rock River watershed.

15.35 **(l) Protecting Minnesota's Lakes of Outstanding**
 15.36 **Biological Significance, Phase 4**

16.1 \$3,209,000 the first year is to the
16.2 commissioner of natural resources for
16.3 agreements to acquire land in fee and
16.4 permanent conservation easements and to
16.5 restore and enhance lakes of outstanding
16.6 biological significance in northeast and
16.7 north-central Minnesota. Of this amount,
16.8 \$1,530,000 is to the Northern Waters Land
16.9 Trust and \$1,679,000 is to Minnesota Land
16.10 Trust. Up to \$168,000 to Minnesota Land
16.11 Trust is for establishing a monitoring and
16.12 enforcement fund as approved in the
16.13 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
16.14 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.

16.15 **(m) Shakopee Creek: Headwaters Restored,**
16.16 **Species and Land Protected**

16.17 \$2,413,000 the first year is to the
16.18 commissioner of natural resources for an
16.19 agreement with the Kandiyohi Soil and Water
16.20 Conservation District to restore and enhance
16.21 wildlife habitat in the headwaters area of
16.22 Shakopee Creek in Kandiyohi County.

16.23 **(n) DNR Trout Stream Conservation Easements,**
16.24 **Phase 4**

16.25 \$995,000 the first year is to the commissioner
16.26 of natural resources to acquire land in
16.27 permanent conservation easements to protect
16.28 trout-stream aquatic habitat. Of this amount,
16.29 up to \$120,000 is for establishing a monitoring
16.30 and enforcement fund as approved in the
16.31 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
16.32 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.

16.33 **(o) Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic**
16.34 **North-Central Minnesota Lakes, Phase 11**

17.1 \$2,944,000 the first year is to the
 17.2 commissioner of natural resources for
 17.3 agreements to acquire land in fee and
 17.4 permanent conservation easements and to
 17.5 restore and enhance wildlife habitat to sustain
 17.6 healthy fish habitat on coldwater lakes in
 17.7 Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, and Hubbard
 17.8 Counties as follows: \$1,292,000 to Northern
 17.9 Waters Land Trust and \$1,652,000 to
 17.10 Minnesota Land Trust. Up to \$168,000 to
 17.11 Minnesota Land Trust is to establish a
 17.12 monitoring and enforcement fund as approved
 17.13 in the accomplishment plan and subject to
 17.14 Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056,
 17.15 subdivision 17.

17.16 **(p) Minnesota Statewide Trout Habitat**
 17.17 **Enhancement, Phase 2**

17.18 \$2,173,000 the first year is to the
 17.19 commissioner of natural resources for an
 17.20 agreement with Minnesota Trout Unlimited
 17.21 to restore and enhance habitat for trout and
 17.22 other species in and along coldwater rivers,
 17.23 lakes, and streams throughout Minnesota.

17.24 **(q) Restoring and Enhancing Minnesota's**
 17.25 **Important Bird Areas, Phase 4**

17.26 \$2,049,000 the first year is to the
 17.27 commissioner of natural resources for an
 17.28 agreement with Audubon Minnesota to restore
 17.29 and enhance wildlife habitat in important bird
 17.30 areas or Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan
 17.31 Priority areas of northwestern Minnesota.

17.32 **(r) Fall River Restoration**

17.33 \$1,348,000 the first year is to the
 17.34 commissioner of natural resources for an
 17.35 agreement with Cook County to restore and

18.1 enhance coldwater stream habitat in the Fall
 18.2 River in Cook County.

18.3 **(s) DNR Aquatic Habitat Restoration and**
 18.4 **Enhancement, Phase 8**

18.5 \$3,887,000 the first year is to the
 18.6 commissioner of natural resources to restore
 18.7 and enhance aquatic habitat in degraded
 18.8 streams and aquatic management areas and to
 18.9 facilitate fish passage throughout Minnesota.

