

Subject Outdoor Heritage Fund

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Overview

This bill contains appropriations from the outdoor heritage fund (OHF). The OHF is one of four funds created by the constitutional amendment passed in 2008, often referred to as the “Legacy Amendment,” that increased the state’s sales tax by 3/8ths of 1 percent for 25 years and distributed the receipts to four separate funds with dedicated purposes. The OHF receives 33 percent of the receipts and may be spent only “to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.”

The appropriations in this bill are based upon recommendations made by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). The LSOHC is a 12-member council made up of four legislators and eight citizens tasked with making annual recommendations to the legislature on how to spend money in the OHF.

Summary

Section	Description
1	Appropriations. Technical.
2	Outdoor heritage fund. Subd. 1. Total appropriation. Provides total appropriations of \$168,512,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$775,000 in fiscal year 2027 from the outdoor heritage fund. Subd. 2. Prairies. Specifies appropriations totaling \$34,199,000 for various projects restoring, enhancing, and protecting the state’s prairies. Subd. 3. Forests. Specifies appropriations totaling \$20,414,000 for various projects restoring, enhancing, and protecting the state’s forests. Subd. 4. Wetlands. Specifies appropriations totaling \$29,695,000 for various projects restoring, enhancing, and protecting the state’s wetlands.

Section	Description
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	<p>Subd. 5. Habitats. Specifies appropriations totaling \$82,150,000 for various other habitat projects and the conservation partners legacy grant program.</p>
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	<p>Subd. 6. Administration. Specifies appropriations totaling \$2,054,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$775,000 in fiscal year 2027 for administration, including administrative costs of the LSOHC, contract management services from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and a technical evaluation panel.</p>
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	<p>Subd. 7. Availability of appropriation. States that the money appropriated may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan and may not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to a specific appropriation. Provides for the availability of money depending on use and whether or not federal funds are also used.</p>
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	<p>Subd. 8. Payment conditions and capital equipment expenditures. Requires all agreements to be administered on a reimbursement basis unless otherwise provided. Allows reasonable amounts to be advanced in some circumstances if approved as part of an accomplishment plan. Requires capital expenditures that exceed \$10,000 to be itemized and approved as part of an accomplishment plan.</p>
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	<p>Subd. 9. Mapping. Requires recipients of an appropriation to submit geographic information to the DNR on lands acquired in fee with the appropriation that are open to the public for hunting and fishing for mapping.</p>
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	<p>Subd. 10. Carryforward. Extends the availability of several prior appropriations.</p>
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	<p>Subd. 11. Cancellation. Cancels \$120,000 from a 2020 appropriation originally for the Heron Lake Area Conservation Partnership.</p>
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3	<p>Federal grant fund requirements.</p>
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	<p>States that an interest in real property purchased with money from the OHF may be used to leverage federal money from conservation programs (ex. Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration, and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration) and that the programs may place conditions requiring the continued use of the land for conservation purposes. States that these conditions do not require prior approval by the LSOHC under an existing law that requires OHF recipients to get approval prior to altering or conveying an interest in OHF acquired real property.</p>
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