

Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

April 14, 2026

We write to you, as dedicated members of Minnesota's conservation community, to express support of the funding recommendations for the Outdoor Heritage Fund forwarded to you by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), and we urge passage of those recommendations before you, the outcomes of which contribute to \$23.4 billion in outdoor recreation-based economic activity in Minnesota and 152,334 jobs (per Outdoor Recreation Industry Partnership, 2026).

This nation-leading Outdoor Heritage Fund was created when Minnesotans voted overwhelmingly 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. The recommendations contain 54 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 **\$499 million in requests** and resulted in recommendations to you that total \$198.903 million.

In considering full approval of the recommendations, 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. 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 \$500,000.

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,



CONSERVATION MINNESOTA



CONSERVATION LEAGUE



*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."*

Minnesota Constitution, Art. XI, Sec. 15



April 15, 2026

Dear Co-Chairs Vang and McDonald, and members of the Legacy Committee:

On behalf of the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (the “Commission”) and the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails (GMPT) organization, we want to thank you for putting together the omnibus Legacy Finance bill. The Commission is a statutorily established state entity tasked with creating and implementing a regional park and trail system in Greater Minnesota, as well as evaluating and recommending how the Legacy funds for Greater Minnesota are spent. GMPT is a 501(c)4 organization made up of more than 135 counties, cities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals dedicated to supporting and improving outdoor recreational opportunities in Greater Minnesota.

Article 2 includes several provisions that relate specifically to the work of the Commission and projects in our member communities. The first four sections include changes to the statute that established the Commission more than a decade ago. These changes better reflect how the Commission’s work has evolved over the years as we have created and implemented a regional system that includes 85 parks and trails.

Section 5 extends the availability of six previously designated parks and trails grants, five of which are for park and trail construction. The local governments have been diligently pursuing these projects, but weather, supply chain issues, and related factors have caused construction delays. Extending these grants will allow completion of these projects.

Finally, Section 6 removes obsolete language regarding the Commission’s initial formation. We greatly appreciate your including these changes in your omnibus bill and urge swift passage. Thank you again for all your efforts. If you have any questions, please contact either one of us or GMPT’s lobbyist, Elizabeth Wefel (651-492-3998).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Tart".

Joe Tart
Chair, Greater MN Parks & Trails
Parks Director, Chisago County

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renee Mattson".

Renee Mattson
Executive Director
Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails Commission



April 6, 2026

121 Center Street East
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218.463.1542
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cityclerk@mncable.net

City Council

Dan Fabian-Mayor
Amy Bassingthwaite
Oliver Ullman
Pat Novacek
Brady Johnson

City Dept. Heads

Todd Peterson
Community Dev. Coord.

Gary Przekwas
City Superintendent

Marc Hodge
Chief of Police

Niki Johnson
Liquor Store Manager

Leon Huot
Fire Chief

Administrative Staff

Elizabeth Carlson
City Clerk-Treasurer

www.city.roseau.mn.us

Equal Opportunity Provider and
Employer

Members of the Legislature:

This letter is intended to bring to you my concerns regarding the recent action taken by the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee concerning the flood mitigation project at Roseau Lake. As I understand Senator Green's amendment to remove the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project funding from the Legacy Bill was accepted by Chair Hawj as a friendly amendment. I strongly oppose this action.

A little background is helpful. In June of 2002 the City of Roseau and much of Roseau County suffered a catastrophic flood. With the help of so many the City of Roseau was able to save our Hospital, School, water treatment plant and the Polaris manufacturing plant. The huge amount of damage to homes, businesses, churches, and other infrastructure resulted in disaster declaration and the need for disaster funding from the State of Minnesota and the Federal Government totaling more than \$100 million. That public funding along with private capital enabled us to rebuild our awesome town and surrounding area. Much work has been done to protect Roseau from future floods, but more work needs to be done to expand flood protection in Roseau County. This includes finishing the Roseau Lake flood mitigation project, currently 75% complete.

To say I was upset to learn that much of the information presented in the Committee hearing was, in my opinion, factually incorrect, is a large understatement. Let me point out some of the inaccuracies presented.

The first item was the conflation of different issues or projects that are unrelated to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project being used as rationale for stopping the Roseau Lake Project. Those include a lawsuit related to a weir structure on State Ditch 51 that was constructed to improve fisheries along the original Roseau River channel. Whether that weir structure is or isn't present has no impact on the operation or usefulness of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project.

Other factually incorrect information that was provided as rationale for removing the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project included an estimate of projected flood damages resulting from the project and that this increased flooding amounted to a "taking" of private property. There were claims that over 12,600 private acres would receive increased flooding from the project. However, the entire Roseau Lake basin covers less than 8,000 acres in total, making this claim untenable; furthermore LIDAR data indicates that the basin is very defined and by project design all the high-water flows would be taken into the lake storage area before they could impact private lands. Finally, it should be noted that many of the private lands in question already flood on a fairly regular basis because they lie in the former lakebed.

I am also concerned that during testimony other reasons given for removing the project from the bill were not substantiated with facts or data presented to the Committee. Somewhat vague references were made but no hard reference data. For example, three other hydrologists were referred to but no names, professional qualifications, or public availability of where their findings could be accessed. In this case, it is my understanding that the hydrologists referred to may have never set foot in Roseau County to gather data and view the site of the project.

The Roseau City Council passed a unanimous resolution in 2020 in support of the project. At our April meeting I brought forth another resolution to reaffirm the Council's unwavering support of the project. The County has also provided similar support for the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project.

We cannot afford to kill this project. After twelve years of planning, design, securing funds and construction, walking away now would be a massive waste of time and money leaving our community unprotected against future floods.

In closing let me state clearly that I am 100% in favor of completion of the project which is only possible if the funding recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council is passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Walz.

Thank you for your thoughtful attention to this critically important matter. If you have any questions for me please feel free to contact me when it is convenient for you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Fabian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Fabian - Mayor of Roseau,
Former House of Representatives Member,
Former member of the LSOHC,
Former and current member of the LCCMR
218-230-3975 Dfabian@mncable.net

RESOLUTION

Resolution in support of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project

WHEREAS, the Roseau River Watershed and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have been developing the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project in partnership utilizing the Project Team process as outlined in the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group Agreement, and

WHEREAS, the Roseau City Council realizes the community benefits of multipurpose water management projects that promote flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancements, and

WHEREAS, the City of Roseau strives to maintain and build partnerships with other local, state and federal agencies with the same goals of flood hazard reduction and mitigation,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Roseau City Council supports the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project moving forward with the continued outreach to landowners, responsible management of public funding and utilization of the project to the greatest water management potential to meet the goals of the project.

Resolved and agreed upon this 6th day of April, 2026



City Clerk-Treasurer



Mayor

RESOLUTION #13-20

Resolution in support of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project

WHEREAS, the Roseau River Watershed and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have been developing the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project in partnership utilizing the Project Team process as outlined in the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group Agreement, and

WHEREAS, the Roseau City Council realizes the community benefits of multipurpose water management projects that promote flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancements, and

WHEREAS, the City of Roseau strives to maintain and build partnerships with other local, state, and federal agencies with the same goals of flood hazard reduction and mitigation,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Roseau City Council supports the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project moving forward with continued outreach to landowners, responsible management of public funding and utilization of the project to the greatest water management potential to meet the goals of the project.

Resolved and agreed upon this 6th day of January, 2020



City Clerk



Mayor

March 19, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The **Bois de Sioux Watershed District** supports the Roseau River Watershed District's efforts to secure \$3.5 million in Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) funding for their Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project.

The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project has a history of support, through awards provided in 2015, 2016, 2023, 2024, and 2025; this support recognized the nature of this project to serve multiple purposes – improving approximately 5,500 wetland acres while controlling 1,000 square miles of upstream drainage. This Project also works towards meeting water quality objectives at the international border in accordance with the 1909 Treaty between the United States and Canada.

Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,



Linda Vavra
President



March 30, 2026

Dear Chairs Hawj, McDonald, and Vang,

Northwestern Minnesota often experiences flooding due to its topography. The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project will help reduce the depth and duration of floods that adversely impact farmland. **That's why Minnesota AgriGrowth supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) for the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project.**

This multi-purpose flood mitigation water storage project will result in approximately 22,000 acre-feet of water storage and habitat, reduced flood flows, and enhanced water quality. Most importantly, the Roseau Lake project improves approximately 5,500 wetland acres and controls approximately 1,000 square miles of upstream drainage once operational.

The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project was thoroughly vetted by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and approved in 2015, 2023, and 2025, and previously funded by the Legislature in 2016 and 2024.

We urge you to fully fund the \$3.5 million for this Project, as recommended by the LSOHC and included in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill. Your commitment will ensure the continued success and long-term benefits of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project for Minnesota agriculture and conservation.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support for Minnesota's future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darin Broton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Darin" and last name "Broton" clearly distinguishable.

Darin Broton, Executive Director
Minnesota AgriGrowth

CC: Members of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the House of Representative Legacy Committee

Legislative Testimony: Opposition to Continued Funding of Roseau River Watershed District Projects

Speaker: Max Becker, Attorney, Mohrman, Kaardal & Erickson, P.A.

Estimated Time: 2 Minutes

Committee Members,

My name is Max Becker. I am an attorney with Mohrman, Kaardal & Erickson, and I am here today to present the evidence that the Roseau River Watershed District is in direct violation of the statutory "floor" of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Under Minnesota Statutes § 97A.056, the law is unambiguous: Outdoor Heritage money "shall not be spent to acquire property by eminent domain unless the owner requests" that acquisition. This is a consent-based fund. Yet, the District is using these habitat dollars to force through a project against the explicit, documented will of the people living there. Make no mistake, the Plaintiffs we represent in the referenced, federal case do not consent to the use of eminent domain to take possession of their land—whether its in the form of an easement, flooding, or otherwise.

Currently, the project is being funded through Minnesota's Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (Outdoor Heritage Fund), supported by taxpayer dollars and approved through the legislature. LSOHC funding cannot be used to acquire property by eminent domain unless the owner requests so—and we do NOT. By funding a project that involves taking land from owners who are actively suing to stop it, the State is violating the core mandate of the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Further, by funding a project that may well be found illegal in the federal court system, the state runs the risk of paying for something that it, and its citizens, will never have. A pause is necessary, while this action plays out in Court. I urge this committee to stop the funding until the District can prove it has the consent required by law.

From: [Jordan Erickson](#)
To: [Tracy Halstengard](#)
Subject: Re: letter
Date: Friday, March 20, 2026 12:29:27 PM

To whom it may concern,

I have personally witnessed the foresight and progressive nature of the Roseau watershed board. This was through two extensive and fundamental ditching projects done in Ross and Dieter townships, ditch 16 and 115. These two projects approved by said board have been a major positive economic impact to agriculture in the area. Greatly improved yields with water and erosion control.

Our farm is around 1400 acres in the Ross/dieter townships and 4700 overall. I have attended several meetings this watershed has put on and they have all been highly informational.

My opinion of the Roseau watershed board is of the highest regard as they are fiscally responsible, insightful, listen to all sides and make the best choice as a local board. They understand the environmental impacts as well as the financial implications in dealing with major projects. This Roseau watershed project is no different and believe it will be positive for the land owners.

I lived in the twin cities for 5 years as an icu nurse as regions hospital and worked on our family farm. Being that far away I trusted my father and brother to make the correct choice. That's what should be done in this case as well. Let the local individuals on these boards make the decisions as they have done well for years, not from St. Paul.

Lastly, I support the project and its inclusion in the Lessard-Sam Outdoor Heritage Fund legislation.

Thank you,

Jordan Erickson

Michelle Gawronsky
Box 13,
115 Main Street S.,
Vita, Manitoba, Canada
R0A 2K0

March 23, 2026

Dear Chair Vang, Chair McDonald, and Legacy Committee Members;

I am writing this morning to share my full support of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project in the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund Bill.

I am a resident of the Rural Municipality of Stuartburn, northeast of Roseau Minnesota, sharing the United States and Manitoba border.

I have been fortunate to observe and visit the project and the benefits to the communities surrounding it. I am so impressed by the progressive planning, engineering and construction of the project. To observe the flood protection, draught protection, the benefits to the water quality and the ability to introduce wonderful recreation opportunities is impressive. I already recognise the economic benefits to the town of Roseau and the community surrounding it.

Living in Manitoba, I have a personal stake in projects carried out in Minnesota and have become actively involved in this initiative. I have attended informal events held by the Watershed District about the project. I have requested and received information from the District on the project. I congratulate the Watershed on moving in such a positive direction for the benefits of towns, communities, and farmers alike. I also see an international benefit for us in my community just north of the border.

I thank you for your time in reading my letter. If you would like to contact me for any clarification or questions please feel free to contact me any time at (204) 391-0287 or mlgawronsky@gmail.com.

Respectfully

M. Gawronsky

Testimony Regarding the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project and Other
OHF Funds
House Informational Meeting – 04/15/2026

Isaac Magnusson here and I farm around 2,000 acres that would be directly impacted in what they call the lake bottom project. If this land is flooded and it prevents me from harvesting, that is my whole livelihood in those acres. Farming is all I have ever known.

March 19, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

As the former Executive Director of the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) and as current U.S. Commissioner of the International Joint Commission (IJC) I have first-hand experience working on land and water related issues in the Red River Basin—not only in Minnesota, but also North and South Dakota and Manitoba in Canada.

After the major 2009 flood that hit the Red River Basin -- both Minnesota and North Dakota at the state levels, provided funding to the RRBC that resulted in a Long Term Flood Solutions (LTFS) Report. This report highlights the importance of holding water in retention areas like the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project. These types of projects along with diversions, dikes, land use changes and habitat are all a part of building flood resiliency in the Red River Basin. These types of investments provide significant benefits to the economy of the state and local governments by preventing re-occurring damages from flooding that can easily reach 10's and 100's of millions in damages.

I want to lend my support to the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District and for a request for a re-consideration of funding this important project.

This Project was thoroughly vetted by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), which is a citizen-legislator council that spends significant time reviewing proposals, hearing presentations, and deliberating recommendations to spend Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars for habitat projects across the state. The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project has been vetted and approved by LSOHC in 2015, 2023, and 2025 and previously funded by the Legislature in 2016 and 2024.

This multipurpose flood mitigation – water storage Project will result in approximately 22,000 acre-feet of water storage and habitat, reduced flood flows to Canada, and enhanced water quality to downstream neighbors. When completed, this Project is a win locally, regionally, and internationally. The State of Minnesota also benefits from this Project as it improves approximately 5,500 wetland acres. In addition, 1,000 square miles of upstream drainage area will be controlled once the Project is operational.

Red River water flows north to Lake Winnipeg and this Project works towards meeting water quality objectives at the international border in accordance with the 1909 Treaty between the United States and Canada.

Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,
Lance Yohe



Lance Yohe
U.S. Commissioner
International Joint Commission
lance.yohe@ijc.org
Work Cell: 202-227-0492
Personal: tbslance@gmail.com
Personal Cell: 701-371-8246

Testimony of Erick G. Kaardal Regarding Legally Unauthorized Use of Outdoor Heritage Funds

To: Members of the Legislative Committee

From: Erick G. Kaardal, Mohrman, Kaardal & Erickson, P.A.

Date: April 13, 2026

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erick Kaardal. I am an attorney with Mohrman, Kaardal & Erickson, P.A., representing a coalition of over 40 Roseau County landowners. I am here to alert this committee to a systemic misappropriation of state funds that constitutes a legally unauthorized use of the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). We are witnessing a failure of transparency and a direct violation of the statutory safeguards placed on these funds.

Misleading Claims of Project Completion

The Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD) is currently presenting a narrative that these projects are 60% to 75% complete to justify "Phase 3" funding. Based on the facts on the ground, this is simply not true. Only Phase 1—planning and pre-construction—is effectively complete. Phases 2 and 3 remain murky, yet the District is already utilizing OHF money to execute construction activities that fall outside of any authorized legal process.

Conclusive Evidence of Statutory Violations

Internal communications from the District provide a "smoking gun" regarding their disregard for the law. In emails between District Administrator Tracy Halstengard and other officials, the District admits that if OHF funding could not be used where an eminent domain (ED) proceeding was required, it would "severely impact" their ability to plan funding.

This statement is an admission of illegal activity. The Minn. Stat. § 97A.056 ban is absolute: OHF money "shall not be spent to acquire property by eminent domain" without landowner consent. The District's admission, combined with their ongoing theft of right-of-way (ROW) easements from landowners along drainage ditches, is conclusive evidence that OHF funds have been illegally expended.

