

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

**MEMO:** Proposal Evaluation & Scoring Criteria

**DATE:** December 1, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Scoring Subcommittee - Staff feedback & potential changes to criteria

**PRESENTER:** LSOHC Staff

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**Background:**

At the previous subcommittee meeting, members asked staff to provide suggestions for potential criteria revisions, scoring revisions, & possibly proposal format revisions.

**Options for actions at Dec 6<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

1. Retain Current Hearing Criteria and Scoring.
2. Minor editing and reordering of current Hearing Criteria & Scoring.
  - a. Potentially combine some Criteria Questions and adjust scoring weights.
  - b. Potential examples of rewording:
    - i. question #3 - "Proposal uses and adequately explains its science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey."
    - ii. question #7 - "Maintenance of Proposal outcomes ~~will be maintained over time~~ is clearly considered and explained."
    - iii. question #8 - "Degree of timing/opportunistic urgency is adequately explained and clearly exists."
    - iv. question #9 - "Proposal includes confirmed leverage ~~in funds and~~ or other identifies the sources of those matching dollars and in-kind efforts to supplement any OHF appropriation."
    - v. move questions 8 & 9 forward between questions 3 & 4.
3. Schedule a mid-January Subcommittee meeting finalize recommendations for delivery to Council at meeting on Friday, January 27, 2023.
4. Dedicated discussion in June - Prior to scoring new proposals, members, and staff to examine & discuss the intent of each criteria question, why each question is included, and how to consider each question while scoring.

**Staff Thoughts:**

Thus far a few items have arisen that Staff can affect without much difficulty. Initial staff review of the surveys has indicated a few other efficiencies that could be considered.

- Re-order Hearing Criteria – It was requested that the order of the Criteria questions be organized to more directly correlate with the order of the information provided in proposals. Staff can improve the correlations and will do this.
- Remove or combine redundant or similar proposal questions. This can be done, but the origin of the question should be considered. Some questions are included specifically to make sure of compliance with statutory requirements (e.g. Questions re indicator species, adherence to biological survey and other state wildlife plans, etc.). Some questions are included due to legislative interest. As a result, staff feels It may be best to retain such questions. (e.g. Question regarding indicator species and assoc. quantities the habitat will typically support, or the question re: BIPOC, etc.).
- Reordering of Proposal questions and information. This can be done, and staff is looking into which reports will need alterations to incorporate the changes.

### **Items to Remember:**

- The Council’s statutory charge is as follows:
  - “The council shall make recommendations to the legislature on appropriations of money from the outdoor heritage fund that are consistent with the constitution and state law and that will achieve the outcomes of existing natural resource plans, including, but not limited to, the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, that directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and that prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie.”
- LSOHC members are, by default, considered "authorities."
  - According to statutory guidance, Public Members of the Council “shall have practical experience or expertise or demonstrated knowledge in the science, policy, or practice of restoring, protecting, and enhancing wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.”
- OHF monies are public funds and as such carry the very real and high expectation of “transparency” in all related matters.
- Reviewing and scoring OHF proposals is a difficult assignment.
  - Proposals are technical with detailed accomplishment plans and detailed budgets.
  - Most proposals are very good proposals and are worthy of funding.
  - Funding is limited. Not all proposals can be fully funded.
  - Constitutional and Statutory requirements guide the Council in its annual journey.