



# OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND Recommendations Bill Summary Fiscal Year 2026

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Recommendations — FY2026

## LSOHC Recommendations Highlights

In the seventeenth years of Outdoor Heritage Funding (OHF), the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council is recommending a total of 50 programs be funded by the MN Legislature for a total of \$168,512,000.

- 106,778 acres of wildlife habitat throughout Minnesota is estimated to be restored, enhanced, and/or protected.
- 68 miles of shoreline will be restored, enhanced and/or protected.
- An additional \$30,753,300 in federal, local government, and private conservation funding is expected to be leveraged with FY2026 OHF.
- 29 different organizations are recommended for funding (2 state agencies, 10 local units of government, and 17 non-government organizations).
- Continued investment in robust on going programs constitutes 94% of the programs recommended.
- Activities include: native prairie protection, wetland restoration, trout stream enhancement, public wildlife land enhancements, shallow lake enhancement, forest fragmentation prevention, strategic land acquisition in fee and conservation easement, invasive species removal, restoring fish passage and pollinator habitat.



**Prairie Protection and Enhancement –** This monarch butterfly stopped to feed on a meadow blazingstar on the Steinke Tract of the Lac Qui Parle WMA in Big Stone County, MN. This tract was acquired by Ducks Unlimited utilizing ML2018 Outdoor Heritage Funds. The tract has nearly 60 acres of native prairie.



**Forest Enhancement —** Moose tracks are seen along the edge of an OHF funded forest enhancement project in northern Minnesota. The goal of the project was improving habitat for moose and other forest species.

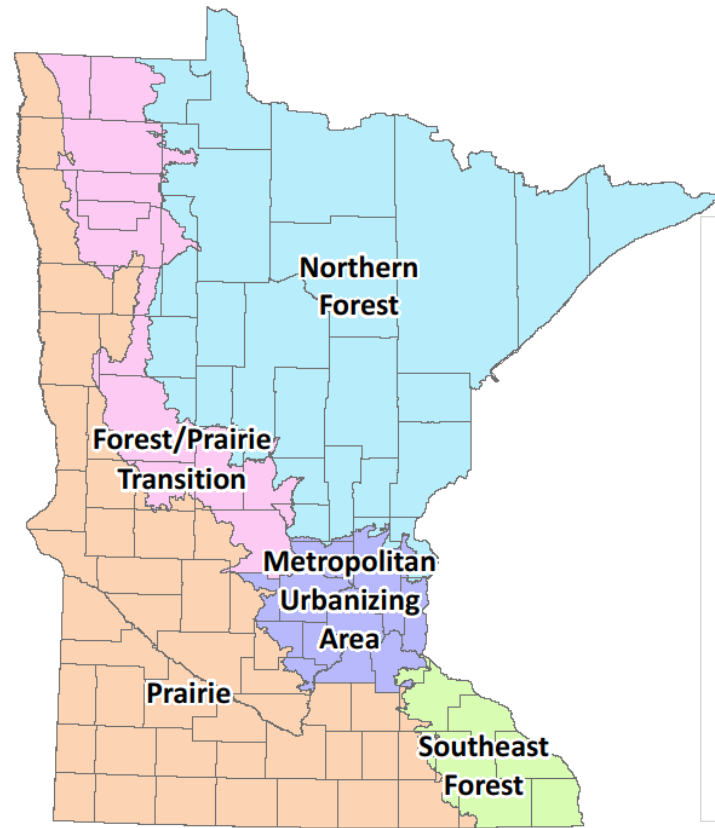
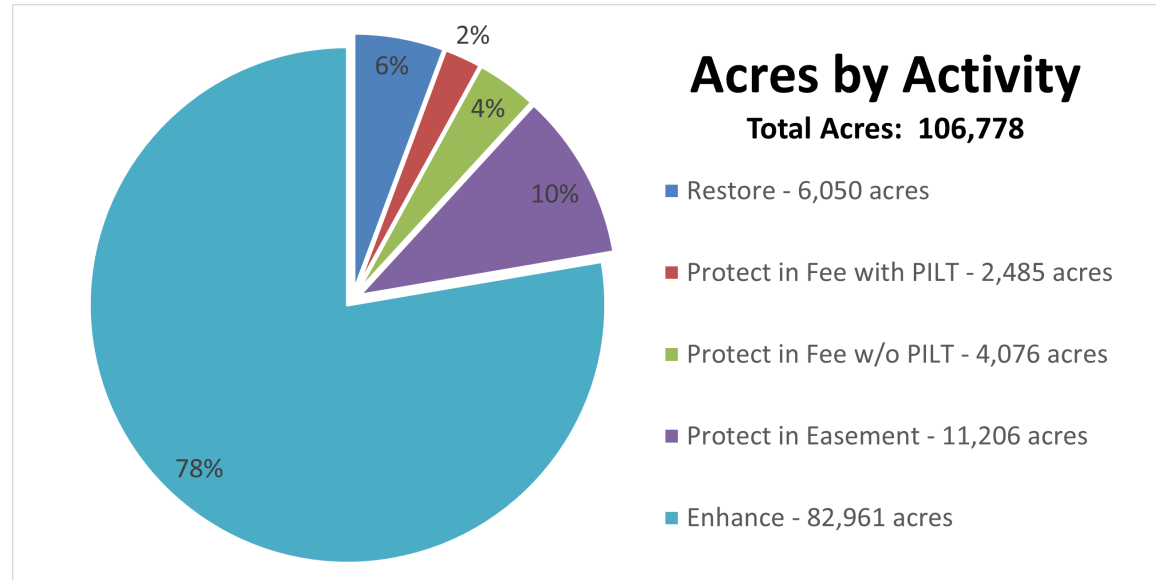
**Constitutional Amendment - Article XI—Sec. 15.**