Engineering the Loss of Vested Property Rights

Our hydrology experts have confirmed a deceptive engineering tactic used to strip landowners of their rights:

- **Manipulation of Baselines:** The District is using current, degraded conditions as the "pre-project" baseline rather than the legally required 1914–1916 improvement baseline.
- **Loss of Hydraulic Capacity:** By changing the baseline to post-project conditions, landowners lose their vested right to the original hydraulic capacity of the drainage ditch system.
- **Return to Pre-Settlement Flooding:** Effectively, the RRWD is using OHF funds to restore "pre-settlement" flooding conditions—reversing the 1916 drainage improvements—without paying for the resulting destruction of private farmland.

Non-Transparent Funding and "Double Jeopardy"

We are concerned by a funding scheme where the RRWD works with partners like Ducks Unlimited and the DNR to shuffle funds between "Wetlands and Habitat" line items to obscure the actual

project scope. Landowners face a "double jeopardy" scenario: while the District floods their land without compensation, it uses its taxing authority to raise local levies on those same families to fund the projects causing the damage.

Documented Physical Takings

This misconduct has necessitated two federal lawsuits. Physical damages include:

- Infrastructure Encroachment: A permanent weir structure where 20 percent of the structure sits directly on unpurchased private land.
- Theft of Property: The trespass and seizure of over 120 truckloads of private soil from private land for project use without payment.
- Economic Destruction: Engineered flooding that has "drowned out" crops like soybeans and flax on acreage omitted from legal taking proceedings.

Conclusion

The RRWD's reliance on non-existent easements and manipulated baselines to bypass § 97A.056 represents a gross misuse of public funds. We urge this committee to halt all further disbursement of OHF funds until the District complies with constitutional eminent domain procedures.

MN House Legacy Finance Committee

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Kurt Kveen, proud Roseau MN landowner and 5th generation farmer. We started this battle against the RRWD, and Minnesota DNR approximately 14 years ago. We questioned them and discussed potential problems we saw with this project. We believe our interpretation and knowledge of this project, and land would be considered and evaluated by their experts. They displayed maps with colored lines crossing our private properties and their assurance that if we didn't like the project, we could stop it. We knew immediately that this project would destroy our livelihoods.

Originally, I envisioned our experts presenting their conclusions to the watershed and simple facts that would show their plans flaws. Since this project was initiated, we have tirelessly fought the watershed and DNR. Over the years we have attended numerous meetings, wrote dozens of letters, spoke at every meeting we could, and we have called lawmakers to plead our case. We have hired several professional engineers and hydrologists; we have hired surveyors. We have gone door to door and provided literature and conversation to as many people in the area as we could. We had a booth at the Roseau County Fair, obtained more than 500 signatures on a petition to oppose the project, and handed out apparel supporting our cause. We've hosted informational dinners for the community and other landowners involved in this project. Unfortunately, since this all started it seems to be the only conversation we have --it's become all consuming. We have given more time to this fight than I care to calculate. While our land and farms deserve our attention, our families, children, and grandchildren have watched their grandparents' parents, and great grandparents struggle with this project. Projects like this can destroy farmers livelihoods, friendships, families, and communities.

I've been asked why are you fighting this? This project is not a flood reduction project. It is merely an inflated retention area that will only be utilized to form duck habitat. Their own engineer touted that this project could reduce flooding downriver by as much as 5%. These agencies brag about natural restoration conservation and a bunch of other \$0.10 words. If that's their intent to restore Roseau Lake, they should be looking at restoring it back to the approximately 600 to 800 acres that it was. I have a pile of plat books from the early 1900s through today and that lake has never been over 800 acres now they're begging for money to build a 6000-acre shallow retention area that does not have any resemblance of what Roseau Lake once was.

This is not a lake! So, I ask why we are fighting this project. We're not foolish, we're not naive. We didn't just decide to challenge the watershed and DNR because we like the excitement. We did our homework and can stand in front of you today and tell you that this will destroy private property. They will not tell you about any of this because they know they will be held accountable for their words. They know today's hearing will be documented. The Watershed is a public utility funded to control water, and be of service, not to be used by the DNR to destroy productive land.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Kveen

Dear Chair Vang, Chair McDonald and Legacy Committee Members,

I support the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project in the Leppard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund Bill.

My husband and I are landowners and past farmers in Dieter and Ross townships. We own 785 acres and live 3 miles west of the Roseau Lake. We attended informational meetings and especially ones which we were invited to that pertained to our land. We received letters regarding meetings and were kept well informed! The watershed meetings (time & place) are published in the local newspaper (Roseau Times Region) as well.

We sold land to the watershed and were given fair prices and our requests for changes were honored. I believe this project will be beneficial to land owners downstream especially to reduce flooding during flooding events. We have lived on the river for 54 years and experienced several floods in our time. I grew up in Ross and remember many flooding years as more & more drainage was done upstream. The prime lake bottom land was not very consistent for planting or harvesting! We definitely support this project.

Phil & Roberts Johnson

Dear Chair Vang, Chair McDonald
and Legacy Committee Members

I am a landowner who resides in
Dieter Township and I own 40
Acres of land in Section 27, Next
to Hwy 89, west of the Ross bridge
and south of the Roseau River.

In the past 10 yrs of ownership
I have been flooded out 2 times, total
crop loss due to overland flooding

I believe if this project was
to be completed and the water could
be controlled this could be very
minimal damage to cropland and
the same for other farmers

I support the Roseau Lake
Restoration Project in the Leland-
Sams Outdoor Heritage Funding bill
and encourage the funding to be
approved

David S. Lee

3/21/2026

Dear Chas Vang, Chair McDonald, and
Legacy Committee Members;

I ask you to please support the
Roseau Lake Restoration Project and
to continue it's funding through the
Leason-Dain Outdoor Heritage Fund
legislation... I feel that this
project will be a tremendous
benefit to the landowners who are
in the area affected by routine
flooding.

I live in sections 23 of Dieter
township right next to the Roseau
lake; also I own land in section
26 of Dieter. I'm directly affected by
this project and am a big supporter
of it. I own around 560 acres here.

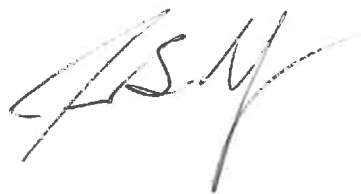
Over the years I've attended many
informational meetings; I missed some
but the watershed district (RRWD) was
always making efforts to keep me
updated with events and information.

Please ask you to continue
funding of this almost finished project.
Charles James Johnson 218 242 1622

Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project Letter of Support 3-22-26

Greetings Chair Vang, Chair McDonald, and Legacy Committee members, I am writing to you today from Roseau Minnesota in support of the Roseau Lake rehabilitation Project in the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund Bill. I am property owning resident living on the west side of this project who is in support of the completion of this project. I Live in Dieter Township in Roseau county less than a mile from the west side of the project. I am a homeowner on a few acres and have experienced flooding many times in my lifetime. I have lived in the area over 20 years combined and have been a Roseau County resident my entire lifetime. I have not attended many meetings on the project, but I am very aware of the project and the benefits it will have during peak flooding for residents and farming upstream from here. Please Support this project and it's inclusion in The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund Legislation. I have lived on both sides of the river up here and I am a very avid outdoorsman. I have spent my whole life hunting and fishing the Roseau River area and I believe this project will be a great asset to that as well as be functional for holding back some of the flood waters. I strongly support the completion of this project.

Thank you for time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AS-11' or similar, written in a cursive style.

This is in regards to the Roseau Lake Project.

IF it Does what its supposed to do. I am not
against it. I understand the DNR own the land.

IF their willing to give the Roseau Water Shed
a say in what happens, with the water after
spring thaw, thats a good thing I think.

I Have Flooded 4 times once in 1996 2 Times
in 1997 and in 2002. Unless a Channel is

Built from here to Lake Winnepeg. We will Flood
again. anything to help Im all for.

I live in The First ~~Part~~ Place West of the lake Bottom
Down Stream.



Rick Isham

Gary Sunsten

35336 310th Ave

Roseau MN 56751

3/21/2026

Dear Chair Vang, Chair McDonald, and Legacy Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project and to respectfully urge its inclusion and continued funding in the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund legislation.

