

Request for Funding

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fiscal Year 2015 / ML 2014

Program or Project Title: Grey Cloud Slough Habitat Restoration

Funds Requested: \$452,000

Manager's Name: John Loomis
Title: Water Resource Specialist
Organization: South Washington Watershed District
Street Address: 2302 Tower Dr
City: Woodbury, MN 55125
Telephone: 651-714-3714
E-Mail: jloomis@ci.woodbury.mn.us
Organization Web Site: www.swwdmn.org

County Locations: No Counties Listed

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Metro / Urban

Activity Type:

- Restore

Priority Resources Addressed by Activity:

- Habitat

Abstract:

The Grey Cloud Slough Habitat Restoration project will improve water quality and restore essential backwater aquatic habitat by reconnecting the slough to the main channel of the Mississippi River.

Design and Scope of Work:

The Grey Cloud Slough is a side channel of the Mississippi River in southern Washington County. This section of the River is within the Mississippi National River and Recreational Area and is a designated State water trail. Unfortunately, the slough is severely degraded.

Flow from the Mississippi River into the slough was cut off following construction of an earthen embankment and roadway across the mouth of the slough in the 1960s. As a direct result, the slough exhibits stagnation, poor water quality, and severely degraded backwater aquatic habitat. Water quality and habitat restoration in the slough has long been a priority for the region and draws significant interest from local, state, and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and area residents. That interest is evidenced by a high level of participation in a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to explore options to restore the slough. That TAC included representatives from Denmark Township, Washington County, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) formed its Grey Cloud TAC in 2011 to provide a formal setting to engage all interested parties, coordinate agency efforts, and tap technical expertise in identifying cost-effective solutions to achieving SWWD water quality and habitat goals for the slough. The consensus of the TAC was that reconnecting the slough to the main channel of the Mississippi River was the essential first step to

restore water quality and habitat. Through use of an engineering consulting firm, the TAC examined several options for making that reconnection. Ultimately, the TAC came to the consensus that constructing a bridge in place of the existing earthen embankment was the best of several options explored due to the following reasons: 1) most importantly, a bridge fully restores hydrologic connectivity to the slough over other options (e.g. culverts), will immediately improve water quality to match that of the main channel, and restores sediment transport; 2) the bridge offers improved fish passage, provides boating access to the slough, and dramatically improves boater and roadway safety. The SWWD Board of Managers accepted the TAC consensus and is proposing to construct a bridge as a first step toward the goal of restoring water quality and backwater aquatic habitat in the Grey Cloud Slough.

Construction of the bridge is estimated to cost \$1,652,000. To date, SWWD and its partners have secured \$1,200,000 in funding for the project all through local funding sources and are requesting the remaining \$452,000 through the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. This request is consistent with past LSOHC allocations to fund infrastructure (e.g. water control structures or dam modifications) for the purpose of enhancing or restoring habitat. Ongoing maintenance will be provided through existing Washington County Public Works transportation maintenance programs.

Future efforts will build on the benefits of reconnecting the slough. SWWD and its partners will leverage existing program delivery mechanisms to promote and assist landowners along the slough in completing streambank stabilization and riparian buffer restoration projects. Further, it is expected that Washington County and MnDNR will make additional recreation and access improvements to the area as planned parks are formally developed throughout Grey Cloud Island. Together, these efforts along with essential hydrologic reconnection of the slough will restore water quality and essential backwater aquatic habitat and create a boating, hunting, and fishing destination within the Twin Cities Metro area.

Planning

MN State-wide Conservation Plan Priorities:

- H3 Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- H6 Protect and restore critical in-water habitat of lakes and streams

Plans Addressed:

- Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management
- Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda
- Minnesota Sustainability Framework
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan
- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework
- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Habitat Conservation Model
- Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Projects Joint Ventures Plan
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul, Rock Island, and St. Louis Districts. Lower Pool 2 Restoration Project Proposal. Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program. 2010.

LSOHC Statewide Priorities:

- Address Minnesota landscapes that have historical value to fish and wildlife, 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 long-term or permanent solutions to aquatic invasive species
- Are ongoing, successful, transparent and accountable programs addressing actions and targets of one or more of the ecological sections
- Attempts to ensure conservation benefits are broadly distributed across the LSOHC sections
- Ensures activities for "protecting, restoring and enhancing" are coordinated among agencies, non profits and others while doing this important work; provides the most cost-effective use of financial resources; and

where possible takes into consideration the value of local outreach, education, and community engagement to sustain project outcomes

- Leverage effort and/or other funds to supplement any OHF appropriation
- Produce multiple enduring conservation benefits
- Provide Minnesotans with greater public access to outdoor environments with hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities
- 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

LSOHC Metro Urban Section Priorities:

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds:

- No Relationships Listed

Accelerates or Supplements Current Efforts:

This proposal specifically requests funding to assist with the construction of a bridge in place of the existing roadway which crosses the upstream end of the slough atop of an earthen embankment. This project is an essential first step to restoring water quality and backwater aquatic habitat in the slough. While future work will be pursued by project partners through existing programs, the partners do not have programs or funding to fully cover the cost of bridge construction. To date, project partners have secured \$1,200,000 in funding for the project and are requesting the remaining \$452,000 necessary to implement the project. The requested LSOHC funding does not supplant those existing funding commitments, but rather supplements that funding to accelerate implementation of this important project.

Sustainability and Maintenance:

The new roadway will be maintained by Washington County as part of its normal transportation maintenance operations. Additional improvements in the slough will be pursued in partnership with Great River Greening and local, state, and federal agencies and are expected to include shorebank stabilization, and shoreland/riparian buffer restoration throughout the length of the slough. Additionally, the slough is an integral part of planned park and recreational facilities on the island. It is expected that several additional access and recreational improvements will be made as those parks are formally developed.

Permanent Protection:

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15? - Yes
(County/Municipal, Public Waters)

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Final Design	December 31, 2014
Bridge Construction	June 30, 2015

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- Improved aquatic habitat indicators *Aquatic habitat indicators will be measured and evaluated through existing Department of Natural Resources Fisheries and Wildlife division operations.*

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$452,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0		\$0
Contracts	\$0	\$0		\$0
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	\$0	\$0		\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$326,000	South Washington WD	\$326,000
Direct Support Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$452,000	\$874,000	South Washington WD/Washington County	\$1,326,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$452,000	\$1,200,000		- \$1,652,000

Output Tables

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	127	127
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	127	127

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$452,000	\$452,000
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	\$452,000	\$452,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	127	0	0	0	0	127
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	127	0	0	0	0	127

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$452,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$452,000
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	\$452,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$452,000

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

0 miles

Parcel List

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

Washington

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?
Grey Cloud Slough Restoration	02722224	127	\$1,652,000	Yes

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

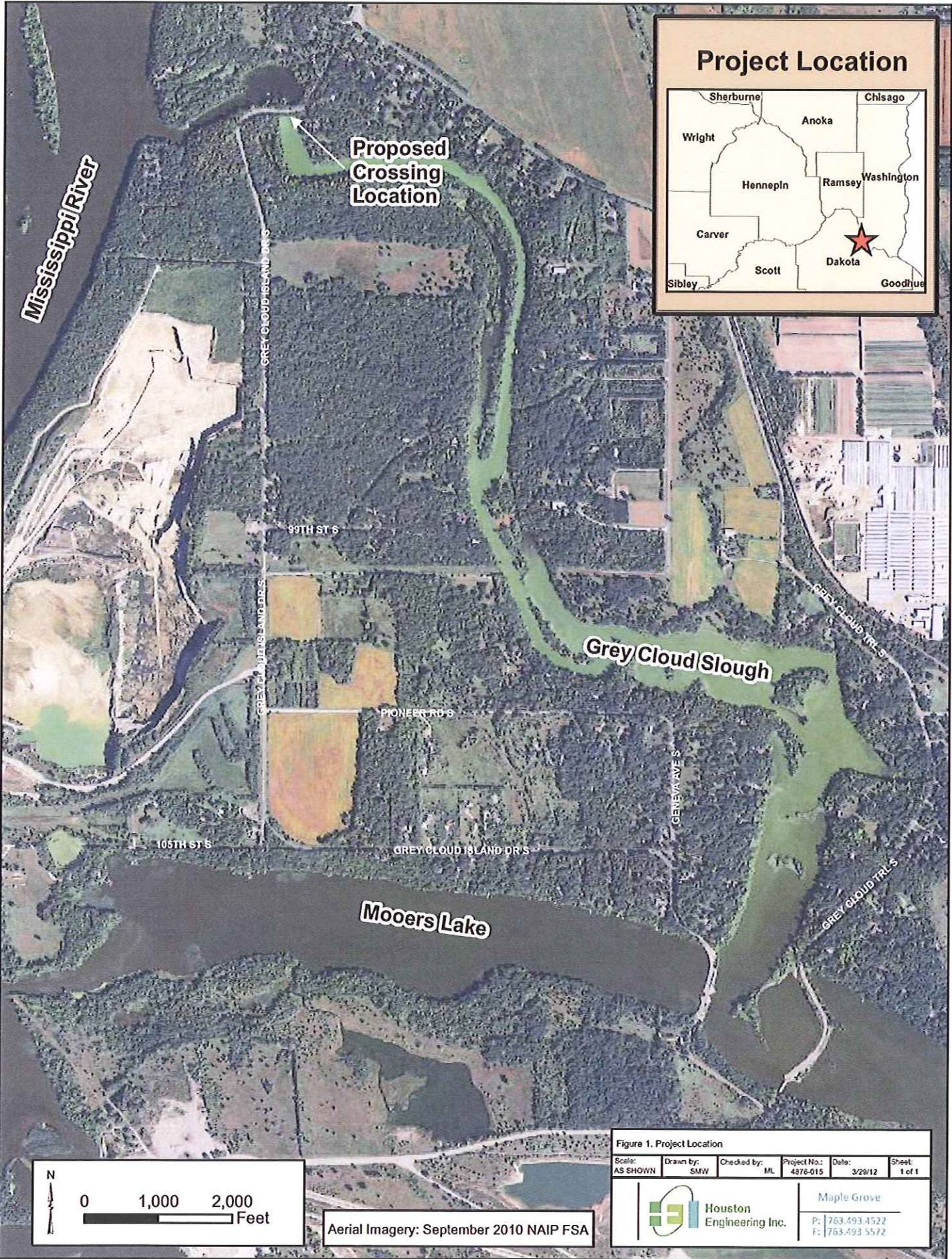
No parcels with an activity type protect.