18.10 **(t) Rum River Corridor Fish and Wildlife**
 18.11 **Habitat Enhancement, Phase 3**

18.12 \$1,387,000 the first year is to the
 18.13 commissioner of natural resources for an
 18.14 agreement with the Anoka County Soil and
 18.15 Water Conservation District to restore and
 18.16 enhance upland and riverine habitat in the
 18.17 Rum River corridor.

18.18 **(u) DNR Roving Crew, Phase 3**

18.19 \$12,642,000 the first year is to the
 18.20 commissioner of natural resources to restore
 18.21 and enhance fish and wildlife habitat on
 18.22 permanently protected lands throughout
 18.23 Minnesota using the roving crew program of
 18.24 the Department of Natural Resources.

18.25 **(v) Conservation Partners Legacy Grant**
 18.26 **Program: Statewide and Metro Habitat, Phase**
 18.27 **17**

18.28 \$15,000,000 the first year is to the
 18.29 commissioner of natural resources for a
 18.30 program to provide competitive matching
 18.31 grants of up to \$500,000 to local, regional,
 18.32 state, and national organizations for enhancing,
 18.33 restoring, or protecting forests, wetlands,
 18.34 prairies, or habitat for fish, game, or wildlife
 18.35 in Minnesota. Of this amount, unless not

19.1 enough eligible grant applications are
19.2 received, at least \$4,000,000 is for grants in
19.3 the seven-county metropolitan area and cities
19.4 with a population of 50,000 or more and at
19.5 least \$4,000,000 is for grants to applicants that
19.6 have not previously applied for money from
19.7 the outdoor heritage fund. Grants must not be
19.8 made for activities required to fulfill the duties
19.9 of owners of lands subject to conservation
19.10 easements. Grants must not be made from the
19.11 appropriation in this paragraph for projects
19.12 that have a total project cost exceeding
19.13 \$1,000,000. Of the total appropriation,
19.14 \$600,000 may be spent for personnel costs,
19.15 outreach, and support to first-time applicants
19.16 and other direct and necessary administrative
19.17 costs. Grantees may acquire land or interests
19.18 in land. Easements must be permanent. Grants
19.19 may not be used to establish easement
19.20 stewardship accounts. The program must
19.21 require a match of at least ten percent from
19.22 nonstate sources for all grants. The match may
19.23 be cash or in-kind. For grant applications of
19.24 \$25,000 or less, the commissioner must
19.25 provide a separate, simplified application
19.26 process. Subject to Minnesota Statutes, the
19.27 commissioner of natural resources must, when
19.28 evaluating projects of equal value, give
19.29 priority to organizations that have a history of
19.30 receiving, or a charter to receive, private
19.31 contributions for local conservation or habitat
19.32 projects. All restoration or enhancement
19.33 projects must be on land permanently
19.34 protected by a permanent covenant ensuring
19.35 perpetual maintenance and protection of
19.36 restored and enhanced habitat, by a

20.1 conservation easement, or by public ownership
 20.2 or in public waters as defined in Minnesota
 20.3 Statutes, section 103G.005, subdivision 15.
 20.4 Priority must be given to restoration and
 20.5 enhancement projects on public lands.
 20.6 Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056,
 20.7 subdivision 13, applies to grants awarded
 20.8 under this paragraph. This appropriation is
 20.9 available until June 30, 2028. No less than five
 20.10 percent of the amount of each grant must be
 20.11 held back from reimbursement until the grant
 20.12 recipient completes a grant accomplishment
 20.13 report by the deadline and in the form
 20.14 prescribed by and satisfactory to the
 20.15 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. The
 20.16 commissioner must provide notice of the grant
 20.17 program in the summary of game and fish law
 20.18 prepared under Minnesota Statutes, section
 20.19 97A.051, subdivision 2.

20.20 **Subd. 6. Administration**

2,054,000

775,000

20.21 **(a) Contract Management**

20.22 \$410,000 the first year is to the commissioner
 20.23 of natural resources for contract management
 20.24 duties assigned in this section. The
 20.25 commissioner must provide an
 20.26 accomplishment plan in the form specified by
 20.27 the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
 20.28 on expending this appropriation. The
 20.29 accomplishment plan must include a copy of
 20.30 the grant contract template and reimbursement
 20.31 manual. No money may be expended before
 20.32 the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
 20.33 approves the accomplishment plan. Money
 20.34 appropriated in this paragraph is available until
 20.35 June 30, 2027.