I reside with my son on our family's riverfront property along the Roseau River, located approximately one mile west of the Roseau Lake bottom in Dieter Township. I have lived here with my son in recent years. While the property is not in my name, I share the home and have a direct stake in its well-being and future.

Although I have not been as actively involved in following the project's details as others, I have visited the construction sites with my son and have observed the progress firsthand. I have been supportive throughout and was looking forward to the project's completion. The restoration would allow the lake bottom to function once again as a natural reservoir, helping to mitigate the minor flooding that has affected our property over the years. The inclusion of public access features would enable the broader community to enjoy recreational opportunities in the area, which I view as a positive outcome for everyone involved.

It is concerning to learn that funding has been halted at this advanced stage, after substantial progress and investment. Halting support now would prevent these anticipated benefits, both for our family and for the public.

I fully support the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project and its continuation through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund. I respectfully request that the Committee restore the necessary funding to enable the project to reach completion.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important initiative and for your stewardship of Minnesota's outdoor heritage resources.

Sincerely,

Gary Sunsten

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Sunsten". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a stylized "S".

Phone: 214-563-2400

Gary.sunsten@gmail.com

Boyd Olmstead
31342 County Road 112
Roseau, MN 56751

March 22, 2026

RE: Lake bottom project

I'm addressing this to whomever it may concern,

I have lived in Ross for 40 years, approximately ½ mile from the Roseau River and I have seen many neighbors suffer with flooding over the years, that could have possibly been prevented by holding the water in the lake bottom and releasing it at a proper time. It would be beneficial to many families and farmland along the Roseau River if the projected outcome is reached.

It doesn't make much sense to allow the project to get this far and stop it when it almost completed. It is my opinion that the project should continue as it was originally planned. Due to changes Roseau County has made in their flood plan, the Roseau River fills up faster than before and causes significant flooding. I think this project would be a good plan for a water holding area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Boyd Olmstead". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

March 23, 2026

To: Chair Vang, Chair McDonald
Legacy Committee Members

From Jerry Arneson
429 Birch Circle,
Moorhead, MN 56560
Landowner - Dieter Township, Ross, MN
701-361-7595



Re: Support Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project and the inclusion in the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund (LSOHF) legislation.

I strongly encourage your support of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project in the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund Bill. Please consider funding the project.

I am a landowner within one mile of the project; I own agricultural land which is connect to the Roseau River. I grew up on a farm operation within one mile of the project, my mother currently lives on the family farmstead, near Ross, MN within one mile of the project.

- The Roseau Watershed District has been open/available in sharing information on the project with the public. The district web site provides meeting/project information, public meetings held to share information and respond to questions. Supervisors have been open to individual and group meetings to discuss the project.

I believe the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project will be a benefit for controlling water flow (preventing flooding, crop damage, etc.) of the Roseau River. The project will be a benefit/enhancement to wildlife/fisheries and waterfowl habitat.

Please support the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project and the inclusion in the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund (LSOHF) legislation.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Testimony Regarding the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project and Other OHF Funds House Informational Meeting – 04/15/2026

Introduction

Good morning, my name is Matt Magnusson. I am a landowner and farmer in and around the Roseau Lake rehabilitation project area. In addition to farming, I hunt and fish in the area and reside nearby.

Project Impacts on Local Agriculture

The ongoing project is already causing crop damage and creating hardships for area farmers. One specific concern is the construction of the weir (or dam).

I have personally observed the negative effects of the weir installed in the cutoff channel during phase 1 of this project. This channel serves as a vital private drainage ditch route for the area. Unfortunately, the watershed did not disclose details about the project.

- The weir was originally intended to be 4 feet tall from the bottom of the channel.
- However, the weir that was built is approximately **12 feet tall** from the bottom of the channel.

According to project engineers, the weir would back up water only a few tenths of a foot (3.6 inches), with the increase diminishing to nothing upstream at Stoe's bridge, 1.75 miles away.

This statement from the engineers is inaccurate. Multiple water elevation surveys have shown that the water level increase is well over a foot (13 tenths = 15.6 inches).

- This increase causes water to back up on our agricultural land.
- These higher river levels upstream limit our ability to drain into the river.
- Additionally, plugging the cutoff also forces water into storage.
- It is important to note that there has not been a significant runoff event since the weir's installation.

As a result, the weir is damming water to levels that are negatively impacting area farms.

Further Concerns and Local Government Involvement

I also serve as a supervisor for Jadis Township. In 2021, Roseau County and Jadis Township collaborated to replace a bridge spanning the cutoff channel. A different engineering firm determined that two large concrete box culverts, each 16 feet wide, were necessary to maintain flow in the channel and prevent upstream flooding.

The project's weir (dam) is now located directly upstream of these culverts, effectively blocking them until water overtops the weir.

Furthermore, the weir was constructed using material **taken from an existing dike on private property** without the landowner's knowledge or consent. Projects conducted in this manner should not receive funding.

Request to the Committee

I urge you, in your roles as committee members, to withhold any funding for this project or any other OHF partner funds that support it.



Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers

2600 Wheat Drive • Red Lake Falls, MN 56750

Phone: 218-253-4311 • mnwheat.org

March 27, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District.

This Project was thoroughly vetted by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), which is a citizen-legislator council that spends significant time reviewing proposals, hearing presentations, and deliberating on recommendations to spend Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars for habitat projects across the state. The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project has been vetted and approved by LSOHC in 2015, 2023, and 2025 and previously funded by the Legislature in 2016 and 2024.

This multipurpose flood mitigation – water storage Project will result in approximately 22,000 acre-feet of water storage and habitat, reduced flood flows to Canada, and enhanced water quality to downstream neighbors. When completed, this Project is a win locally, regionally, and internationally. The State of Minnesota also benefits from this Project as it improves approximately 5,500 wetland acres. In addition, 1,000 square miles of upstream drainage area will be controlled once the Project is operational.

Red River water flows north to Lake Winnipeg and this Project works towards meeting water quality objectives at the international border in accordance with the 1909 Treaty between the United States and Canada.

Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,

Brian Sorenson, Executive Director

March 23, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District.

The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project has been vetted and approved by LSOHC in 2015, 2023, and 2025 and previously funded by the Legislature in 2016 and 2024. This multipurpose flood mitigation – water storage Project will result in approximately 22,000 acre-feet of water storage and habitat, reduced flood flows to Canada, and enhanced water quality to downstream neighbors.

Red River water flows north to Lake Winnipeg and this Project works towards meeting water quality objectives at the international border in accordance with the 1909 Treaty between the United States and Canada.

Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "CGriffith".

Caroline Griffith
Water Program Director
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy



March 23, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Minnesota Watersheds represents 42 watershed organizations throughout Minnesota. Many of our member organizations have received funding for projects that have been thoroughly vetted through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). As a citizen-legislator council, we appreciate the significant amount of time spent reviewing proposals, hearing presentations, and deliberating on recommendations to appropriate money from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Minnesota Watersheds supports the rigorous process employed by LSOHC. This process ensures recommendations are consistent with the constitution and state law, directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie.

Minnesota Watersheds supports the recommendations made by the LSOHC as introduced in [SF4304](#) and [HF3879](#) which include the following funding for watershed districts:

- Roseau River WD; Roseau Lake Rehabilitation, Phase 3 - \$3.505 million
- Comfort Lake-Forest Lake WD; Greenbelt, Phase 1 - \$1.448 million
- Shell Rock River WD; Shell Rock River Watershed Habitat Restoration Program, Phase 15 - \$2.039 million
- Comfort Lake-Forest Lake WD; Bone Lake South, Phase 2 - \$1.413 million
- Red Lake WD; Mud River Enhancement Project - \$2.917 million
- Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers WD; Swift Coulee Channel Restoration and Enhancement, Phase 2 - \$2.635 million

Thank you for your consideration.

Jan Voit
Executive Director

PRESIDENT
Brad Kramer (Region 2)
Shell Rock River WD
brad@provenioconsulting.com
507-369-6050 | Term 2028

VICE PRESIDENT
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pfjestad@prtcl.com
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Upper Minnesota WD
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320-760-6093 | Term 2027

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lvavra@fedtel.net
320-760-1774 | Term 2026

Gene Tiedemann (Region 1)
Red Lake WD
gtiedemann@rrv.net
218-289-3511 | Term 2027

Jeff Gertgen (Region 2)
Middle Fork Crow River WD
jg liaison@gmail.com
608-370-3934 | Term 2026

Shaun Kennedy
Bassett Creek WMC
shaun.kennedy1066@gmail.com
651-260-0916 | Term 2026

Shawn Mazanec (Region 3)
Capitol Region WD
mazanecshawn@gmail.com
651-428-6076 | Term 2028

Jan Voit
Executive Director
jvoit@mnrwatersheds.com
507-822-0921



Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am requesting that you halt funding for the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation and Roseau River Restoration projects until significant legal and design issues are fully addressed.

The map included with my testimony reflects an early project design. **Each red square represents 640 acres.** The thick blue (center), orange (upper left) and purple (lower), lines mark proposed dikes at an elevation of 1036 feet, with 1034-foot weirs. Everything inside the dotted blue line is state land. The land to the immediate south of that dotted line is privately owned and currently protected only by 1031.5-foot dikes.

The purple dike had originally been included because the Watershed District wanted to own the dike and also purchase flood easements on the private land inside it. **The project included two pools on private land—marked by black Xs on the map. This demonstrates that flooding private land was contemplated from the beginning. Landowners refused to sell either land or easements. Because of that refusal, the Watershed eliminated the entire southern dike concept from the revised alternative.**

It is critical to note that the Roseau River lies south of the state's 1036-foot dikes. Historically, water has always pooled north of the blue-line dike. Under the current design with 1036 dikes and with the Department of Natural Resources controlling flows into the lake bottom, water will be forced either downstream or back onto private land to the south. This is a dramatic departure from the natural hydrology.

Now, with a revised design, even the public lands southeast of the blue-line dikes are at increased risk of flooding. From the earliest Project Work Team meetings, landowners repeatedly asked the agencies to consider a smaller-scale project. Those concerns were dismissed. The pattern is clear: the intent has consistently been to build a large project that places private land at risk without landowner consent.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to pause all funding until a lawful decision is made by the court.

Two Rivers Watershed District

In Roseau, Kittson, & Marshall Counties



*Board of Managers: President – Rick Sikorksi, V.P.- Roger Anderson, Secretary - Daryl Klegstad, Treasurer – Gerald Olsonawski
Manager - Bruce Anderson, Manager - Scott Klein, Manager – Mark Langehaug
Staff: Dan Money, District Administrator; Tyler Coffield, Head Technician; Kimberly Soberaski, Administrative Assistant*
*410 5th Street S., Suite 112, Hallock, MN 56728 - Phone (218) 843-3333 - Email: dan.money@tworiverswd.com
World Wide Web: www.TwoRiversWD.com*

April 3, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, & Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The Two Rivers Watershed District supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District.

It is the understanding of the Two Rivers Watershed District that this project was thoroughly reviewed by each member of the LSOHC and then scored and ranked among all other project applications that were received. The LSOHC, which is a citizen-legislator council, spent significant time reviewing proposals, hearing project presentations, and deliberating on recommendations to spend Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars for habitat projects in all regions of the state.

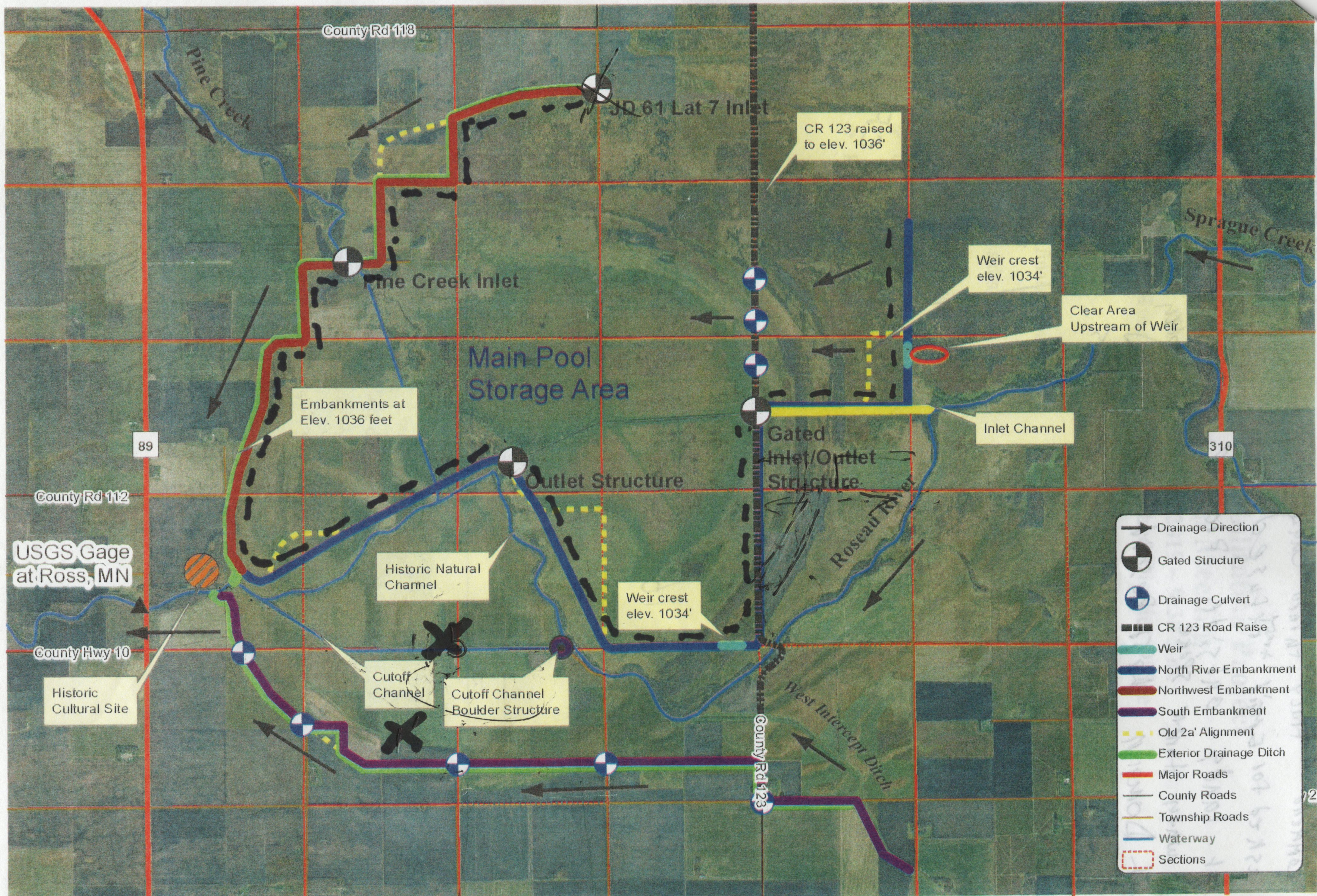
Prior phases of the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project have been vetted and approved by the LSOHC in 2015, 2023, and 2025 and previously funded by the Legislature in 20216 and 2024. Further, projects of watershed districts in the Red River Valley not only follow rigorous requirements of MN Statute 103D, but they also follow the process set up by the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group, which convenes a project team of local, state and federal citizens, agencies, and special interest groups to collectively agree by consensus on projects. In short, this project has been viewed and reviewed numerous times by numerous entities and has held up to rigorous standards that are required by law.

This project will reduce flooding in the Roseau River Watershed, reduce crossover flooding in the Two Rivers Watershed, and reduce flooding in the Province of Manitoba, Canada by storing 22,000 acre feet of flood water. It will also provide exceptional habitat in the project area by enhancing and protecting approximately 5,500 wetland acres.

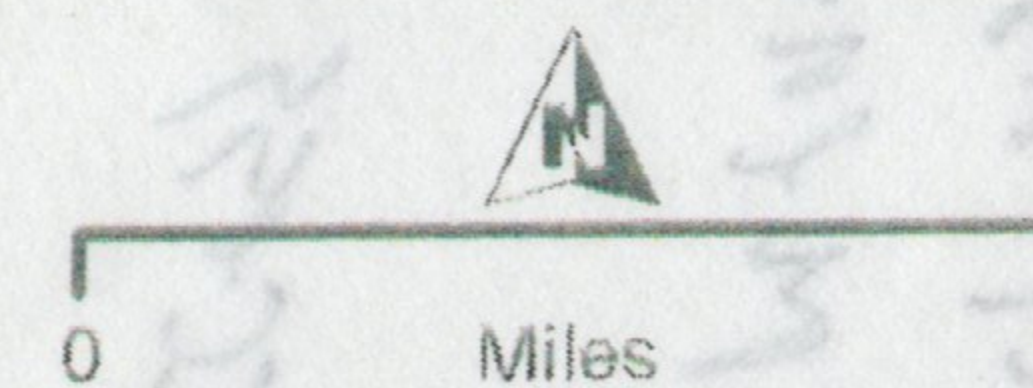
Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as it was reviewed and recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF 3879, the 2026 Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,

Dan Money
District Administrator



ALTERNATIVE 2A'
ALIGNMENT ADJUSTMENTS
JUNE 2019



ROSEAU
LAKE
PROJECT



Contact:
Debby Stone
Coalition Spokesperson/
Legal and Legislative
Affairs
202-251-5577
dstone@globalinfra.us

Q: Who are the project proposers?