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

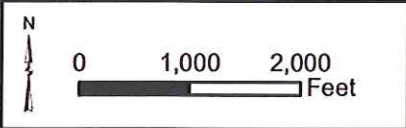
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.



Project Location



Aerial Imagery: September 2010 NAIP FSA

Figure 1. Project Location					
Scale:	Drawn by:	Checked by:	Project No.:	Date:	Sheet:
AS SHOWN	SMW	ML	4876-015	3/29/12	1 of 1
Houston Engineering Inc.				Maple Grove	
				P: 763.493.4522 F: 763.493.5572	



SWWD RESOLUTION #2013-004

LSOHC Submittal Authorization
SWWD Grey Cloud Restoration

WHEREAS, the South Washington Watershed District ("The District") has approved and locally adopted a comprehensive watershed management plan ("Plan") as defined by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B, 103D and 103E and Minnesota Rule Chapter 8410; and

WHEREAS, The District's Plan includes projects to manage natural resources and improve habitat and water quality; and

WHEREAS, the District's Plan prioritizes restoration of Grey Cloud Slough, a degraded side channel of the Mississippi River, and identified MnDNR water trail and Metro conservation corridor, and;

WHEREAS, the District convened a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of staff from applicable local, state, and federal agencies, and;

WHEREAS, the TAC identified restoration of flow to the channel as the best option for habitat restoration, and;

WHEREAS, the Technical Advisory Committee completed a feasibility study and identified construction of a bridge in place of an existing earthen embankment as the most effective and beneficial option for restoring flow to the channel, and;

WHEREAS, The District's Plan includes a Capital Improvement Program; and

WHEREAS, The District amended its Capital Improvement Program to include construction of a bridge for the purpose of restoring flow to Grey Cloud Slough, and;

WHEREAS, construction of a bridge provides many benefits, including water quality restoration, habitat restoration, fishing and boating recreational access, and safety improvements, and;

WHEREAS, The District and its partners have secured \$1,200,000 in funding for the estimated \$1,600,000 project, and;

WHEREAS, The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) has issued its FY2015 Request for Proposals, and;


WHEREAS, the LSOHC request prioritizes protection and restoration of water quality and aquatic habitat, and;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Washington Watershed District Board of Managers, authorizes the development and submission of a funding proposal to LSOHC for construction of a bridge, necessary to restore flow to the Grey Cloud Slough, and for the purpose of improving water quality and restoring essential backwater aquatic habitat.

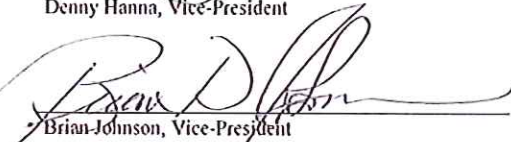
Manager Hanna moved the adoption of the foregoing Resolution #2013-004, and

Manager Johnson seconded the adoption of the Resolution, and it was duly adopted by the Board

on the 14th of May, 2013.



Denny Hanna, Vice-President



Brian Johnson, Vice-President

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

1200 Warner Road
St. Paul, MN 55106
651-259-5635



4 June 2013

Mr. John Loomis
South Washington Watershed District
2302 Tower Drive,
Woodbury, MN 55125

Dear Mr. Loomis:

Please accept this letter of support for your LSOHC project to restore water flow to Grey Cloud Slough. We feel this proposal addresses a need to improve water quality, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and improve fishing and boating recreational access in this important backwater of the Mississippi River. These functions will be restored and enhanced from when the natural river flow through the backwater was disconnected.

Healthy backwater areas provide important habitat for numerous fish species. In this area it will be particularly beneficial to largemouth bass, bluegill, walleye, and channel catfish, which were all present in the area prior to the decline in water quality related to flow disconnect. Furthermore, numerous native minnow species, vital links in the food web, rely upon healthy backwater habitats to complete their life cycle.

This project will also improve the experience for users of the Mississippi River State Water Trail. It will allow passage for canoe and kayak users through Grey Cloud Slough, which will be a scenic and safe alternative to the main channel and its associated large boat and commercial traffic. It will also provide expanded access to the angling opportunities in this important backwater habitat.

Thank you for the opportunity to review your proposal. Through a collaborative effort, DNR will provide technical support and other in-kind assistance on this project if it is funded. If you have further questions, please contact Brad Parsons at 651-259-5789 or bradford.parsons@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Keith Parker'.

Keith Parker, Regional Director
Central Region



IN REPLY REFER TO

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
111 E. Kellogg Blvd., Ste. 105
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1256

May 16, 2013

Dear LSOHC:

The National Park Service (NPS) is writing to support the South Washington Watershed District application for funding construction of a bridge to open up the Grey Cloud Slough. This bridge will restore flow to the slough, thereby improving water quality and restoring essential backwater aquatic habitat in the area. It will also provide recreational benefits by creating a water trail connection through the area, which is currently blocked by the roadway. This project falls within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MISS). The MISS is strongly in support of both the ecological and recreational benefits that this project would provide for this stretch of river.

The National Park Service, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area has partnered in efforts to get this connection established for many years now. We will continue to support this effort in whatever way we can, as we have done in the past. This proposed project is a key water trail connection in that stretch of the Mississippi, and the ecological benefits are well defined.

We are looking forward to continuing to work in partnership with this project and its partners. We strongly encourage the LSOHC to give this project its full support.

Sincerely,

Paul Labovitz
Superintendent

GREY CLOUD ISLAND TOWNSHIP

COUNTY OF WASHINGTON

STATE OF MINNESOTA

5/7/2013

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
95 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: South Washington Watershed District's Grey Cloud Slough Restoration

Dear Council:

The Grey Cloud Island Township Board of Supervisors submits this letter in full support of the South Washington Watershed District's (SWWD) Grey Cloud Slough Restoration project. The slough, a once valuable and important backwater habitat was largely cut off from the main channel of the Mississippi River during the 1960's. Since then the slough has become stagnant, choked with vegetation, and exhibits persistent severe algal blooms. As residents of the island, we have watched the slough become increasingly degraded and experienced firsthand the harm to habitat, public recreational access, and fishing opportunities.

As members of the SWWD Grey Cloud Slough Restoration Technical Advisory Committee, we concur that the best option to restore the slough is to restore connectivity with the main channel and that the best option to restore flow is construction of a bridge in place of the existing earthen embankment. This project will result in immediate water quality and habitat improvement, SWWD's primary goal, and also provide several secondary benefits including improved roadway stability, increased boating and fishing opportunities, and improved access to the island during flooding.

This project provides an effective, immediate solution to long-term degradation of important habitat. We anxiously await the project's completion and look forward to watching the slough's transformation back to quality aquatic habitat and fishing and boating destination.

Sincerely,



Richard Adams
Chair, Town Board of Supervisors