



Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
The State of Minnesota

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

January 15, 2026

The Honorable Lisa Demuth
Speaker, House of Representatives
2nd Floor, Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Speaker Demuth,

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 2027 appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. This proposed legislation contains the Council's 18th 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 \$513 million from a cross-section of public and non-profit organizations and many levels of government. The Council's FY 2027 recommendations include 54 proposed appropriations with expenditures totaling \$188,922,000.

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:

- 6,754 acres of wetland and wetland ecosystems protected, restored, and enhanced;
- 19,455 acres of prairie and prairie ecosystems protected, restored, and enhanced;
- 36,047 acres of forest protected, restored, and enhanced;
- 6,596 acres of aquatic and other habitat protected, restored, and enhanced; and
- 40 miles of shoreline protected, restored, and enhanced

Restoration and enhancement of permanently protected lands accounts for approximately 42% of acres impacted by these recommendations. Over 68,852 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 heritage and legacy.

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 outdoor heritage fund;
 1.3 extending and modifying prior appropriations.

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

1.5 Section 1. **APPROPRIATIONS.**

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

1.17 Sec. 2. **OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND**

1.18 <u>Subdivision 1. Total Appropriation</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>188,922,000</u>
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1.19 This appropriation is from the outdoor heritage
 1.20 fund. The amounts that may be spent for each
 1.21 purpose are specified in the following
 1.22 subdivisions.

- 2.1 Subd. 2. **Prairies** -0- 35,901,000
- 2.2 **(a) RIM Grasslands Reserve, Phase 7**
- 2.3 \$2,303,000 the second year is to acquire
- 2.4 permanent conservation easements and to
- 2.5 restore and enhance wildlife habitat. Of this
- 2.6 amount, \$189,000 is to the commissioner of
- 2.7 natural resources for an agreement with Ducks
- 2.8 Unlimited and \$2,114,000 is to the Board of
- 2.9 Water and Soil Resources. Of the amount to
- 2.10 the Board of Water and Soil Resources, up to
- 2.11 \$50,000 is to establish a monitoring and
- 2.12 enforcement fund as approved in the
- 2.13 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
- 2.14 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. A
- 2.15 list of permanent conservation easements must
- 2.16 be provided as part of the final report.
- 2.17 **(b) Accelerating Wildlife Management Area**
- 2.18 **Program, Phase 18**
- 2.19 \$4,460,000 the second year is to the
- 2.20 commissioner of natural resources for an
- 2.21 agreement with Pheasants Forever to acquire
- 2.22 in fee and to restore and enhance lands for
- 2.23 wildlife management area purposes under
- 2.24 Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,
- 2.25 subdivision 8. Subject to evaluation criteria
- 2.26 in Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority
- 2.27 must be given to acquiring lands that are
- 2.28 eligible for the native prairie bank under
- 2.29 Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands
- 2.30 adjacent to protected native prairie.
- 2.31 **(c) DNR Wildlife Management Area and**
- 2.32 **Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition,**
- 2.33 **Phase 18**

3.1 \$3,455,000 the second year is to the
 3.2 commissioner of natural resources to acquire
 3.3 in fee and to restore and enhance lands for
 3.4 wildlife management purposes under
 3.5 Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,
 3.6 subdivision 8, and to acquire land in fee for
 3.7 scientific and natural area purposes under
 3.8 Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,
 3.9 subdivision 5. Subject to evaluation criteria
 3.10 in Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority
 3.11 must be given to acquiring lands that are
 3.12 eligible for the native prairie bank under
 3.13 Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands
 3.14 adjacent to protected native prairie.

3.15 **(d) Martin County DNR WMA Acquisition,**
 3.16 **Phase 10**

3.17 \$2,977,000 the second year is to the
 3.18 commissioner of natural resources for
 3.19 agreements to acquire land in fee and to
 3.20 restore and enhance strategic prairie grassland,
 3.21 wetland, and other wildlife habitat in Martin
 3.22 and Watonwan Counties for wildlife
 3.23 management area purposes under Minnesota
 3.24 Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, as
 3.25 follows: \$2,323,000 to Fox Lake Conservation
 3.26 League, Inc.; \$583,000 to Ducks Unlimited;
 3.27 and \$71,000 to the Conservation Fund.

3.28 **(e) Northern Tallgrass Prairie National**
 3.29 **Wildlife Refuge, Phase 16**

3.30 \$3,046,000 the second year is to the
 3.31 commissioner of natural resources for an
 3.32 agreement with The Nature Conservancy, in
 3.33 cooperation with the United States Fish and
 3.34 Wildlife Service, to acquire land in fee or
 3.35 permanent conservation easements and to

4.1 restore and enhance lands in the Northern
 4.2 Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area in
 4.3 western Minnesota to add to the Northern
 4.4 Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge.
 4.5 Subject to evaluation criteria in Minnesota
 4.6 Rules, part 6136.0900, priority must be given
 4.7 to acquiring lands that are eligible for the
 4.8 native prairie bank under Minnesota Statutes,
 4.9 section 84.96, or lands adjacent to protected
 4.10 native prairie.