A: Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD) and Minnesota DNR.

Q: What do they state the purpose of the Roseau River “Restoration” and Roseau Lake “Rehabilitation” projects are?

A: According to project materials, the stated purpose is flood damage reduction and improved fish/wildlife habitat. Depending on the funding source they are seeking, the emphasis shifts between both.

Q: What is the current status of these projects?

A: The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project (Roseau Lake Project) is under construction and is picking up speed as the RRWD works to push these projects through. Construction on the Roseau River Restoration project hasn’t started yet.

Q: What’s at risk?

A: Reports from more than one expert hydrologist have identified approx. 100+ landowners and 12,600 acres (20 square miles) of private, productive agricultural land is at risk.

Q: What have independent hydrology experts found?

A: Landowners have gotten three independent hydrology reviews (at their own cost over \$40k with another \$100k in costs pending) have reported that the flood reduction created through the projects will be minimal and will not protect against major 5- and 10-year events. And critically, those projects are projected to flood up to 12,600 acres of productive private farmland, rendering it unfarmable.

Q: How would the projects change the purpose and functionality of the original drainage ditch system?

A: The original 1914–1916 drainage ditch system (created by landowners with the State of MN) was designed to move water out of the county. The projects would change this by storing water on private farmland rather than efficiently conveying it downstream.

Q: What is the RRWD supposed to be doing?

A: Per statute 103D/103E, Watersheds exist to manage water in the watershed, especially flooding, drainage systems, and water resources. It requires them to “maintain the drainage system and provide repairs when necessary to restore the system to its original efficiency.” Over the last century, erosion from our land and silt have slowed the system down and the Watershed has not done their job to properly maintained the system.

Q: Does the RRWD have right-of-way easements on our land?

A: No. The documents were written up back when the system was established, but were NOT signed. They came up with a policy and are using they are using “hidden” or “assumed” drainage customs and ROW easements to push these projects through without landowner notification, permission, or compensation.

The RRWD is going around MN law by *claiming* 50–80 foot they have easements from the top of bank or centerline on both sides of several drainage ditches thus 100-160 ft on every parcel of private land with a drainage ditch.

- The ROW drainage records they developed rely on “hidden” drainage customs and “assumed” ROW easements. They have not compensated landowners for this. They are illegal according to constitutional law as alleged in the Federal lawsuit.

Q: What does “shifting the baseline” mean and why does it matter?

A: RRWD has not been maintaining the original 1900s drainage ditch system—landowners created, with the State of MN in 1910 to 1916—even though this is what they were established to do. As a result of erosion and silting, landowners have lost a lot of the functionality they paid for when that system was built. The RRWD has been using 2019 data as the “baseline” for State Ditch 51 (SD 51) elevations, contours, and flow NOT the original 1916 system. By doing so, they are taking our entitlement of the original capacity of the ditch without paying us which constitutes a Physical Occupation of our land. Since we didn't sell them the right to put the water beyond the 1916 baseline, it is a physical taking for them to claim a “current conditions” baseline requiring compensation for the SD 51 projects (for clarity, SD 51 is also the Roseau River).

- In essence they're not comparing to the system what was originally agreed to. They're comparing it to conditions that have degraded over time (because the RRWD hasn't kept it up...)—which hides the real impact and allows more water to be stored on private land without compensation.

Q: What is an example of project features that will cause flooding on private farmland + RRWD corruption at its finest?

A: The next phase of the project that we're trying to block funding for includes RRWD building dikes that are 3ft higher than landowner dikes, with that overflow spilling onto productive private farmland. It can be no accident that RRWD Board members Jason Braaten and Jimmy Johnson got 4ft dikes and culverts but the other landowners only have 1ft dikes.

Q: What is the “Peckman Trap”?

A: We are trying to break what we call the "Peckman Trap". We are trying to stop the RRWD from using 30-day statutory deadlines to kill your right to compensation *before you even know* you have been damaged by the construction and before you have the engineering information you need to evaluate the project's effect on your property. This is absurd given there is no notice on what is proposed specifically or how you may be impacted. In federal court, your right to be paid for your property is absolute and cannot be extinguished by administrative maneuvering. (called the Peckman Trap because RRWD did this to the Peckman family--they missed the 30-day window, and now have no recourse)

Q: What was settled in the 2024 lawsuit against the RRWD?

A: The RRWD entered private land without owner knowledge or approval, removed 120 truckloads of soil from their private embankment, built a 14' high weir (dam) with the landowner's soil – that not only blocks drainage ditch 51 but >20% of the dam was built on the landowner's own land – and is flooding multiple landowners' fields, seeing backups up to 3 miles.

Q: What is the current federal lawsuit?

A: The current lawsuit against the RRWD includes >40 landowners and is growing as more landowners begin to understand how these projects are impacting their land and livelihoods. We're suing over the violation of due process, equal protection and just compensation rights under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and Article I of the Minnesota Constitution, as well as for their conversion, trespass, and nuisance related to Plaintiffs' property interests. Because the RRWD didn't fulfill the terms of the settlement of the 2024 suit, the current suit addresses this as well.

Q: What is the MN Statute 103E/103D loophole the RRWD been using that violate the Plaintiffs' due process, equal protection rights, and just compensation rights?

A: Chapter 117 provides some of the best protections for private property owners in MN from takings including: proper notice, fair process to challenge the scope of the taking, determine proper compensation, and reimbursement of attorneys' fees.

An exception was made when 103E/103D was created to allow Watersheds to avoid that – it's intended for use for smaller maintenance projects. But this is a massive project chopped up in smaller pieces (Roseau Lake “Restoration” and Roseau River “Rehabilitation” projects) and phases that make the size and scale less apparent.

103E/103D do not have these constitutionally required procedures—no court oversight, no proper notice on scope of takings, Watershed gets to determine if they'd compensate landowners and what they feel it's worth, there's no attorney fee reimbursement—as there is under chapter 117.

In short, there are massive financial advantages for the RRWD to follow 103E/103D. They've avoided millions of dollars of project costs by not properly compensating affected landowners for the flooding/taking of their productive private farmland—both value of the land and lost crops, and violates our constitutional rights.

Q: What is the funding mechanism?

A: Currently, state funding from Minnesota's Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (Outdoor Heritage Fund), supported by taxpayer dollars and approved through the legislature. LSOHC funding cannot be used to acquire property by eminent domain unless the owner requests so—and we do NOT. While this is the immediate concern, we know that if we stop the LSOHC funding, they will find another source.

Q: What is funding supposed to be for vs. what's happening?

A: This funding is meant for conservation and habitat restoration. Instead, it's being used to push projects that would intentionally flood productive private farmland—without clear transparency or fair process for the landowners impacted.

Q: What's the status of funding?

A: Landowners testified at the 3/17/26 Senate Environment Committee meeting, and legislators voted unanimously to pause funding. The RRWD/MN DNR requested the 4/8/26 meeting with the House Legacy Fund Finance Committee, where landowners testified again. Additional hearings/meetings with the Senate Finance Bill and the House Outdoor Heritage Funding will take place between over the next 6 weeks. We remain vigilant to oppose this funding.

Q: Where can people find more information?

- Coalition website: <https://roseaulandgrab.com>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MNLandownersCoalition>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mnlandcoalition/>
- TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@mn.landowners.coa>
- X: <https://x.com/MNLandCoalition>
- BlueSky: <https://bsky.app/profile/mnlandcoalition.bsky.social>





MIDDLE-SNAKE-TAMARAC RIVERS WATERSHED DISTRICT

Portions of Marshall, Kittson, Polk, Pennington and Roseau Counties

453 N McKinley St
Warren, MN 56762
Phone 218-745-4741
Fax 218-745-5300
info@mstrwd.org
www.mstrwd.org

OP-26-011
03/19/2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Re: letter of Support to fund Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project

Dear Committee Members,

The Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project (WRE-06) that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District.

