



# Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

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# Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program (CPL)

- Clean Water, Land and Legacy Constitutional Amendment
- Legislation requires a conservation partners program to encourage and support local conservation efforts.
  - To provide matching grants for restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forest and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife



# Statewide and Metro Cycles

- Grant requests \$5,000- \$500,000
  - \$4.4 Million for Statewide; 2 Rounds
  - \$4 Million for Metro; 1 Round
- Total project cost cannot exceed \$1 Million
- Restoration, enhancement, or acquisition projects
- Projects on public land or land protected under a permanent conservation easement
- Metro projects must occur within the 7-county metro area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott & Washington) or within the city limits of Duluth, St. Cloud or Rochester



# New Applicant Round

- Grant requests \$5,000- \$500,000
- Total project cost cannot exceed \$1 Million
- \$4 Million available; 1 round
- Restoration, enhancement, or acquisition projects
- Projects on public land or land protected under a permanent conservation easement
- Only applicants who have never received CPL or OHF funds are eligible.
- Can occur anywhere in Minnesota



# Expedited Conservation Projects (ECP)

- Grant requests \$5,000- \$50,000
  - Restoration or Enhancement projects only
  - Work can be done only on public land
  - List of eligible activities **updated for FY2025** ([www.mndnr.gov/ecp](http://www.mndnr.gov/ecp))
- \$2 Million available
- Continuous application cycle, funding awarded up to 5 times per fiscal year



# Expedited Conservation Projects: Forests

- Expedited Conservation Projects

## Forest habitat:

- Winter (thermal) cover
- Tree planting
- Promotion of natural regeneration
- Bud capping
- Rx burning within BMP prescription, including aerial support



# Expedited Conservation Projects: Prairies

- Expedited Conservation Projects

## Prairie habitat:

- Establish new prairie/grassland
- Seed purchase of *native* species
- Rx burning within BMP prescription
- Mowing/herbicide for invasive species control
- Tree removal/woody encroachment management
- Interseeding of monoculture/low biodiversity sites



# Expedited Conservation Projects: Wetlands

- Expedited Conservation Projects

## Wetland/water habitat:

- Water level control structures
- Fish Barriers
- Upland vegetation enhancement
- Tile breaks/ditch blocks





# Expedited Conservation Projects: Fish, Game, and Wildlife

- Expedited Conservation Projects

## Fish, Game, and Wildlife habitat:

- Brushland shearing
- Dam removal/modification
- In-stream habitat modification
- Trout stream restoration/habitat improvement
- Site prep for habitat enhancement



# Match Requirements

- What is match?
  - Cash, goods, or services provided by the grantee to the project.
  - Cash Match:
    - Payments towards habitat work
  - In-Kind Match:
    - Volunteer hours
    - Equipment use/rental
    - Value assigned to goods

10% of Grant  
Award  
Required



# Eligibility Requirements

- Only nonprofit organizations and government agencies may apply
- Projects must be on permanently protected lands
- Individuals are not eligible
- Partnerships are encouraged!