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

4.13 \$3,445,000 the second year is to the
 4.14 commissioner of natural resources for an
 4.15 agreement with The Nature Conservancy to
 4.16 acquire land in fee and to restore and enhance
 4.17 native prairie, grasslands, wetlands, and
 4.18 savanna. Subject to evaluation criteria in
 4.19 Minnesota Rules, part 6136.0900, priority
 4.20 must be given to acquiring lands that are
 4.21 eligible for the native prairie bank under
 4.22 Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, or lands
 4.23 adjacent to protected native prairie. Annual
 4.24 income statements and balance sheets for
 4.25 income and expenses from land acquired and
 4.26 held by The Nature Conservancy with this
 4.27 appropriation must be submitted to the
 4.28 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council no
 4.29 later than 180 days after the The Nature
 4.30 Conservancy's fiscal year closes.

4.31 **(g) Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of**
 4.32 **Southern Red River Valley, Phase 12**

4.33 \$3,053,000 the second year is to the
 4.34 commissioner of natural resources for an
 4.35 agreement with Pheasants Forever, in

5.1 cooperation with the Minnesota Prairie
 5.2 Chicken Society, to acquire land in fee and to
 5.3 restore and enhance lands in the southern Red
 5.4 River Valley for wildlife management
 5.5 purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section
 5.6 86A.05, subdivision 8, or to be designated and
 5.7 managed as waterfowl production areas in
 5.8 Minnesota, in cooperation with the United
 5.9 States Fish and Wildlife Service. Subject to
 5.10 evaluation criteria in Minnesota Rules, part
 5.11 6136.0900, priority must be given to acquiring
 5.12 lands that are eligible for the native prairie
 5.13 bank under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96,
 5.14 or lands adjacent to protected native prairie.

5.15 **(h) RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water,**
 5.16 **Phase 12**

5.17 \$3,694,000 the second year is to the Board of
 5.18 Water and Soil Resources to acquire
 5.19 permanent conservation easements and restore
 5.20 habitat under Minnesota Statutes, section
 5.21 103F.515, to protect, restore, and enhance
 5.22 habitat by expanding the riparian buffer
 5.23 program under the clean water fund for
 5.24 additional wildlife benefits from buffers on
 5.25 private land. Of this amount, up to \$60,000 is
 5.26 to establish a monitoring and enforcement
 5.27 fund as approved in the accomplishment plan
 5.28 and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 5.29 97A.056, subdivision 17. Subdivision 8,
 5.30 paragraph (b), does not apply to this project.
 5.31 A list of permanent conservation easements
 5.32 must be provided as part of the final report.

5.33 **(i) Accelerating USFWS Habitat**
 5.34 **Conservation Easement Program, Phase 6**

6.1 \$4,448,000 the second year is to the
 6.2 commissioner of natural resources for
 6.3 agreements to restore and enhance wetland
 6.4 and prairie habitat on habitat easements of the
 6.5 United States Fish and Wildlife Service as
 6.6 follows: \$2,979,000 to Ducks Unlimited and
 6.7 \$1,469,000 to Pheasants Forever.

6.8 **(j) DNR Grassland Enhancement, Phase 17**

6.9 \$2,111,000 the second year is to the
 6.10 commissioner of natural resources to
 6.11 accelerate restoration and enhancement of
 6.12 prairies, grasslands, and savannas in wildlife
 6.13 management areas; in scientific and natural
 6.14 areas; in aquatic management areas; on lands
 6.15 in the native prairie bank; in bluff prairies on
 6.16 state forest land in southeastern Minnesota;
 6.17 and in waterfowl production areas and refuge
 6.18 lands of the United States Fish and Wildlife
 6.19 Service.

6.20 **(k) Enhanced Public Land - Grasslands,**
 6.21 **Phase 9**

6.22 \$2,909,000 the second year is to the
 6.23 commissioner of natural resources for an
 6.24 agreement with Pheasants Forever to enhance
 6.25 and restore grassland and wetland habitat on
 6.26 public lands in the forest prairie transition,
 6.27 metro urban, and prairie ecoregions of
 6.28 Minnesota.

6.29 **Subd. 3. Forests**

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36,780,000

6.30 **(a) Northern Forests Legacy Project**

6.31 \$25,090,000 the second year is to the
 6.32 commissioner of natural resources to acquire
 6.33 priority forest lands in fee in St. Louis County
 6.34 as wildlife management areas, scientific and

7.1 natural areas, state forests, and county forests.

7.2 Of this amount, \$12,866,000 is for an

7.3 agreement with St. Louis County.