This Project was thoroughly vetted by the LSOHC, which is a citizen-legislator council that spends significant time reviewing proposals, hearing presentations, and deliberating on recommendations to spend Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars for habitat projects across the state. This project has been vetted and approved by LSOHC in 2015, 2023, and 2025 and previously funded by the Legislature in 2016 and 2024.

This multipurpose flood mitigation – water storage Project will result in approximately 22,000 acre-feet of water storage and habitat, reduced flood flows to Canada, and enhanced water quality to downstream neighbors. When completed, this Project is a win locally, regionally, and internationally. The State of Minnesota also benefits from this Project as it improves approximately 5,500 wetland acres. In addition, 1,000 square miles of upstream drainage area will be controlled once the Project is operational.

Red River water flows north to Lake Winnipeg and this Project works towards meeting water quality objectives at the international border in accordance with the 1909 Treaty between the United States and Canada.

Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,


District Administrator

BILL PETERSEN
MIDDLE RIVER
PRESIDENT
MARSHALL COUNTY

ROBERT KOVAR
EAST GRAND FORKS
VICE PRESIDENT
POLK COUNTY

KEITH SZCZEPANSKI
STEPHEN
TREASURER
MARSHALL COUNTY

BRADLEY BLAWAT
VIKING
SECRETARY
MARSHALL COUNTY

LEIN SCHILLER
ARGYLE
AST SEC/TREASURER
MARSHALL COUNTY

JOEY MCGREGOR
WARREN
MANAGER
MARSHALL COUNTY

JARED SANDS
ALVARADO
MANAGER
MARSHALL COUNTY

Red Lake Watershed District

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Gene Tiedemann

Vice President
Terry Sorenson

Treasurer
Tom Anderson

1000 Pennington Avenue South
Thief River Falls MN, 56701

218-681-5800

218-681-5839 FAX

E-mail: RLWD@redlakewatershed.org
www.redlakewatershed.org

Secretary
LeRoy Ose

Managers
Grant Nelson

Allan Page
Brian Dwight

March 19, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The Red Lake Watershed District supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District.

This Project was thoroughly vetted by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), which is a citizen-legislator council that spends significant time reviewing proposals, hearing presentations, and deliberating on recommendations to spend Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars for habitat projects across the state. The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project has been vetted and approved by LSOHC in 2015, 2023, and 2025 and previously funded by the Legislature in 2016 and 2024.

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Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,



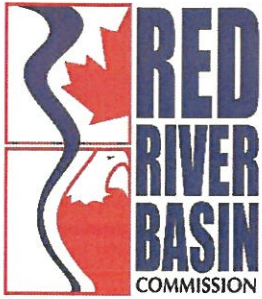
Tammy Audette
Administrator

RRWD Project Funding Transparency Issues

Phase	Cost	Primary Funders	Main Purpose	Key Cost Drivers	Status
Pre-construction	~\$7.2M	RRWMB (regional), RRWD (local), State, Federal	Planning, design, land acquisition	Land/engineering, environmental compliance	Complete
Phase 1	~\$13.0M	State (LSOHC/Outdoor Heritage Fund), RRWMB, RRWD, NRCS (Federal)	Core infrastructure (dike, control structures)	Earthwork, concrete structures, foundation	Not Complete*
Phase 2	~\$7.0M	State (LSOHC/DNR), NRCS (Federal), RRWD	Water storage & flow expansion	Channel improvements, storage	Not Complete*
Phase 3	~\$5.0M	State (LSOHC/DNR), RRWD	Habitat restoration & system refinement	Wetland restoration, grading/vegetation	Under construction (through ~2026)
Phase 4	~\$? (remaining to ~\$32M+)	State, RRWD, Flood Mitigation grants	System fixes, flow control refinements	Adjustments, inflation	Under construction (through ~2026)
Phases 5–6	~\$9M+	State (LSOHC, Flood Hazard Mitigation), RRWD	Completion, optimization	Optimization, inflation, finishing work	Final funding + completion phase

Funding Trends & Insights:

- State funding (especially LSOHC/Outdoor Heritage Fund) dominates construction, covering most of Phases 1–3. RRWD report 60-75% complete with the project but scopes above show this is not accurate. Phase 2 and 3 are in process.
- Regional money (RRWMB) is critical in pre-construction and early phases.
- Local funding (RRWD) is required throughout, generally ~\$1M–\$1.5M per phase.
- Federal funding (NRCS) is limited but strategic, mainly in Phases 1–2.
- Costs peak in Phase 1 due to heavy earthwork and core infrastructure; drop in later phases as focus shifts to restoration and system optimization.
- Late phases are expensive per unit due to inflation, optimization, and "finishing work."



Red River Basin Commission

Manitoba • Minnesota • North Dakota • South Dakota

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2025 - 2027

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March 19, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The Red River Basin Commission supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District.

This multipurpose flood mitigation – water storage Project will result in approximately 22,000 acre-feet of water storage and habitat, reduced flood flows to Canada, and enhanced water quality to downstream neighbors. When completed, this Project is a win locally, regionally, and internationally. The State of Minnesota also benefits from this Project as it improves approximately 5,500 wetland acres. In addition, 1,000 square miles of upstream drainage area will be controlled once the Project is operational.

The Red River Basin Commission has long advocated for projects like this that contribute to our Natural Resource Framework Goals. This project in particular contributes to the following goal areas:

Goal #1 - Manage natural resources in the RRB by watershed boundaries rather than political boundaries

Goal #4- Improve stakeholder participation and awareness of land and water issues and awareness of land and water issues

Goal #6 – *Reduce risk of flood damages for people, property and the environment in the main stem floodplain and in tributary waters.*

Goal # 9 – *Maintain, protect and restore surface and ground water quality in the Red River Basin.*

Goal #12 – *Conserve, manage and restore diversity and viability of native fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.*

Red River water flows north to Lake Winnipeg and this Project works towards meeting water quality objectives at the international border in accordance with the 1909 Treaty between the United States and Canada.

Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,

Ted M. Preister, Executive Director



RED RIVER RETENTION AUTHORITY

1120 28th Avenue North, Suite C - Fargo, ND 58102 - Phone: 701-356-6644

March 19, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The Red River Retention Authority supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District.

This Project was thoroughly vetted by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), which is a citizen-legislator council that spends significant time reviewing proposals, hearing presentations, and deliberating recommendations to spend Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars for habitat projects across the state. The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project has been vetted and approved by LSOHC in 2015, 2023, and 2025 and previously funded by the Legislature in 2016 and 2024.

This multipurpose flood mitigation – water storage Project will result in approximately 22,000 acre-feet of water storage and habitat, reduced flood flows to Canada, and enhanced water quality to downstream neighbors. When completed, this Project is a win locally, regionally, and internationally. The State of Minnesota also benefits from this Project as it improves approximately 5,500 wetland acres. In addition, 1,000 square miles of upstream drainage area will be controlled once the Project is operational.

Red River water flows north to Lake Winnipeg and this Project works towards meeting water quality objectives at the international border in accordance with the 1909 Treaty between the United States and Canada.

Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian L. Fuder".

Brian L. Fuder, Executive Director
Red River Retention Authority



March 19, 2026

Members of the Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Members of the Minnesota House of Representative Legacy Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) supports the \$3.5 million funding recommendation of the Lessard – Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) specifically related to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project that is being constructed by the Roseau River Watershed District.

This Project was thoroughly vetted by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), which is a citizen-legislator council that spends significant time reviewing proposals, hearing presentations, and deliberating on recommendations to spend Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars for habitat projects across the state. The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project has been vetted and approved by LSOHC in 2015, 2023, and 2025 and previously funded by the Legislature in 2016 and 2024.

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Red River water flows north to Lake Winnipeg and this Project works towards meeting water quality objectives at the international border in accordance with the 1909 Treaty between the United States and Canada. Please consider full funding of \$3.5 million for this Project as recommended by the LSOHC and contained in HF3879, the 2026 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Finney".

John Finney, RRWMB President

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Sip".