21.1 **(b) Legislative Coordinating Commission**

21.2 \$732,000 the first year and \$772,000 the
21.3 second year are to the Legislative
21.4 Coordinating Commission for administrative
21.5 expenses of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor
21.6 Heritage Council and for compensating and
21.7 reimbursing expenses of council members.
21.8 This appropriation is available until June 30,
21.9 2027. Minnesota Statutes, section 16A.281,
21.10 applies to this appropriation.

21.11 **(c) Technical Evaluation Panel**

21.12 \$168,000 the first year is to the commissioner
21.13 of natural resources for a technical evaluation
21.14 panel to conduct up to 20 restoration and
21.15 enhancement evaluations under Minnesota
21.16 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 10.
21.17 Money appropriated in this paragraph is
21.18 available until June 30, 2027.

21.19 **(d) Core Functions in Partner-Led OHF Land**
21.20 **Acquisitions**

21.21 \$740,000 the first year is to the commissioner
21.22 of natural resources for administering the
21.23 initial development, restoration, and
21.24 enhancement of land acquired in fee with
21.25 money appropriated from the outdoor heritage
21.26 fund. This appropriation may be used for land
21.27 acquisition costs incurred by the department
21.28 as part of conveyance of parcels to the
21.29 Department of Natural Resources and initial
21.30 development activities on fee title acquisitions.
21.31 Money appropriated in this paragraph is
21.32 available until June 30, 2033.

21.33 **(e) Legacy Website**

22.1 \$4,000 the first year and \$3,000 the second
22.2 year are to the Legislative Coordinating
22.3 Commission for the website required under
22.4 Minnesota Statutes, section 3.303, subdivision
22.5 10.

22.6 **Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation**

22.7 (a) Money appropriated in this section may
22.8 not be spent on activities unless they are
22.9 directly related to and necessary for a specific
22.10 appropriation and are specified in the
22.11 accomplishment plan approved by the
22.12 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

22.13 Money appropriated in this section must not
22.14 be spent on indirect costs or other institutional
22.15 overhead charges that are not directly related
22.16 to and necessary for a specific appropriation.

22.17 Money appropriated for fee title acquisition
22.18 of land may be used to restore, enhance, and
22.19 provide for public use of the land acquired
22.20 with the appropriation. Public-use facilities
22.21 must have a minimal impact on habitat in
22.22 acquired lands.

22.23 (b) Money appropriated in this section is
22.24 available as follows:

22.25 (1) money appropriated for acquiring real
22.26 property is available until June 30, 2029;

22.27 (2) money appropriated for restoring and
22.28 enhancing land acquired with an appropriation
22.29 in this act is available for four years after the
22.30 acquisition date with a maximum end date of
22.31 June 30, 2033;

22.32 (3) money appropriated for restoring and
22.33 enhancing other land is available until June
22.34 30, 2030;

23.1 (4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money
 23.2 appropriated for a project that receives at least
 23.3 15 percent of its funding from federal funds
 23.4 is available until a date sufficient to match the
 23.5 availability of federal funding to a maximum
 23.6 of six years if the federal funding was
 23.7 confirmed and included in the original
 23.8 approved draft accomplishment plan; and
 23.9 (5) money appropriated for other projects is
 23.10 available until the end of the fiscal year in
 23.11 which it is appropriated.

