

February 28, 2022

Members of the Minnesota House:

We write to you, as dedicated members of Minnesota's conservation community, to express our support the package of funding recommendations for the Outdoor Heritage Fund forwarded to you by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and included in HF3726.

This nation-leading Outdoor Heritage Fund was created when Minnesotans overwhelmingly voted in 2008 in favor of the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment. With that vote, Minnesotans called for acceleration of conservation in Minnesota and full transparency of spending decisions and outcomes. The structure and process followed by the LSOHC has met and continues to meet those expectations.

This year's funding package was unanimously approved by the LSOHC before being submitted to the legislature via HF3726. It contains 42 high priority conservation projects across the state, in addition to more projects that will be funded through the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program. The selected projects have been thoroughly vetted by the LSOHC through its competitive, public process, which received over \$314 million in requests and resulted in recommendations to you totaling \$155.361 million.

In considering full approval of the recommended package in the bill, we encourage you to reflect on the following:

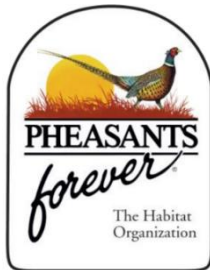
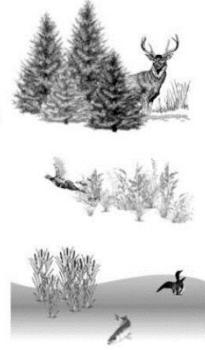
1. LSOHC members are citizens and legislators chosen for their expertise in conservation from a statewide perspective. The LSOHC is well-qualified to select projects that are urgent and most likely to return positive results from taxpayer investment.
2. The LSOHC's competitive grant application process is thorough, fair and transparent. It demands that proposals are well-designed, high-priority, science-based projects that address conservation goals enumerated by LSOHC and state plans.
3. The LSOHC adheres to a rigorous review process each year to determine its final recommendations for the Legislature. It prioritizes projects based upon several criteria, including urgency, reasonableness and ability of the proposer to achieve the outcomes.
4. The conservation projects recommended by the LSOHC are urgent and ready to implement.
5. LSOHC and the Minnesota DNR developed the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program, which sub-grants funding to smaller, community-level conservation projects. This popular Outdoor Heritage Fund program funds projects up to \$400,000.

The LSOHC package presented to you is worthy of your support. We are available as a resource to you and thank you for your support of conservation in Minnesota.

Respectfully submitted by the following organizations:

THE CONSERVATION FUND

Fish & Wildlife  
Legislative  
Alliance



*The Outdoor Heritage Fund created by the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment  
“may be spent only to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and  
habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.”*



# MASWCD

PRESIDENT  
PAUL KRABBENHOFT  
Moorhead, MN  
(701) 799-0369  
paul.krabbenhoft@maswcd.org

VICE PRESIDENT &  
WC AREA 2 DIRECTOR  
CHARLES RAU  
Rice, MN  
(320) 493-9503  
chuck.rau@maswcd.org

SECRETARY/TREASURER &  
SW AREA 5 DIRECTOR  
CLARK LINGBEEK  
Comfrey, MN  
(507) 920-9884  
clark.lingbeek@maswcd.org

NW AREA 1 DIRECTOR  
RANDY SCHELLACK  
Glyndon, MN  
(701) 238-8121  
randy.schellack@maswcd.org

NE AREA 3 DIRECTOR  
KURT BECKSTROM  
Milaca, MN  
(612) 390-2459  
kurt.beckstrom@maswcd.org

METRO AREA 4 DIRECTOR  
DOUG SCHOENECKER  
New Prague, MN  
(952) 758-3435  
doug.schoenecker@maswcd.org

SW AREA 5 DIRECTOR  
CLARK LINGBEEK  
Comfrey, MN  
(507) 920-9884  
clark.lingbeek@maswcd.org

SC AREA 6 DIRECTOR  
MARK SCHNOBRICH  
Hutchinson, MN  
(320) 587-3760  
mark.schnobrich@maswcd.org

SE AREA 7 DIRECTOR  
RANDY SMITH  
Adams, MN  
(507) 438-4570  
randy.smith@maswcd.org

NC AREA 8 DIRECTOR  
KEN LAPORTE  
Pillager, MN  
(218) 746-3927  
ken.laporte@maswcd.org

IMMEDIATE PAST  
PRESIDENT  
ROLAND CLEVELAND  
North Branch, MN  
(612) 978-3989  
roland.cleveland@maswcd.org

STAFF  
Executive Director  
LEANN BUCK  
Assistant Director  
SHEILA VANNEY  
Office Manager  
STEFANIE MARTINEZ

## Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

255 Kellogg Boulevard East, Suite 101, St. Paul, MN 55101 | 651-690-9028 | www.maswcd.org

February 25, 2022

The Honorable Rick Hansen  
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

**Re: HF 3726 (Ecklund) Outdoor heritage fund money appropriated.**

Chair Hansen, Rep. Ecklund, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, thank you for the opportunity to express our support for [HF 3726 – Outdoor heritage fund money appropriated](#).

MASWCD represents the state's 88 soil and water conservation districts, including their 440 elected supervisors and their more than 460 employees. Soil and Water Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of the State established under Minnesota Statute Chapter 103C. Each SWCD is governed by a board of elected supervisors. And SWCD law is implemented across 100% of the state.

MASWCD supports the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council's recommendations for annual appropriations of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as outlined in [HF 3726](#), which include funding for voluntary easement programs such as:

- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Grasslands Reserve;
- RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water;
- Wild Rice Shoreland Protection; and
- RIM Wetlands.

These easements programs, administered at the state level by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and implemented locally by SWCDs with interested landowners, have numerous benefits to wildlife habitat, water quality, water storage and retention, and climate resiliency on the landscape.

Thank you for your consideration. We strongly urge support for [HF 3726](#) and we thank Rep. Ecklund for carrying this bill.

Sincerely,

Sheila Vanney  
Assistant Director  
Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts