

DRAFT MINUTES

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)

August 25, 2026

Hybrid Meeting – MN State Capitol 120 & Zoom, pursuant to MS 13D

Call to Order: Chair David Hartwell called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. [\(0:00:07\)](#)

Members Present	Members Absent
David Hartwell (Chair)	Sen. FOUNG HAWJ
Ron Schara (Vice Chair)	
Suzanne Baird	
Rep. John Burkel	
Kristin Eggerling	
Matt Kucharski	
Sen. Andrew Lang	
Darrel Palmer	
Tom Saxhaug	
Ted Suss	
Rep. Samantha Vang	

A quorum was present.

1. Review and Approve Agenda: [\(0:00:57\)](#)

Councilmember Eggerling made a motion to approve the agenda – **Motion Prevailed**

2. Review and Approve Minutes: [\(0:01:19\)](#)

Councilmember Kucharski made a motion to approve the minutes from July 29, 2026 – **Motion Prevailed**

3. Conflicts of Interest Reported: [\(0:01:33\)](#)

Councilmember Suss reported a possible perceived conflict of interest with proposals HA03 and HRE10 due to a possible future organizational partnership with Clean River Partners and a River Watch Program that Councilmember Suss is involved in as a volunteer.

4. Chair's Comments:

(0:02:00)

Chair Hartwell noted that time will be allocated for member discussion of proposal hearings at the end of today's meeting. Chair Hartwell acknowledged that one proposal, PA06, Lower Sioux Prairie and Wetland Habitat Protection and Restoration Project, withdrew from consideration and intends to reapply in a subsequent year. Chair Hartwell reiterated the format and schedule selected for hearings.

5. Report from the Executive Director:

(0:04:17)

Executive Director Kristina Smitten alerted members to an updated handout provided to members relating to ML 2023 program acquisition spending to date. Director Smitten noted an analysis completed by the Restoration Evaluations Program related to past findings of any substandard work did not reveal any particular organizations or programs with repeated findings of substandard restoration. Director Smitten also informed the Council of several upcoming events that members may choose to attend. Director Smitten described that an estimate of \$175,000,000 to be used by members to complete initial allocation selections was arrived at in collaboration with MN Management and Budget staff and may be adjusted prior to final completion of the ML 2027 recommendations process.

Council discussion followed.

6. Hearings for Funding Requests

(0:10:55)

The Council heard the following proposals:

Time	ID	Title	Request	Manager	Organization
<u>0:11:02</u>	FA02	Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project Phase 11	\$5,000,000	Tim Terrill	Mississippi Headwaters Board
<u>0:21:03</u>	FA03	MN Forests of the Future Phase XI South East Blufflands to Northern Forests Protection	\$8,000,000	Andy Kernan	MN DNR

Time	ID	Title	Request	Manager	Organization
<u>0:37:46</u>	FA04	Pine and Leech Watershed Phase IV Forest Habitat Protection	\$4,290,000	Melissa Barrick	Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District
<u>0:53:16</u>	FRE01	DNR Statewide Forest Enhancement-Phase 7	\$4,451,000	Ted Dick	MN DNR
<u>1:12:09</u>	FRE03	Metro Forests for Minnesota Wildlife and Communities	\$2,968,000	Rebecca Tucker	Great River Greening
<u>1:32:38</u>	FRE04	Minnesota Forest Recovery Project	\$9,864,900	Chris Dunham	The Nature Conservancy
<u>1:47:38</u>	PA01	Accelerating the Wildlife Management Area Program. - Phase XIX	\$15,955,500	Sabin Adams	Pheasants Forever
<u>2:28:38</u>	PA03	DNR Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection – Phase IX	\$3,575,000	Judy Elbert	MN DNR
<u>2:37:17</u>	PA04	DNR WMA & SNA Acquisition, Phase XIV	\$10,000,000	Jeff Tillma	MN DNR
<u>2:53:31</u>	PA05	Great Prairie Lakes and Wetlands Restoration Initiative	\$4,838,200	John F. Smeltzer	Spirit Lake Protective Association
<u>3:08:40</u>	PA07	Martin County WMA Acquisition Phase 11	\$12,972,000	Doug Hartke	Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc.
<u>3:17:46</u>	PA08	Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)	\$10,000,000	Dusty Van Thuyne	MN BWSR
<u>3:32:59</u>	PA09	Minnesota River Watershed Habitat Conservation Program Phase 2	\$9,680,000	Todd Rexine	Great River Greening
<u>4:26:41</u>	PA10	MN Prairie Recovery Program	\$14,040,000	Liz Beery	The Nature Conservancy
<u>4:40:49</u>	PA11	Prairie Chicken Habitat Partnership of the Southern Red River Valley - Phase XIII	\$10,564,400	Sabin Adams	Pheasants Forever

Time	ID	Title	Request	Manager	Organization
<u>4:52:05</u>	PA12	RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water – Phase XIII	\$5,000,000	Dusty Van Thuyne	MN BWSR
<u>5:17:05</u>	PA13	Western Minnesota Prairie and Wetland Protection Program	\$8,340,000	Wayne Ostlie	Minnesota Land Trust
<u>5:31:17</u>	PRE01	Enhanced Public Land – Grasslands – Phase X	\$8,681,000	Sabin Adams	Pheasants Forever
<u>5:44:11</u>	PRE02	Restoring Minnesota's Prairie Pothole Ecosystem – Phase 1	\$6,960,000	Wayne Ostlie	Minnesota Land Trust
<u>6:02:56</u>	CPL	Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program ML27/FY28	\$15,000,000	David Stein	MN DNR
<u>6:14:04</u>	O2	2027 Restoration Evaluations - ML 2027	\$206,000	Wade Johnson	MN DNR
<u>6:39:12</u>	O1	2027 Contract Management	\$550,000	Andrea Sternberg	MN DNR
<u>6:48:33</u>	O3	DNR Core Functions in Partner-led OHF Acquisitions	\$124,500	Jennifer Olson	MN DNR
<u>7:01:46</u>	O4	DNR Roving Crew 4	\$13,006,900	Greg Hoch	MN DNR
<u>7:14:07</u>	WA01	Accelerating the Waterfowl Production Area Program – Phase XIX	\$14,264,800	Sabin Adams	Pheasants Forever
<u>7:22:31</u>	WA02	RIM Wetlands – Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota	\$7,500,000	John Voz	MN BWSR
<u>7:31:25</u>	WA03	Shallow Lake & Wetland Protection & Restoration Program	\$16,995,000	Jon Schneider	Ducks Unlimited
<u>7:51:39</u>	WRE01	2027 Accelerating the USFWS Habitat Conservation Easement Program	\$14,499,000	Logan Shoup	Ducks Unlimited

7. Council Discussion

(8:04:32)

The Council discussed various aspects of the proposals heard thus far and other topics related to this year's funding requests and the allocation process.

No public testimony was heard.

Meeting adjourned at 5:23 p.m.