

Chapter 126

2026 Regular Session

Subject Legacy and Other Provisions**Bill** S.F. 2077**Analyst** Janelle Taylor**Date** May 28, 2026

Overview

This act contains appropriations from the outdoor heritage fund as well as provisions related to the parks and trails fund and arts and cultural heritage fund. The funds were established by the “Legacy Amendment” passed by the voters in 2008.

The act also contains a number of other provisions, including provisions that impact state lands, appropriate money for the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI), modify provisions related to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) new electronic licensing system, and extend unemployment insurance for certain iron mining workers.

Article 1: Outdoor Heritage Fund

This article contains fiscal year 2027 appropriations from the outdoor heritage fund (OHF). The appropriations 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. The OHF receives 33 percent of the revenues from the sales tax increase and the money may be spent only “to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.”

Section	Description – Article 1: Outdoor Heritage Fund
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1	Appropriations.
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Technical.

2	Outdoor heritage fund.
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Subd. 1. Total appropriation. Provides a total appropriation of \$191,081,000 in fiscal year 2027 from the OHF.

Section Description – Article 1: Outdoor Heritage Fund

Subd. 2. Prairies. Specifies appropriations totaling \$36,387,000 for various projects restoring, enhancing, and protecting the state’s prairies.

Subd. 3. Forests. Specifies appropriations totaling \$36,939,000 for various projects restoring, enhancing, and protecting the state’s forests.

Subd. 4. Wetlands. Specifies appropriations totaling \$33,188,000 for various projects restoring, enhancing, and protecting the state’s wetlands.

Subd. 5. Habitats. Specifies appropriations totaling \$82,408,000 for various other habitat projects and the conservation partners legacy grant program for the seven-county metropolitan area and cities with a population of 50,000 or more.

Subd. 6. Administration. Specifies appropriations totaling \$2,159,000 for administration, including administrative costs of the LSOHC, contract management services from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and a technical evaluation panel.

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.

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.

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.

Subd. 10. Carryforward. Extends the availability of two prior appropriations.

3 Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

Prohibits public members of the LSOHC from serving more than eight years, except to fill a vacancy (up to an additional six months). Strikes language being codified in the next section.

Section	Description – Article 1: Outdoor Heritage Fund
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4	Administration; executive director.
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	Allows the LSOHC to have a meeting closed to the public in order to discuss, interview, and select candidates when hiring an executive director. Recodifies language stricken in the previous section.
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5	Habitats.
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	Amends a previous OHF appropriation for a structural deterrent for invasive carp at Lock and Dam No. 5 on the Mississippi River to provide additional time for the design to be completed (until June 30, 2027).
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6	Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council; Transition.
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	States that the changes in section 3 regarding term limits for LSOHC public members are effective July 1, 2026, and apply to appointments made on or after that date. Allows members appointed before that date to serve out the remainder of their terms if their service exceeds the term limits.
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Article 2: Parks and Trails Fund

This article contains a number of provisions impacting the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC). The commission was established by law in 2013 and tasked with regional park system planning and providing recommendations for appropriations from the parks and trails fund for parks and trails of regional significance outside the seven-county metropolitan area. It also extends the availability of previous parks and trails fund appropriations.

Section	Description - Article 2: Parks and Trails Fund
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1	Districts; plans and hearings.
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	Removes the requirement that districtwide plans and master plans for individual parks outside the seven-county metropolitan area meet certain criteria, as well as removes requirements for public hearings on those plans.
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2	Recommendations.
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	Specifies that parks and trails fund grant recommendations may be for “projects” rather than for “parks and trails.”
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3	Chair.
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	Requires the chair of the GMRPTC to be elected biennially rather than annually, which is required under current law.
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Section	Description - Article 2: Parks and Trails Fund
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| 4 | Report.
Requires the GMRPTC to list its recommendation for parks and trails fund grants by regional parks and trails district instead of in priority order as required under current law. |
| 5 | Parks and trails fund appropriation extensions.
Extends the availability of six previous parks and trails fund grants. |
| 6 | Repealer.
Repeals obsolete provisions establishing requirements for the first GMRPTC appointments (Minn. Stat. § 85.536, subd. 3) and its first meeting (Minn. Stat. § 85.536, subd. 4). |

Article 3: Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

This article amends a previous appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Section	Description - Article 3: Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund
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| 1 | Department of Administration.
Amends a previous appropriation for a grant for an art installation celebrating Suni Lee to change the recipient to the city of St. Paul, specifies that the installation is a public installation, and extends the availability of the appropriation to June 30, 2028. |
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Article 4: State Lands

This article contains a number of provisions that pertain to the administration of state land being recommended by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as well as provisions authorizing St. Louis County to sell certain land by private sale and authorizing the Minnesota Historical Society to convey certain state land. It also contains provisions related to the DNR's new electronic licensing system.

Section	Description - Article 4: State Lands
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| 1 | Acquisition procedure.
Modifies a provision requiring the DNR to follow certain procedures, including having lands appraised, when acquiring an interest in land to only require those procedures when acquiring land in fee title or acquiring an easement. |
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Section Description - Article 4: State Lands

- 2 Stream easements.**
Allows the DNR to acquire an easement to access permanent stream easements the DNR has acquired. Provides the method for calculating access easement payments.
- 3 Access easement.**
Allows the DNR to acquire an easement to access native prairie acquired under the DNR's native prairie bank program. States that the payment for the access easements must be equal to or less than half the native prairie bank payment rate.
- 4 Effective date.**
Modifies the effective date for provisions amended in 2024 to accommodate the new DNR electronic licensing system to allow the provisions to become effective as the pieces of the system they impact are fully implemented.
- 5 Additions to state parks.**
Adds land to the statutory boundaries of Frontenac State Park and Great River Bluffs State Park.
- 6 Deletion from state park.**
Removes land from the statutory boundaries of Mille Lacs Kathio State Park.
- 7 Public sale of surplus land bordering public water; Becker County.**
Allows the DNR to sell certain surplus state land bordering Rossman Lake in Becker County.
- 8 Private sale of surplus land bordering public water; Mille Lacs County.**
Allows the DNR to sell certain surplus state land bordering Mille Lacs Lake to a federally recognized Indian Tribe.
- 9 Private conveyance of surplus land bordering public water; Pine County.**
Allows the DNR to convey certain surplus state land bordering the Grindstone River for no consideration for purposes of ensuring private landowners have continued access to the river after the Grindstone River dam is removed.
- 10 Conveyance of surplus state land; Redwood County.**
Allows the Minnesota Historical Society to convey certain land in Redwood County to the Lower Sioux Indian Community for no consideration.
- 11 Private sale of tax-forfeited land; St. Louis County.**
Allows St. Louis County to sell by private sale certain tax-forfeited land in the county.

Section Description - Article 4: State Lands

- 12 **Private sale of land; St. Louis County.**
Allows St. Louis County to sell by private sale certain county owned land.
- 13 **Private conveyance of surplus land bordering public water; Wabasha County.**
Allows the DNR to convey certain surplus state land for no consideration to the city of Elgin to be used by the city for nonmotorized public recreation and public fishing access. Provides that the land reverts back to the state if the city fails to use the land as intended or allows another public use without written approval from the DNR.
- 14 **Conveyance of surplus state land; Washington County.**
Allows the Minnesota Historical Society to convey certain land in Washington County to the city of Marine on Saint Croix for no consideration.
- 15 **Appropriation extension.**
Extends the availability of a previous appropriation for the DNR's electronic licensing system to June 30, 2027.
- 16 **Effective date.**
States that sections 4 to 15 are effective the day following final enactment.

Article 5: Agricultural Utilization Research Institute

Section Description - Article 5: Agricultural Utilization Research Institute

- 1 **Appropriation; Agricultural Utilization Research Institute.**
Appropriates \$80,000 in fiscal year 2026 from the general fund to AURI for legal costs.

Article 6: Iron Ore Mining; Additional Unemployment Benefits Program

Section Description - Article 6: Iron Ore Mining; Additional Unemployment Benefits Program

- 1 **Iron ore mining additional unemployment benefits program.**
Extends unemployment benefits through March 20, 2027, for iron ore mining workers subject to mass layoffs on or after November 1, 2025, and before March 15, 2026. This is effective retroactively from November 1, 2025.

Section	Description - Article 6: Iron Ore Mining; Additional Unemployment Benefits Program
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On top of the regular 26 weeks of unemployment benefits, an applicant is eligible for additional weeks of benefits if they earned at least 50 percent of their wage credits from an employer in the iron ore mining industry or related explosives manufacturing industry and were laid off by that employer. Eligible applicants would have to meet regular eligibility criteria. Applicants who have applied and been determined eligible for federal Trade Readjustment Allowance benefits would be ineligible for additional unemployment insurance benefits under this section.



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