*...33 percent of the receipts shall be deposited in the outdoor heritage fund and may be spent only to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife;...*

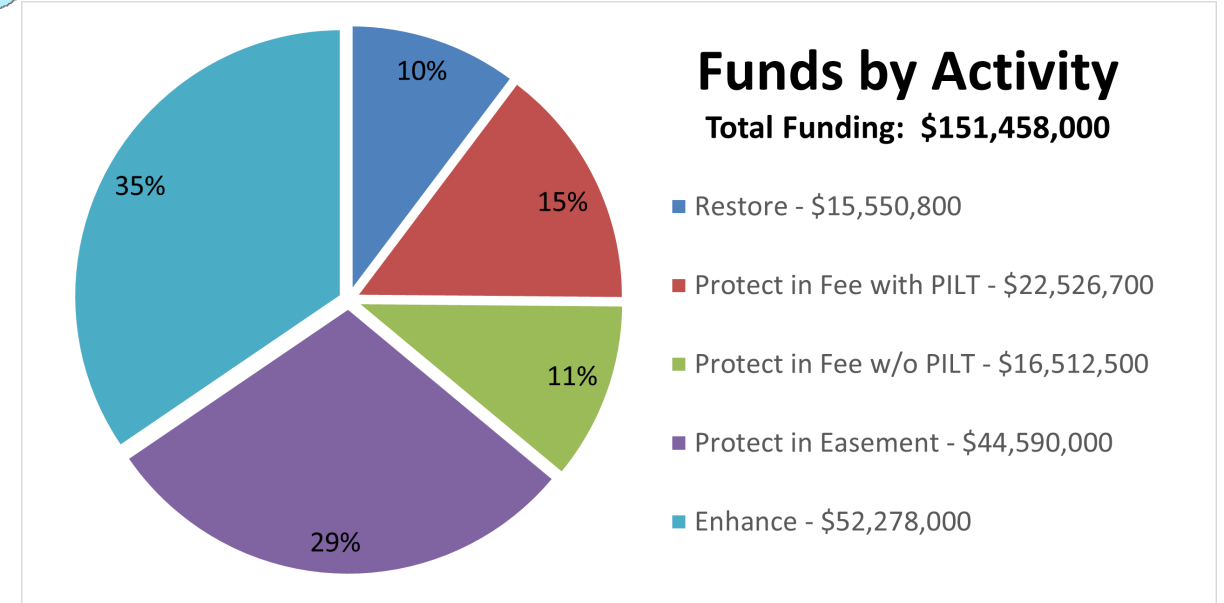
*...The dedicated money under this section must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute. Land acquired by fee with money deposited in the outdoor heritage fund under this section must be open to the public taking of fish and game during the open season unless otherwise provided by law...*

Subd. 2. Prairies		10 projects totaling \$34,199,000
(a) Martin County DNR WMA Acquisition, Phase 9	Fox Lake Conservation League, DU, TCF	\$ 1,363,000
(b) Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley, Phase 11	MN Prairie Chicken Society, PF	\$ 3,690,000
(c) RIM Grasslands Reserve, Phase 6	BWSR	\$ 3,452,000
(d) RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water, Phase 11	BWSR	\$ 4,092,000
(e) Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program, Phase 17	Pheasants Forever	\$ 4,974,000
(f) Minnesota Prairie Recovery Program, Phase 14	The Nature Conservancy	\$ 2,489,000
(g) Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, Phase 15	The Nature Conservancy	\$ 3,742,000
(h) DNR Wildlife Management Area and Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition, Phase 17	MN DNR	\$ 1,960,000
(i) Enhanced Public Land—Grasslands, Phase 8	Pheasants Forever	\$ 3,519,000
(j) Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Conservation Easement Program, Phase 5	Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever	\$ 4,918,000
Subd. 3. Forests		7 projects totaling \$20,414,000
(a) Minnesota Forest Recovery Project, Phase 3	MN DNR	\$ 3,543,000
(b) Itasca County Memorial Forest Project	Itasca County	\$ 2,782,000
(c) Hardwood Hills Habitat Conservation Program, Phase 2	MN Land Trust, St. John’s University	\$ 1,844,000
(d) Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Protection Program ACUB, Phase 13	Morrison County SWCD, BWSR	\$ 2,233,000
(e) Minnesota Forests for the Future, Phase 5	MN DNR	\$ 5,361,000
(f) DNR Forest Habitat Enhancement, Phase 5	MN DNR	\$ 2,601,000
(g) Moose Habitat Collaborative - Northeast MN Forest Habitat Enhancement, Phase 5	Ruffed Grouse Society	\$ 2,050,000
Subd. 4. Wetlands		8 projects totaling \$29,695,000
(a) Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Program, Phase 10	MN Land Trust	\$ 2,918,000
(b) Shallow Lake and Wetland Protection & Restoration Program - Phase 14	Ducks Unlimited	\$ 5,803,000
(c) RIM Wetlands - Restoring the Most Productive Habitat In Minnesota, Phase 14	BWSR	\$ 4,389,000
(d) Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Acquisition Program, Phase 17	Pheasants Forever, Inc.	\$ 5,238,000
(e) Nelson Slough - East Park Wildlife Management Area, Phase 2	Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed District	\$ 1,578,000
(f) Living Shallow Lakes and Wetlands Enhancement and Restoration Initiative, Phase 11	Ducks Unlimited	\$ 5,729,000
(g) Big Swamp North	Roseau River Watershed District	\$ 1,475,000
(h) DNR Accelerated Shallow Lakes and Wetland Enhancement, Phase 17	MN DNR	\$ 2,565,000
Subd. 5. Habitats		22 projects totaling \$82,150,000
(a) Cannon River Watershed Habitat Restoration and Protection Program, Phase 14	Clean Rivers Partners, GRG, TPL	\$ 2,724,000
(b) Spring Road Conservation Project	Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek WD	\$ 2,027,000
(c) Anoka Sand Plain Habitat Conservation, Phase 10	GRG, Anoka WD, TNC, MLT	\$ 3,599,000
(d) Integrating Habitat and Clean Water, Phase 3	BWSR	\$ 2,753,000
(e) St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration, Phase 6	Wild Rivers Conservancy, TPL, MLT	\$ 3,257,000
(f) Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project, Phase 9	Mississippi Headwaters Board, BWSR, TPL	\$ 2,832,000
(g) Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration, Phase 13	MN Land Trust	\$ 2,387,000
(h) Protecting Coldwater Fisheries on Minnesota’s North Shore, Phase 3	MN Land Trust	\$ 2,237,000
(i) Metro Big Rivers, Phase 15	MVNWRT, FMR, GRG, MLT, TPL	\$ 6,949,000
(j) Minnesota River Watershed Habitat Conservation Program	Great River Greening, MN Land Trust	\$ 3,148,000
(k) Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program, Phase 14	Shell Rock River Watershed District	\$ 2,190,000
(l) Protecting Minnesota’s Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance, Phase 4	Northern Waters Land Trust, MLT	\$ 3,209,000
(m) Shakopee Creek: Headwaters Restored, Species and Land Protected	Kandiyohi SWCD	\$ 2,413,000
(n) DNR Trout Stream Conservation Easements, Phase 4	MN DNR	\$ 995,000
(o) Fisheries Habitat Protection of Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes, Phase 11	Northern Waters Land Trust, MLT	\$ 2,944,000
(p) Minnesota Statewide Trout Habitat Enhancement, Phase 2	MN Trout Unlimited	\$ 2,173,000
(q) Restoring and Enhancing Minnesota’s Important Bird Areas, Phase 4	Audubon Minnesota	\$ 2,049,000
(r) Fall River Restoration	Cook County	\$ 1,348,000
(s) DNR Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Enhancement, Phase 8	MN DNR	\$ 3,887,000
(t) Rum River Corridor Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement, Phase 8	Anoka County SWCD	\$ 1,387,000
(u) DNR Roving Crew, Phase 3	MN DNR	\$12,642,000
(v) Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program: Statewide and Metro Habitat, Phase 16	MN DNR	\$15,000,000
Subd. 6. Administration		5 items totaling \$2,054,000
(a) Contract Management	MN DNR	\$ 410,000
(b) Legislative Coordinating Commission	LCC	\$ 732,000
(c) Technical Evaluation Panel	MN DNR	\$ 168,000
(d) Core Functions in Partner-Led OHF Land Acquisitions	MN DNR	\$ 740,000
(e) Legacy Website	LCC	\$ 4,000