7.4 **(b) Sand Lake and Seven Beavers**

7.5 **Acquisition and Enhancement**

7.6 \$7,248,000 the second year is to the

7.7 commissioner of natural resources for an

7.8 agreement with The Nature Conservancy to

7.9 acquire priority forest habitat lands in fee as

7.10 The Nature Conservancy lands, Rajala Woods

7.11 Foundation lands, state forests, and county

7.12 forests. For lands held in perpetuity by The

7.13 Nature Conservancy and Rajala Woods

7.14 Foundation, annual income statements and

7.15 balance sheets for income and expenses from

7.16 land acquired with this appropriation must be

7.17 submitted to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor

7.18 Heritage Council no later than 180 days after

7.19 each organization's respective fiscal year

7.20 closes.

7.21 **(c) Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation**

7.22 **Program, Phase 3**

7.23 \$2,524,000 the second year is to the

7.24 commissioner of natural resources for

7.25 agreements to acquire permanent conservation

7.26 easements and to restore and enhance forest

7.27 habitats in the hardwood hills ecological

7.28 section of west-central Minnesota as follows:

7.29 \$90,000 to St. John's University, \$354,000 to

7.30 Stearns Conservation District, and \$2,080,000

7.31 to Minnesota Land Trust. Of the amount to

7.32 Minnesota Land Trust, \$252,000 is to establish

7.33 a monitoring and enforcement fund as

7.34 approved in the accomplishment plan and

8.1 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
8.2 97A.056, subdivision 17.

8.3 **(d) DNR Forest Habitat Enhancement,**
8.4 **Phase 6**

8.5 \$1,918,000 the second year is to the
8.6 commissioner of natural resources to restore
8.7 and enhance forest wildlife habitats on public
8.8 lands throughout Minnesota.

8.9 Subd. 4. Wetlands -0- 32,755,000

8.10 **(a) Accelerating Waterfowl Production**
8.11 **Area Acquisition Program, Phase 18**

8.12 \$5,358,000 the second year is to the
8.13 commissioner of natural resources for an
8.14 agreement with Pheasants Forever, in
8.15 cooperation with the United States Fish and
8.16 Wildlife Service, to acquire land in fee and to
8.17 restore and enhance wetlands and grasslands
8.18 to be designated and managed as waterfowl
8.19 production areas in Minnesota.

8.20 **(b) RIM Wetlands - Restoring Most**
8.21 **Productive Habitat in Minnesota, Phase 15**

8.22 \$3,455,000 the second year is to the Board of
8.23 Water and Soil Resources to acquire
8.24 permanent conservation easements and to
8.25 restore wetlands and native grassland habitat
8.26 under Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515.
8.27 Of this amount, up to \$60,000 is to establish
8.28 a monitoring and enforcement fund as
8.29 approved in the accomplishment plan and
8.30 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
8.31 97A.056, subdivision 17. Subdivision 8,
8.32 paragraph (b), does not apply to this project.
8.33 A list of permanent conservation easements
8.34 must be provided as part of the final report.

9.1 **(c) Shallow Lake and Wetland Protection**
9.2 **and Restoration Program, Phase 15**

9.3 \$6,005,000 the second year is to the
9.4 commissioner of natural resources for an
9.5 agreement with Ducks Unlimited to acquire
9.6 land in fee for wildlife management purposes
9.7 under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05,
9.8 subdivision 8, or to be designated and
9.9 managed as waterfowl production areas or
9.10 national wildlife refuges in Minnesota, in
9.11 cooperation with the United States Fish and
9.12 Wildlife Service, and to restore and enhance
9.13 prairie lands, wetlands, and land-buffering
9.14 shallow lakes.

9.15 **(d) Wetland Habitat Protection and**
9.16 **Restoration Program, Phase 11**

9.17 \$3,167,000 the second year is to the
9.18 commissioner of natural resources for an
9.19 agreement with Minnesota Land Trust to
9.20 acquire permanent conservation easements
9.21 and to restore and enhance prairie, wetland,
9.22 and other habitat on permanently protected
9.23 conservation easements in high-priority
9.24 wetland habitat complexes in the prairie,
9.25 forest/prairie transition, and forest ecoregions.
9.26 Of this amount, up to \$140,000 is to establish
9.27 a monitoring and enforcement fund as
9.28 approved in the accomplishment plan and
9.29 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
9.30 97A.056, subdivision 17.

9.31 **(e) Living Shallow Lakes and Wetlands**
9.32 **Enhancement and Restoration Initiative,**
9.33 **Phase 12**

10.1 \$6,571,000 the second year is to the
 10.2 commissioner of natural resources for an
 10.3 agreement with Ducks Unlimited to restore
 10.4 and enhance shallow lakes and wetlands on
 10.5 public lands and wetlands under permanent
 10.6 conservation easement for wildlife
 10.7 management.

10.8 **(f) Talcot Lake**

10.9 \$1,000,000 the second year is to the
 10.10 commissioner of natural resources for the
 10.11 survey, design, engineering, and permitting
 10.12 of the Talcot Lake restoration and
 10.13 enhancement project in Cottonwood County.