Robert L. Sip, RRWMB Executive Director



154 Friesen Avenue
Steinbach, MB, R5G 0T5
Ph: (204) 326-1030
info@srrwd.ca
www.srrwd.ca

March 20, 2026

Att: Tracy Halstensgard
Roseau River Watershed District
Roseau, MN

On behalf of the Board of the Seine Rat Roseau Watershed District (SRRWD), we are pleased to provide this letter of support for the Roseau River Watershed District's Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project.

67-2025: Neil Claringbould – Harold Janzen

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD supports the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project being initiated by Roseau River Watershed District in Roseau, Minnesota.

The SRRWD recognizes the importance of proactive watershed management initiatives that enhance water quality, improve ecological function, and support long-term sustainability within our shared watershed. The proposed rehabilitation of Roseau Lake represents a valuable investment in both environmental health and community resilience. Projects of this nature contribute to reduced nutrient loading, improved aquatic habitat, and strengthened natural infrastructure that benefits surrounding communities and residents.

As neighboring watershed districts, we understand the interconnected nature of our water systems and the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing watershed challenges. The Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project aligns with our shared goals of responsible water management, flood mitigation, and the protection of natural resources for future generations.

We commend the Roseau River Watershed District for its leadership and commitment to advancing this initiative. The SRRWD Board fully supports the progression of this project and encourages continued investment in watershed-based solutions that deliver environmental, social, and economic benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ed Penner".

Ed Penner
SRRWD Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Joey Pankiw".

Joey Pankiw
SRRWD District Manager

Landowner Concerns Regarding House Outdoor Heritage Funding Bill

Testimony to the Chair and Committee Members of the House Legacy Finance Committee

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am Debby Stone, and I represent the MN Landowners Coalition, I am also the great grand daughter of a landowner who homesteaded land signed by the President of the United States, as was the process in the 1890s. Our landowners have in some cases 5 or 6 generations farming the land. Long before the DNR or a Watershed district existed. It is important to note, the drainage ditch system developed to support local economic development and agricultural sector was developed between 1910 and 1914-1916 respectively. It is also important to note, that the system functions efficiently today for us to grow crops and make a living. As we testified last week, the RRWD and DNR have devised a system to take 12,600 acres of private agricultural land, homes, and farms using hidden easements and phony Right-of-Ways. These issues and the constitutional violations they violate are the topic of a huge Federal lawsuit that was filed by landowners in 2025. A case was filed in 2022 on process violations and the destruction of the embankment in 2024, so essentially litigation has been active since 2022 and we are still struggling to find justice. The current case is being amended to add landowners and mounting evidence for the third time. Our attorneys will be in attendance to provide details on those issues.

Review and Concerns Over Grants, Coordination of Partners, “Wetlands” and “Habitat” Funding Requests

Over the weekend, I reviewed the House Outdoor Heritage Funding bill. As landowners, we have serious concerns about several funding requests appearing under in the bill in the “Wetlands” and “Habitat” categories in the bill’s fiscal tracker. Through consultation with our attorneys, we have identified that these requests may indirectly finance the projects using funds other than the designated Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Phase 3-line item.

Indirect Funding and Collaborative Efforts

It appears that other Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) programs are being jointly utilized by the Roseau River Watershed District (RRWD) and organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Board of Water and Soil Resources (BOWSR), and the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB). By working jointly, these groups may employ schemes that fulfill local or other funding requirements, thereby increasing the total funds available for various phases of ongoing projects. Evidence suggests that these phases are likely being planned using OHF funds, with partners involved in wetlands, habitat, birds, and fish initiatives.

Highlighted Funding Concerns - Lack of Transparency in Program Collaboration

We have included a highlighted version of the funding line item summary document as an attachment. Items of concern are highlighted in **“yellow”**. In addition, the levy and taxing authority—at both watershed and county levels—raises local costs/taxes for landowners whose properties are already threatened by intentional flooding. This situation is alarming and essentially constitutes -- double jeopardy for affected landowners.

Although the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Phase 3 is listed as an OHF specific line item, RRWD and DNR continue to collaborate on joint activities with Ducks Unlimited, DNR BOWSR, RRWMB, and others financed by OHF program funding. References to tributaries and watersheds result in non-transparent and murky programs, which further complicate the funding landscape. These entities are working on Roseau Lake and Roseau River scopes regardless of permitting status or process, as demonstrated by previous actions with the District (ie. Destruction of ¼ mi of a private embankment and building of dam on private land etc.) You will hear about the devastating impacts the “dam” and “blockage” of the drainage has caused today from one of our landowners.

Outline of Funding and Activities/References to Phases

With support from Senate legislative staff, we have developed a comprehensive chart (attached) to outline current and planned activities/phases funded by the OHF with partners, as well as identifying other activities and phases in other funding sources that could flow to the projects. It is evident that although the RRWD has testified to being 60-75% complete, their request for Phase 3 funding does not accurately support that progress. Upon reviewing activities in progress—supported by experts, landowners and drone footage—it is apparent that construction has commenced and work is ongoing for activities in Phases 1 and 2, rather than the claimed 60-75% completion. The outlined activities, verified by legislative staff, involve multiple recipients and partners backed by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). Notably, these organizations continue to pursue projects that while they do not specifically reference Roseau Lake and the Roseau River, they are planning despite the legal case, advancing through various phases even when certain permits or formal processes and a ruling on their legality are pending. Putting landowners and OHF funding at risk as it is being spent on projects where landowners are alleging constitutional violations and illegal activities. Most importantly it is the build out of 4 ft dikes, inlet and outlet structures and the planned operation that is most concerning. So a pause now, is incredibly important for landowners.

Furthermore, the general OHF Grant program line item and the item for coordinating funding efforts are equally troubling to us. Overall, there are huge amounts of funding available, and our hope is that the Committee works to make sure it does not support the project activities laid out in the attached chart and line-item documents in the Roseau River Watershed District.

Request for Amendment and Funding Restrictions

Given these circumstances, we seek clarification on whether the risks associated with this pattern of activity are being addressed in an amendment by the Committee currently under consideration to pause project funding. Specifically, we request that no funds be allocated to any projects within the Red River or Roseau River Watersheds that would, directly or indirectly, to support the ongoing Roseau Lake Rehabilitation or Roseau River Restoration projects.

We want to stress that we are extremely grateful for the legislature's support to landowners against such non-transparent threats, especially considering the third lawsuit against the RRWD on these matters since 2022. Considering the current federal lawsuit, and the recent discovery of numerous illegal actions by the Roseau River Watershed District that are currently playing out in the Federal Court process, we ask you to please support us in pausing funding for the court to rule. And that you consider legislator audit actions to identify misuse of funds.

You will hear from Attorneys on the recent discovery of several issues and will hear from landowners. Thank you for your consideration on behalf of the MN Landowners Coalition.

Testimony MN House Legacy Finance Committee
4/15/26

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Tammy Kriese. My great grandparents homesteaded in Roseau in the 1890's and were among the landowners who worked with the State of Minnesota to create the 1916 drainage ditch system that's still used today.

Today, that partnership feels very different.

Landowners cannot compete with the resources of the Minnesota DNR and Roseau River Watershed District. They have massive budgets, tremendous resources, teams of lobbyists, and wield an incredible amount of power. We're landowners, farmers, ordinary people. Yet here we are fighting for our constitutional rights and the land our families have stewarded for generations.

This fight is taking a tremendous toll. Many landowners are in their 70's and 80's and fear retaliation for speaking out. They worry about their ability to pass this farmland on to the next generation. I worry about my ability to pass it on to mine.

The financial burden is also significant. We have spent \$40,000 on hydrologist analysis out of our own pockets, with another \$100,000 pending, and in addition to mounting legal fees.

I struggled with viewing the testimony from last week suggesting that because so much money has been spent on the project to date, it would be a shame to not finish. For those whose land and livelihoods aren't at risk, that may seem reasonable. But for the families who stand to lose their productive multigenerational farmland, homes, and outbuildings—sunk costs are the least of the issue. It's the irreversible impact on people's lives. I ask, should we really be putting ducks over farmers?

I've watched the toll this is taking on my family members and other impacted landowners. It's heartbreaking to see generations of stewardship of this land at risk.

We're not asking for special treatment. We're just asking for the time and due process we're entitled to, and for the court to be able to decide the pending federal case before these projects move forward any further.

This isn't just about land. It's about legacy, livelihood, and our fundamental rights as Americans. We respectfully ask you to keep all project funding paused.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.