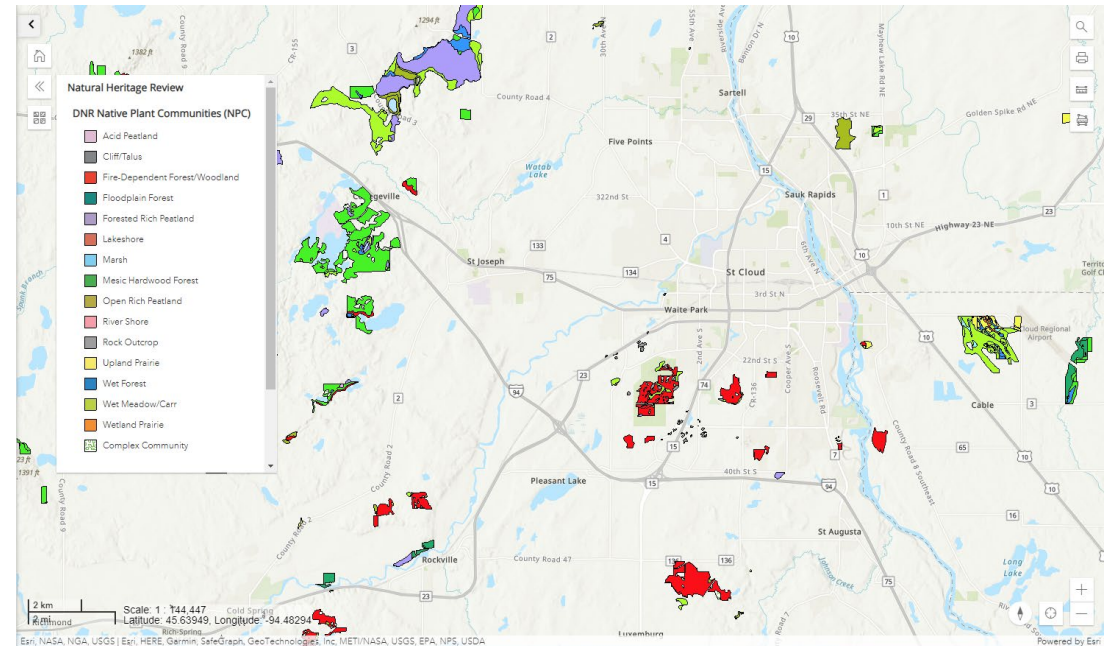
# How to get involved

- Keep your eyes open for opportunities
  - Look for habitat issues
  - Look for wildlife issues
- Do your research
  - What are the best management practices?
  - What are the needs of the local wildlife
  - What was here before?



# How to get involved

- Do your research (Continued)
  - Get to know current habitat priorities
  - Look into the Conservation Explorer
- Reach out to local stakeholders
  - Cities, Counties, SWCD's, Watershed Organizations, Non-profits
  - Get to know local representatives
  - Make your concerns heard



# How to get involved

- Large Landowners
  - Options available for all habitat types
  - Permanent conservation easements
  - Acquisitions



- Online Application System
  - System opens August 1<sup>st</sup>
- Traditional, Metro, and New Applicant
  - Awards announced in late December
  - Contracts set up January
- ECP
  - Open continuously, funds awarded every other month, up to 5 rounds
  - Awards announced 4 weeks after round closes
- Up to 3 years to complete projects



## Statewide, Metro, and New Applicant Review

Technical Review Committee

DNR Division Directors

DNR Commissioner

## ECP Review

DNR Habitat Team

FAW Division Director





# Evaluation Criteria

- Overall Project Value- habitat quality/quantity
- Applicant Performance- Statewide and Metro Rounds Only
- Project Benefits- habitat benefits
- Public Benefits- public access
- Financial Assessment- cost effectiveness, budget
- Urgency

# CPL 2025 Results (So Far)

- New Applicant Round:

- \$4 Million Available

- 8 Applicants; \$2,874,681 in requests
- 4 Grantees Funded; \$1,336,788 awarded

- Metro Round:

- \$4 Million Available

- 13 Applicants; \$3,207,934 in requests
- 12 Grantees Funded, \$3,157,934 awarded

- Statewide Round:

- \$4.4 Million Available

- 18 Applicants; \$4,692,987 in requests
- 17 Grantees Funded, all funds awarded

- Expedited Conservation Projects (ECP):

- \$2 Million Available

- 22 Applicants (1 New); \$943,800 in requests after 2 rounds.

# What's new for this year? (CPL R&D)

- Publication of updated ECP guidelines.
- Publication of updated documents
- New ECP and Statewide/Metro/New Applicant application questions directly related to wildlife
- Updated guidance on emerging issues.
- Increased ECP funding ceiling
- Continued direct outreach to unserved and underserved entities.
- Continued direct outreach to the general public.