10.14 **(g) Roseau Lake Rehabilitation, Phase 3**

10.15 \$3,505,000 the second year is to the
 10.16 commissioner of natural resources for an
 10.17 agreement with the Roseau River Watershed
 10.18 District to restore and enhance the Roseau
 10.19 Lake and Roseau River habitat complex in
 10.20 Roseau County.

10.21 **(h) Shallow Lakes and Wetlands**

10.22 **Enhancement, Phase 18**

10.23 \$3,694,000 the second year is to the
 10.24 commissioner of natural resources to enhance
 10.25 and restore shallow lakes and wetland habitat
 10.26 statewide.

10.27 **Subd. 5. Habitats**

-0-

81,330,000

10.28 **(a) Riparian Habitat Protection in Kettle**
 10.29 **and Snake River Watersheds, Phase 3**

10.30 \$1,122,000 the second year is to the Board of
 10.31 Water and Soil Resources, in cooperation with
 10.32 the Pine County Soil and Water Conservation
 10.33 District, to acquire permanent conservation

11.1 easements and restore high-quality forests,
 11.2 wetlands, and shoreline in the Kettle and
 11.3 Snake River watersheds. Of this amount, up
 11.4 to \$70,000 is to establish a monitoring and
 11.5 enforcement fund as approved in the
 11.6 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
 11.7 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.
 11.8 Subdivision 8, paragraph (b), does not apply
 11.9 to this project. A list of permanent
 11.10 conservation easements must be provided as
 11.11 part of the final report.

11.12 **(b) Cannon River Watershed Habitat**
 11.13 **Restoration and Protection Program, Phase**
 11.14 **15**

11.15 \$2,847,000 the second year is to the
 11.16 commissioner of natural resources for
 11.17 agreements to acquire lands in fee and to
 11.18 restore and enhance wildlife habitat in the
 11.19 Cannon River Watershed as follows: \$92,000
 11.20 to Clean River Partners and \$2,755,000 to
 11.21 Trust for Public Land.

11.22 **(c) DNR Aquatic Management Area**
 11.23 **Acquisition and Trout Stream Easement**
 11.24 **Acquisition**

11.25 \$2,153,000 the second year is to the
 11.26 commissioner of natural resources to acquire
 11.27 land in fee as aquatic management areas and
 11.28 to acquire permanent conservation easements
 11.29 to protect trout-stream aquatic habitat. Of this
 11.30 amount, up to \$88,000 is to establish a
 11.31 monitoring and enforcement fund as approved
 11.32 in the accomplishment plan and subject to
 11.33 Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056,
 11.34 subdivision 17.

- 12.1 **(d) Washington County Habitat Protection**
 12.2 **and Enhancement Partnership, Phase 2**
- 12.3 \$2,774,000 the second year is to the
 12.4 commissioner of natural resources for
 12.5 agreements to acquire permanent conservation
 12.6 easements and to restore and enhance wildlife
 12.7 habitats in Washington County as follows:
 12.8 \$741,000 to Washington County and
 12.9 \$2,033,000 to Minnesota Land Trust. Of the
 12.10 amount to Minnesota Land Trust, \$196,000 is
 12.11 to establish a monitoring and enforcement
 12.12 fund as approved in the accomplishment plan
 12.13 and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 12.14 97A.056, subdivision 17.
- 12.15 **(e) Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic**
 12.16 **North Central Minnesota Lakes, Phase 12**
- 12.17 \$2,286,000 the second year is to the
 12.18 commissioner of natural resources for an
 12.19 agreement with Northern Waters Land Trust
 12.20 to acquire land in fee and to restore and
 12.21 enhance wildlife habitat to sustain healthy fish
 12.22 habitat on coldwater lakes in Aitkin, Cass,
 12.23 Crow Wing, and Hubbard Counties.
- 12.24 **(f) Greenbelt, Phase 1**
- 12.25 \$1,448,000 the second year is to the
 12.26 commissioner of natural resources for an
 12.27 agreement with Comfort Lake-Forest Lake
 12.28 Watershed District to acquire land in fee and
 12.29 permanent conservation easements and to
 12.30 restore and enhance wildlife habitat within the
 12.31 Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District
 12.32 boundary.
- 12.33 **(g) Integrating Habitat and Clean Water,**
 12.34 **Phase 4**

13.1 \$1,803,000 the second year is to the Board of
 13.2 Water and Soil Resources to acquire
 13.3 permanent conservation easements and to
 13.4 restore and enhance wildlife habitat identified
 13.5 under the One Watershed, One Plan program
 13.6 for stacked benefit to wildlife and clean water.
 13.7 Of this amount, up to \$40,000 is to establish
 13.8 a monitoring and enforcement fund as
 13.9 approved in the accomplishment plan and
 13.10 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 13.11 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of permanent
 13.12 conservation easements must be provided as
 13.13 part of the final report.

13.14 **(h) Metro Big Rivers, Phase 16**

13.15 \$6,685,000 the second year is to the
 13.16 commissioner of natural resources for
 13.17 agreements to acquire land in fee and to
 13.18 restore and enhance natural habitat systems
 13.19 associated with the Mississippi, Minnesota,
 13.20 and St. Croix Rivers and their tributaries in
 13.21 the metropolitan area as follows: \$1,468,000
 13.22 to Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
 13.23 Trust, Inc.; \$869,000 to Friends of the
 13.24 Mississippi River; \$1,032,000 to Great River
 13.25 Greening; and \$3,316,000 to Trust for Public
 13.26 Land.

13.27 **(i) Mississippi Headwaters Habitat**
 13.28 **Corridor Project, Phase 10**

13.29 \$2,733,000 the second year is to acquire lands
 13.30 in fee and permanent conservation easements
 13.31 and to restore wildlife habitat in the
 13.32 Mississippi headwaters. Of this amount, (1)
 13.33 \$1,369,000 is to the commissioner of natural
 13.34 resources for agreements as follows: \$60,000
 13.35 to the Mississippi Headwaters Board and

14.1 \$1,309,000 to Trust for Public Land; and (2)
 14.2 \$1,364,000 is to the Board of Water and Soil
 14.3 Resources, of which up to \$70,000 is to
 14.4 establish a monitoring and enforcement fund
 14.5 as approved in the accomplishment plan and
 14.6 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 14.7 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of permanent
 14.8 conservation easements must be provided as
 14.9 part of the final report.

14.10 **(j) Protecting Coldwater Fisheries on**
 14.11 **Minnesota's North Shore, Phase 4**
 14.12 \$1,673,000 the second year is to the
 14.13 commissioner of natural resources for an
 14.14 agreement with Minnesota Land Trust to
 14.15 acquire permanent conservation easements
 14.16 and to restore and enhance wildlife habitat in
 14.17 priority coldwater tributaries to Lake Superior.
 14.18 Of this amount, up to \$196,000 is to establish
 14.19 a monitoring and enforcement fund as
 14.20 approved in the accomplishment plan and
 14.21 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 14.22 97A.056, subdivision 17.

14.23 **(k) Protecting Minnesota's Lakes of**
 14.24 **Outstanding Biological Significance, Phase**
 14.25 **5**
 14.26 \$2,943,000 the second year is to the
 14.27 commissioner of natural resources for
 14.28 agreements to acquire land in fee and
 14.29 permanent conservation easements and to
 14.30 restore and enhance lakes of outstanding
 14.31 biological significance in northeast and
 14.32 north-central Minnesota. Of this amount,
 14.33 \$1,592,000 is to the Northern Waters Land
 14.34 Trust and \$1,351,000 is to Minnesota Land
 14.35 Trust. Of the amount to Minnesota Land Trust,

15.1 up to \$140,000 is to establish a monitoring
15.2 and enforcement fund as approved in the
15.3 accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota
15.4 Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17.

15.5 **(l) Red River Basin Riparian Habitat**
15.6 **Program, Phase 2**

15.7 \$3,867,000 the second year is to acquire
15.8 permanent conservation easements to protect,
15.9 restore, and enhance stream and riparian
15.10 habitat throughout the Red River watershed.
15.11 Of this amount, \$116,000 is to the
15.12 commissioner of natural resources for
15.13 agreements with the Red River Watershed
15.14 Management Board and \$3,751,000 is to the
15.15 Board of Water and Soil Resources. Of the
15.16 amount to the Board of Water and Soil
15.17 Resources, up to \$250,000 is to establish a
15.18 monitoring and enforcement fund as approved
15.19 in the accomplishment plan and subject to
15.20 Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056,
15.21 subdivision 17. A list of permanent
15.22 conservation easements must be provided as
15.23 part of the final report.

15.24 **(m) Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat**
15.25 **Restoration Program, Phase 15**

15.26 \$2,039,000 the second year is to the
15.27 commissioner of natural resources for an
15.28 agreement with the Shell Rock River
15.29 Watershed District to acquire land in fee and
15.30 to restore and enhance habitat in the Shell
15.31 Rock River watershed.

15.32 **(n) Southeast Minnesota Protection and**
15.33 **Restoration, Phase 14**

16.1 \$7,849,000 the second 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 wildlife habitat in
 16.6 southeast Minnesota. Of this amount,
 16.7 \$1,000,000 is to The Nature Conservancy,
 16.8 \$5,788,000 is to Trust for Public Land, and
 16.9 \$1,061,000 is to Minnesota Land Trust. Of the
 16.10 amount to Minnesota Land Trust, up to
 16.11 \$140,000 is to establish 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 **(o) St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection**
 16.16 **and Restoration, Phase 7**

16.17 \$3,807,000 the second year is to the
 16.18 commissioner of natural resources for
 16.19 agreements to acquire land in fee and acquire
 16.20 permanent conservation easements and to
 16.21 restore and enhance natural habitat systems in
 16.22 the St. Croix River watershed as follows:
 16.23 \$2,131,000 to Trust for Public Land, \$130,000
 16.24 to Wild Rivers Conservancy, and \$1,546,000
 16.25 to Minnesota Land Trust. Of the amount to
 16.26 Minnesota Land Trust, up to \$140,000 is to
 16.27 establish a monitoring and enforcement fund
 16.28 as approved in the accomplishment plan and
 16.29 subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 16.30 97A.056, subdivision 17.