23.12 **Subd. 8. Payment Conditions and Capital**
 23.13 **Equipment Expenditures**

23.14 (a) All agreements referred to in this section
 23.15 must be administered on a reimbursement
 23.16 basis unless otherwise provided in this section.
 23.17 Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section
 23.18 16A.41, expenditures directly related to each
 23.19 appropriation's purpose made on or after July
 23.20 1, 2025, or the date of accomplishment plan
 23.21 approval, whichever is later, are eligible for
 23.22 reimbursement unless otherwise provided in
 23.23 this section. For the purposes of administering
 23.24 appropriations and legislatively authorized
 23.25 agreements paid out of the outdoor heritage
 23.26 fund, an expense must be considered
 23.27 reimbursable by the administering agency
 23.28 when the recipient presents the agency with
 23.29 an invoice or binding agreement with the
 23.30 landowner and the recipient attests that the
 23.31 goods have been received or the landowner
 23.32 agreement is binding. Periodic reimbursement
 23.33 must be made upon receiving documentation
 23.34 that the items articulated in the
 23.35 accomplishment plan approved by the

24.1 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council have
24.2 been achieved, including partial achievements
24.3 as evidenced by progress reports approved by
24.4 the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.
24.5 Reasonable amounts may be advanced to
24.6 projects to accommodate cash flow needs,
24.7 support future management of acquired lands,
24.8 or match a federal share. The advances must
24.9 be approved as part of the accomplishment
24.10 plan. Capital equipment expenditures for
24.11 specific items in excess of \$10,000 must be
24.12 itemized in and approved as part of the
24.13 accomplishment plan.

24.14 (b) Unless otherwise provided, no money
24.15 appropriated from the outdoor heritage fund
24.16 in this act may be used to acquire, restore, or
24.17 enhance any real property unless the specific
24.18 acquisition, restoration, or enhancement is
24.19 approved as part of the accomplishment plan
24.20 on the parcel list.

24.21 **Subd. 9. Mapping**

24.22 Each direct recipient of money appropriated
24.23 in this section, as well as each recipient of a
24.24 grant awarded under this section, must provide
24.25 geographic information to the Lessard-Sams
24.26 Outdoor Heritage Council for mapping of any
24.27 lands acquired in fee with funds appropriated
24.28 in this section and open to the public taking
24.29 of fish and game. The commissioner of natural
24.30 resources must include the lands acquired in
24.31 fee with money appropriated in this section
24.32 on maps showing public recreation
24.33 opportunities. Maps must include information
24.34 on and acknowledgment of the outdoor

25.1 heritage fund, including a notation of any
 25.2 restrictions.

25.3 **Subd. 10. Carryforward**

25.4 (a) The availability of the appropriation for
 25.5 Laws 2020, chapter 104, article 1, section 2,
 25.6 subdivision 5, paragraph (b), Metro Big Rivers
 25.7 - Phase X, is extended to June 30, 2026.

25.8 (b) The availability of the appropriation for
 25.9 Laws 2020, chapter 104, article 1, section 2,
 25.10 subdivision 5, paragraph (k), St. Louis River
 25.11 Restoration Initiative - Phase VII, is extended
 25.12 to June 30, 2026.

25.13 (c) The availability of the appropriation for
 25.14 Laws 2023, chapter 40, article 1, section 2,
 25.15 subdivision 6, paragraph (d), Core Functions
 25.16 in Partner-Led OHF Land Acquisitions, is
 25.17 extended to June 30, 2031.

25.18 **Subd. 11. Cancellation**

25.19 \$120,000 of the outdoor heritage fund
 25.20 appropriation in Laws 2020, chapter 104,
 25.21 article 1, section 2, subdivision 2, paragraph
 25.22 (i), is canceled no later than June 29, 2025.

25.23 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** Subdivision 11 is effective the day following final enactment.

25.24 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 97A.056, is amended by adding a subdivision to
 25.25 read:

25.26 **Subd. 25. Federal grant fund requirements.** An interest in real property acquired with
 25.27 money appropriated from the outdoor heritage fund may be used to leverage federal grant
 25.28 funds for related conservation programs, such as Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration,
 25.29 United States Code, title 16, section 669 et seq.; Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration,
 25.30 United States Code, title 16, section 777 et seq.; and the North American Wetlands
 25.31 Conservation Act, United States Code, title 16, section 4401. These grant programs may
 25.32 place conditions on land use that require the continued use of the land for conservation
 25.33 purposes. Placement of conditions on land use under these programs does not require prior

- 26.1 review and approval of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council or its successor under
- 26.2 subdivision 15, paragraph (b).