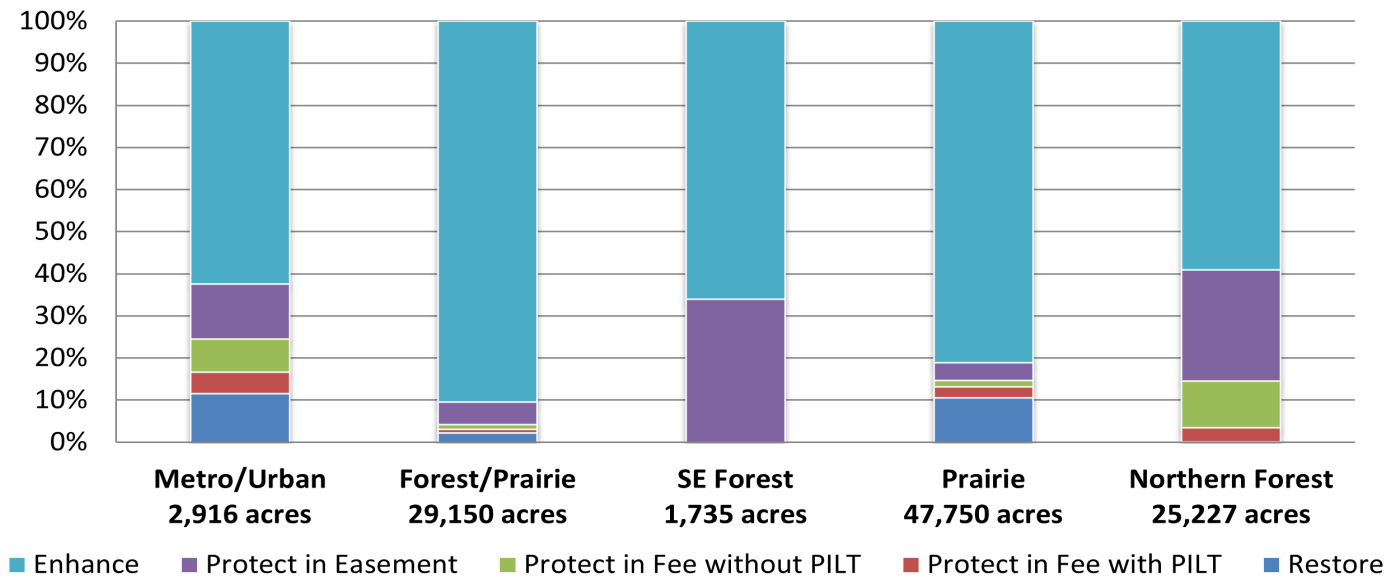
## Output by ACRES



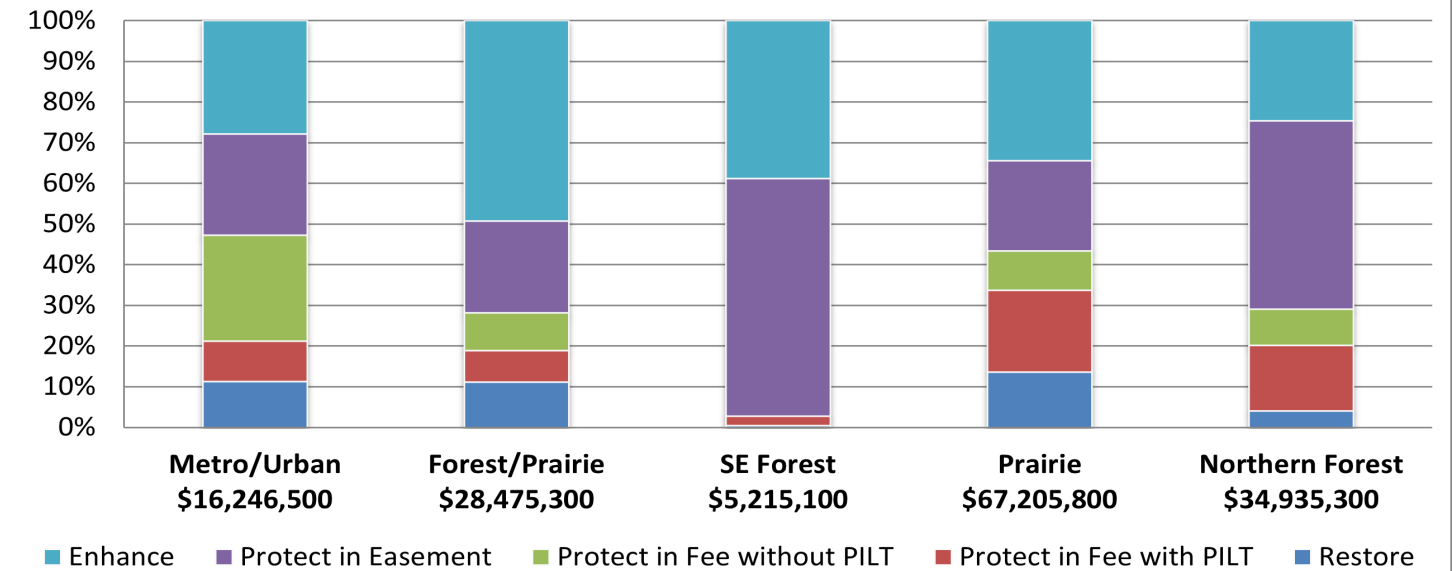
## Output by FUNDING



### Distribution of ACRES by Ecological Section



### Distribution of FUNDS by Ecological Section



#### RESOURCE TYPE (ACRES)

ACTIVITY	WETLANDS	PRAIRIES	FORESTS	HABITATS	TOTAL
Restore	913	4,832	53	252	6,050
Protect in Fee with PILT	149	1,255	297	784	2,485
Protect in Fee without PILT	84	994	2,729	269	4,076
Protect in Easement	245	1,990	6,205	2,766	11,206
Enhance	14,704	50,858	13,595	3,804	82,961
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,095</b>	<b>59,929</b>	<b>22,879</b>	<b>7,875</b>	<b>106,778</b>
<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>56.1%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	-

#### RESOURCE TYPE (FUNDING)

ACTIVITY	WETLANDS	PRAIRIES	FORESTS	HABITATS	TOTAL
Restore	\$2,820,500	\$3,174,000	\$761,900	\$8,794,400	\$15,550,800
Protect in Fee with PILT	\$1,666,600	\$13,067,600	\$2,172,000	\$5,620,500	\$22,526,700
Protect in Fee without PILT	\$843,100	\$9,582,400	\$3,426,200	\$2,660,800	\$16,512,500
Protect in Easement	\$1,791,500	\$14,867,000	\$11,066,600	\$16,864,900	\$44,590,000
Enhance	\$12,964,400	\$20,271,600	\$9,705,400	\$9,336,600	\$52,278,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,086,100</b>	<b>\$60,962,600</b>	<b>\$27,132,100</b>	<b>\$43,277,200</b>	<b>\$151,458,000</b>
<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	-