16.31 **(p) Upper Mississippi Flyway Habitat**
 16.32 **Conservation Program**

16.33 \$2,127,000 the second year is to the
 16.34 commissioner of natural resources for an
 16.35 agreement with Minnesota Land Trust to

17.1 acquire permanent conservation easements
 17.2 and to restore and enhance wetlands, stream
 17.3 corridors, and associated uplands in central
 17.4 Minnesota. Of this amount, up to \$196,000 is
 17.5 to establish a monitoring and enforcement
 17.6 fund as approved in the accomplishment plan
 17.7 and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section
 17.8 97A.056, subdivision 17.

17.9 **(q) A River of Birds in the Sky: Conserving**
 17.10 **Minnesota's Flyway**

17.11 \$1,211,000 the second year is to the
 17.12 commissioner of natural resources for an
 17.13 agreement with National Audubon Society to
 17.14 restore and enhance priority wildlife habitat
 17.15 along the St. Croix, Minnesota, and
 17.16 Mississippi river valleys.

17.17 **(r) Bone Lake South, Phase 2**

17.18 \$1,413,000 the second year is to the
 17.19 commissioner of natural resources for an
 17.20 agreement with Comfort Lake-Forest Lake
 17.21 Watershed District to restore and enhance
 17.22 wildlife habitat in the Bone Lake south habitat
 17.23 complex in Washington County.

17.24 **(s) DNR Aquatic Habitat Restoration and**
 17.25 **Enhancement, Phase 9**

17.26 \$6,429,000 the second year is to the
 17.27 commissioner of natural resources to restore
 17.28 and enhance aquatic habitat in degraded
 17.29 streams and aquatic management areas and to
 17.30 facilitate fish passage throughout Minnesota.

17.31 **(t) Little Cannon River Stream Habitat**
 17.32 **Restoration**

- 18.1 \$500,000 the second year is to the
 18.2 commissioner of natural resources for
 18.3 agreements for survey, design, engineering,
 18.4 and permitting of the Little Cannon River
 18.5 restoration and enhancement project in
 18.6 Goodhue County as follows: \$40,000 to Clean
 18.7 Rivers Partners, \$10,000 to Great River
 18.8 Greening, and \$450,000 to Trout Unlimited.
- 18.9 **(u) Mission Creek Watershed Connectivity**
- 18.10 \$1,279,000 the second year is to the
 18.11 commissioner of natural resources to restore
 18.12 and enhance coldwater stream habitat in the
 18.13 Mission Creek watershed in St. Louis County.
- 18.14 **(v) Mud River Enhancement Project**
- 18.15 \$2,917,000 the second year is to the
 18.16 commissioner of natural resources for an
 18.17 agreement with Red Lake Watershed District
 18.18 to restore and enhance the Mud River habitat
 18.19 complex in Marshall County.
- 18.20 **(w) Oak Savanna Restoration for Living**
 18.21 **Landscapes**
- 18.22 \$1,679,000 the second year is to the Board of
 18.23 Water and Soil Resources, in partnership with
 18.24 the Xerces Society, to restore and enhance oak
 18.25 savanna and associated ecosystems on local
 18.26 public and Tribal lands.
- 18.27 **(x) Swift Coulee Channel Restoration and**
 18.28 **Enhancement, Phase 2**
- 18.29 \$2,635,000 the second year is to the
 18.30 commissioner of natural resources for an
 18.31 agreement with the Middle-Snake-Tamarac
 18.32 Rivers Watershed District to restore and
 18.33 enhance priority habitat associated with the

19.1 Swift Coulee channel restoration in Marshall
19.2 County.

19.3 **(y) Woods Creek Restoration**

19.4 \$750,000 the second year is to the
19.5 commissioner of natural resources for an
19.6 agreement with Cook County to restore and
19.7 enhance coldwater stream habitat in Woods
19.8 Creek in Cook County.

19.9 **(z) Minnesota Statewide Trout Habitat**
19.10 **Enhancement and Protection**

19.11 \$750,000 the second year is to the
19.12 commissioner of natural resources for an
19.13 agreement with Trout Unlimited for survey,
19.14 design, engineering, and permitting of trout
19.15 stream restoration and enhancement projects
19.16 throughout Minnesota.

19.17 **(aa) Conservation Partners Legacy Grant**
19.18 **Program: Statewide and Metro Habitat,**
19.19 **Phase 18**

19.20 \$13,611,000 the second year is to the
19.21 commissioner of natural resources for a
19.22 program to provide competitive matching
19.23 grants of up to \$500,000 to local, regional,
19.24 state, and national organizations for enhancing,
19.25 restoring, or protecting forests, wetlands,
19.26 prairies, or habitat for fish, game, or wildlife
19.27 in Minnesota. Unless there are not enough
19.28 eligible grant applications received, of this
19.29 amount, at least \$3,500,000 is for grants in the
19.30 seven-county metropolitan area and cities with
19.31 a population of 50,000 or more and at least
19.32 \$3,000,000 is for grants to applicants that have
19.33 not previously applied for money from the
19.34 outdoor heritage fund. Grants must not be

20.1 made for activities required to fulfill the duties
20.2 of owners of lands subject to conservation
20.3 easements. Grants must not be made from the
20.4 appropriation in this paragraph for projects
20.5 that have a total project cost exceeding
20.6 \$1,000,000. Of the total appropriation,
20.7 \$600,000 may be spent for personnel costs,
20.8 outreach, and support to first-time applicants
20.9 and other direct and necessary administrative
20.10 costs. Grantees may acquire land or interests
20.11 in land. Easements must be permanent. Grants
20.12 may not be used to establish easement
20.13 stewardship accounts. The program must
20.14 require a match of at least ten percent from
20.15 nonstate sources for all grants. The match may
20.16 be cash or in-kind. For grant applications of
20.17 \$25,000 or less, the commissioner must
20.18 provide a separate, simplified application
20.19 process. Subject to Minnesota Statutes, the
20.20 commissioner of natural resources must, when
20.21 evaluating projects of equal value, give
20.22 priority to organizations that have a history of
20.23 receiving, or a charter to receive, private
20.24 contributions for local conservation or habitat
20.25 projects. All restoration or enhancement
20.26 projects must be on land permanently
20.27 protected by a permanent covenant ensuring
20.28 perpetual maintenance and protection of
20.29 restored and enhanced habitat, by a
20.30 conservation easement, or by public ownership
20.31 or in public waters as defined in Minnesota
20.32 Statutes, section 103G.005, subdivision 15.
20.33 Priority must be given to restoration and
20.34 enhancement projects on public lands.
20.35 Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056,
20.36 subdivision 13, applies to grants awarded

21.1 under this paragraph. This appropriation is
 21.2 available until June 30, 2029. No less than five
 21.3 percent of the amount of each grant must be
 21.4 held back from reimbursement until the grant
 21.5 recipient completes a grant accomplishment
 21.6 report by the deadline and in the form
 21.7 prescribed by and satisfactory to the
 21.8 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. The
 21.9 commissioner must provide notice of the grant
 21.10 program in the summary of game and fish law
 21.11 prepared under Minnesota Statutes, section
 21.12 97A.051, subdivision 2.

21.13 **Subd. 6. Administration** -0- 2,156,000

21.14 **(a) Contract Management**

21.15 \$450,000 the second year is to the
 21.16 commissioner of natural resources for contract
 21.17 management duties assigned in this section.
 21.18 The commissioner must provide an
 21.19 accomplishment plan in the form specified by
 21.20 the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
 21.21 on expending this appropriation. The
 21.22 accomplishment plan must include a copy of
 21.23 the grant contract template and reimbursement
 21.24 manual. No money may be expended before
 21.25 the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
 21.26 approves the accomplishment plan. Money
 21.27 appropriated in this paragraph is available until
 21.28 June 30, 2028.

21.29 **(b) Core Functions in Partner-led OHF**

21.30 **Land Acquisitions**

21.31 \$1,377,000 the second year is to the
 21.32 commissioner of natural resources to
 21.33 administer the initial development, restoration,
 21.34 and enhancement of land acquired in fee with

22.1 money appropriated from the outdoor heritage
 22.2 fund. This appropriation may be used for land
 22.3 acquisition costs incurred by the Department
 22.4 of Natural Resources as part of conveyance
 22.5 of parcels to the department and initial
 22.6 development activities on fee title acquisitions.
 22.7 Money appropriated in this paragraph is
 22.8 available until June 30, 2034.

22.9 **(c) Technical Evaluation Panel**

22.10 \$189,000 the second year is to the
 22.11 commissioner of natural resources for a
 22.12 technical evaluation panel to conduct up to 20
 22.13 restoration and enhancement evaluations under
 22.14 Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056,
 22.15 subdivision 10. Money appropriated in this
 22.16 paragraph is available until June 30, 2028.

22.17 **(d) Legislative Coordinating Commission**

22.18 \$140,000 the second year is to the Legislative
 22.19 Coordinating Commission for administrative
 22.20 expenses of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor
 22.21 Heritage Council and for compensating and
 22.22 reimbursing expenses of council members.
 22.23 This appropriation is in addition to the fiscal
 22.24 year 2027 appropriation in Laws 2025, chapter
 22.25 36, article 1, section 2, subdivision 6,
 22.26 paragraph (b), and is available until June 30,
 22.27 2027. Minnesota Statutes, section 16A.281,
 22.28 applies to this appropriation.