# Grant Monitoring Requirements

- All projects above \$50,000 need to be monitored
  - \$50,000-250,000: Projects Monitored Once
  - \$250,000-\$500,000: Projects Monitored Annually
- Monitoring conducted on-site or virtually by CPL/DNR staff.
  - Questionnaire
  - Site photos
- Unexpected discoveries

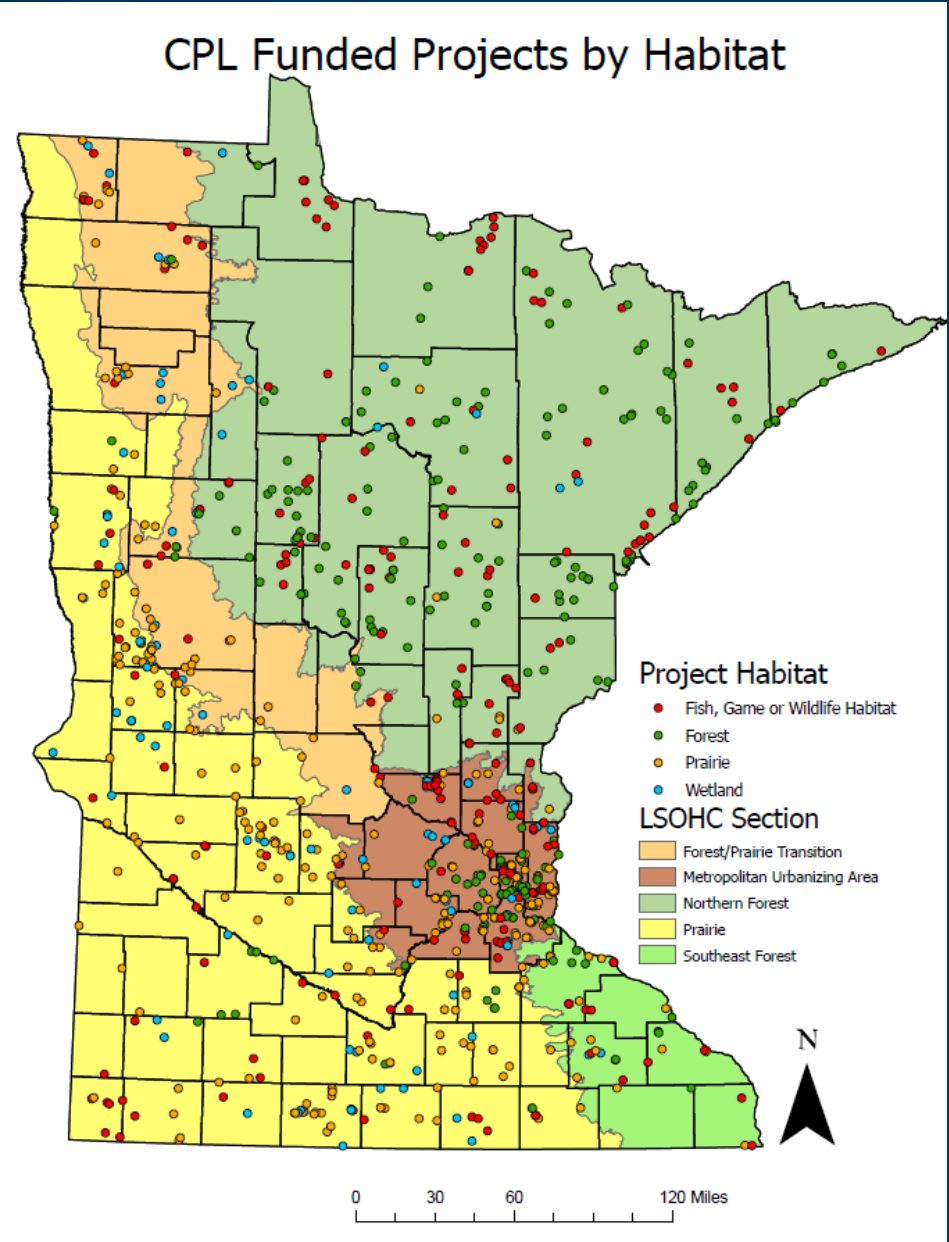


# Looking Ahead at FY 2026

- \$15,000,000 allocation from LSOHC
  - \$4,400,000 for Traditional Statewide Applicants
  - \$4,000,000 for New Applicants
  - \$4,000,000 for Metro Applicants
  - \$2,000,000 for Expedited Conservation Projects (ECP)
  - \$600,000 for Administrative Costs (including increased staffing)
- Goal for FY 2025: At least 90 applications
  - 61 so far!
  - *Goal for FY 2026: At least 120 applications*

# CPL projects 2010-2024

- Over 1070 projects funded from 2010-2024
- Through more than 275 government and non-profit organizations



# Thank You!

**David Stein**

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