22.29 **Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation**

22.30 (a) Money appropriated in this section may
 22.31 not be spent on activities unless they are
 22.32 directly related to and necessary for a specific
 22.33 appropriation and are specified in the
 22.34 accomplishment plan approved by the

- 23.1 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.
- 23.2 Money appropriated in this section must not
- 23.3 be spent on indirect costs or other institutional
- 23.4 overhead charges that are not directly related
- 23.5 to and necessary for a specific appropriation.
- 23.6 Money appropriated for fee title acquisition
- 23.7 of land may be used to restore, enhance, and
- 23.8 provide for public use of the land acquired
- 23.9 with the appropriation. Public-use facilities
- 23.10 must have a minimal impact on habitat in
- 23.11 acquired lands.
- 23.12 (b) Money appropriated in this section is
- 23.13 available as follows:
- 23.14 (1) money appropriated to acquire real
- 23.15 property is available until June 30, 2030;
- 23.16 (2) money appropriated to restore and enhance
- 23.17 land acquired with an appropriation in this act
- 23.18 is available for four years after the acquisition
- 23.19 date with a maximum end date of June 30,
- 23.20 2034;
- 23.21 (3) money appropriated to restore and enhance
- 23.22 other land is available until June 30, 2031;
- 23.23 (4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money
- 23.24 appropriated for a project that receives at least
- 23.25 15 percent of its funding from federal funds
- 23.26 is available until a date sufficient to match the
- 23.27 availability of federal funding to a maximum
- 23.28 of six years if the federal funding was
- 23.29 confirmed and included in the original
- 23.30 approved draft accomplishment plan; and
- 23.31 (5) money appropriated for other projects is
- 23.32 available until the end of the fiscal year in
- 23.33 which it is appropriated.

24.1 **Subd. 8. Payment Conditions and Capital**
24.2 **Equipment Expenditures**

24.3 (a) All agreements referred to in this section
24.4 must be administered on a reimbursement
24.5 basis unless otherwise provided in this section.

24.6 Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section
24.7 16A.41, expenditures directly related to each
24.8 appropriation's purpose made on or after July
24.9 1, 2026, or the date of accomplishment plan
24.10 approval, whichever is later, are eligible for
24.11 reimbursement unless otherwise provided in
24.12 this section. For the purposes of administering
24.13 appropriations and legislatively authorized
24.14 agreements paid out of the outdoor heritage
24.15 fund, an expense must be considered
24.16 reimbursable by the administering agency
24.17 when the recipient presents the agency with
24.18 an invoice or a binding agreement with the
24.19 landowner and the recipient attests that the
24.20 goods have been received or the landowner
24.21 agreement is binding. Periodic reimbursement
24.22 must be made upon receiving documentation
24.23 that the items articulated in the
24.24 accomplishment plan approved by the
24.25 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council have
24.26 been achieved, including partial achievements
24.27 as evidenced by progress reports approved by
24.28 the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

24.29 Reasonable amounts may be advanced to
24.30 projects to accommodate cash flow needs,
24.31 support future management of acquired lands,
24.32 or match a federal share. The advances must
24.33 be approved as part of the accomplishment
24.34 plan. Capital equipment expenditures for
24.35 specific items in excess of \$10,000 must be

- 25.1 itemized in and approved as part of the
25.2 accomplishment plan.
- 25.3 (b) Unless otherwise provided, no money
25.4 appropriated from the outdoor heritage fund
25.5 in this act may be used to acquire, restore, or
25.6 enhance any real property unless the specific
25.7 acquisition, restoration, or enhancement is
25.8 approved as part of the accomplishment plan
25.9 on the parcel list.
- 25.10 (c) Reimbursement of eligible expenses must
25.11 be submitted no later than 12 months after the
25.12 approval of the final report.
- 25.13 **Subd. 9. Mapping**
- 25.14 Each direct recipient of money appropriated
25.15 in this section, as well as each recipient of a
25.16 grant awarded according to this section, must
25.17 provide geographic information to the
25.18 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council for
25.19 mapping any lands acquired in fee with funds
25.20 appropriated in this section and open to public
25.21 taking of fish and game. The commissioner
25.22 of natural resources must include the lands
25.23 acquired in fee with money appropriated in
25.24 this section on maps showing public recreation
25.25 opportunities. Maps must include information
25.26 on and acknowledgment of the outdoor
25.27 heritage fund, including a notation of any
25.28 restrictions.
- 25.29 **Subd. 10. Carryforward**
- 25.30 (a) The availability of the appropriation for
25.31 Laws 2021, First Special Session chapter 1,
25.32 article 1, section 2, subdivision 5, paragraph
25.33 (l), St. Louis River Restoration Initiative,
25.34 Phase VIII, is extended to June 30, 2027.

- 26.1 (b) The availability of the appropriation for
26.2 Laws 2022, chapter 77, article 1, section 2,
26.3 subdivision 5, paragraph (u), Daylighting
26.4 Phalen Creek, is extended to June 30, 2028.
- 26.5 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** Subdivision 10 is effective the day following final enactment.