

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

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### Overview

This bill contains the fiscal year 2014 appropriations from the outdoor heritage fund largely based on the recommendations made by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC).

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- 1 **Outdoor heritage appropriation.** Technical.
- 2 **Outdoor heritage.**

**Subd. 1. Total appropriation.** Provides a total appropriation of \$97,644,000 from the outdoor heritage fund in fiscal year 2014.

**Subd. 2. Prairies.** Provides a total appropriation of \$27,730,000 for the following prairie projects:

- (a) \$2,000,000 to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), in cooperation with the Minnesota Land Trust and the Conservation Fund, for a pilot project to acquire conservation easements on grasslands;
- (b) \$7,960,000 for an agreement with Pheasants Forever to acquire wildlife management areas (WMAs);
- (c) \$4,940,000 to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to acquire land for WMAs and scientific and natural areas (SNAs), and to acquire native prairie bank easements;

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- (d) \$5,310,000 for an agreement with the Nature Conservancy to acquire native prairie, wetland, and savanna and restore and enhance grasslands, wetlands, and savanna;
- (e) \$3,520,000 to BWSR to acquire permanent conservation easements that expand clean water fund riparian buffers on private land;
- (f) \$1,780,000 for an agreement with the Trust for Public Land to acquire and restore lands in the Cannon River watershed for WMA or aquatic management area (AMA) purposes; and
- (g) \$2,220,000 to the DNR to accelerate restoration and enhancement of WMAs, SNAs, and land under native prairie bank easements.

**Subd. 3. Forests.** Provides a total appropriation of \$7,130,000 for the following forest projects:

- (a) \$1,180,000 for an agreement with the American Bird Conservancy to acquire land for WMAs;
- (b) \$1,150,000 to the BWSR and the DNR to acquire land in fee and through permanent conservation easements adjacent to the Mississippi and Crow Wing Rivers and the boundaries of the Minnesota National Guard Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB);
- (c) \$1,180,000 for an agreement with Pheasants Forever, in cooperation with the Minnesota Sharp-Tailed Grouse Society, to acquire and enhance lands for WMA purposes;
- (d) \$500,000 for an agreement with Cass County to acquire land for forest wildlife habitat;
- (e) \$820,000 for an agreement with the Minnesota Land Trust to acquire conservation easements along rivers and lakes in the northern forest region; and
- (f) \$2,000,000 for an agreement with the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association to restore and enhance public forest lands in the northern forest region for moose habitat.

**Subd. 4. Wetlands.** Provides a total appropriation of \$31,150,000 for the following wetland projects:

- (a) \$13,390,000 to BWSR for permanent easements and restoration of wetlands and associated uplands through the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program and Wetlands Reserve Program;
- (b) \$6,830,000 for an agreement with Pheasants Forever to acquire land for

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waterfowl production areas;

- (c) \$3,530,000 for an agreement with Ducks Unlimited to acquire land for WMAs;
- (d) \$1,630,000 to BWSR to acquire land in fee for wild rice lake shoreland habitat;
- (e) \$1,980,000 for an agreement with the Minnesota Land Trust to acquire permanent conservation easements in high-priority wetland complexes in the prairie and forest/prairie transition areas;
- (f) \$1,790,000 to the DNR to enhance and restore shallow lakes; and
- (g) \$2,000,000 for an agreement with Ducks Unlimited to construct an outlet, water control structure, and pump station to enhance aquatic habitat in Pelican Lake.

**Subd. 5. Habitat.** Provides a total appropriation of \$30,383,000 for the following habitat projects:

- (a) \$5,250,000 to the DNR to acquire lands in fee for AMAs and to restore and enhance aquatic habitat;
- (b) \$4,100,000 for an agreement with Dakota County to acquire, restore, and enhance lands in Dakota County for fish and wildlife management purposes for WMAs and AMAs;
- (c) \$2,750,000 for agreements to acquire conservation easements and land in fee for SNA and state forest purposes;
- (d) \$1,720,000 for agreements to acquire land in fee and through conservation easements and to restore and enhance natural systems associated with the Mississippi, Minnesota, and St. Croix Rivers;
- (e) \$1,000,000 to the University of Minnesota to acquire land in fee surrounding Lake Tamarack for the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum;
- (f) \$1,710,000 to the DNR to enhance aquatic habitat;
- (g) \$2,470,000 for an agreement with Trout Unlimited to restore and enhance coldwater fish river and stream habitats;
- (h) \$1,127,000 for an agreement with the Shell Rock River Watershed District to construct structural deterrents and lake level controls to enhance aquatic habitat on Albert Lea Lake;
- (i) \$ 6,396,000 to the Metropolitan Council for habitat restoration in various parks; and
- (j) \$3,860,000 to the DNR for the Outdoor Heritage Conservation Partners Grant Program, a competitive grant program administered by the DNR. The grants are available to local, regional, state, and national organizations for enhancement,

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restoration, or protection of forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife. The grants may be awarded in an amount up to \$400,000 and require a nonstate cash match of ten percent.

**Subd. 6. Administration.** Provides a total appropriation of \$1,251,000 for administration, including: \$175,000 for contract management services from the DNR; \$936,000 for administration of the council; \$90,000 for a technical evaluation panel to conduct restoration audits; and \$50,000 for land acquisition pre-transaction services of the DNR.

**Subd. 7. Availability of appropriation.** States that 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. States that appropriations are available until June 30, 2016, unless otherwise specified. States that appropriations for acquisitions are available until June 30, 2017, if a binding agreement is entered into by that June 30, 2016. States that appropriations for restoration or enhancement work are available until June 30, 2018, or four years after acquisition of the land being restored or enhanced, whichever is later. States that appropriations for projects receiving federal funds are extended to equal the availability of federal funding. States that funds for acquisition may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for the public use of lands acquired and that public use facilities must have minimal impact on habitat.

**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 on lands acquired in fee that are open to the public for hunting and fishing to the DNR for mapping.

**Subd. 10. Appropriations carryforward; fee title acquisition.** Extends a previous appropriation for a Washington County project until July 1, 2015 and allows the funding to be used for acquisition of land in fee.

**Subd. 11. Conservation Corps Minnesota.** Requires a recipient of money appropriated in the act to make written contact with the Conservation Corps Minnesota and file a copy of the contact with the LSOHC.

**3 Restoration evaluations.** Amends § 97A.056, subd. 10. Removes the cap on the number of restoration evaluations that may be conducted each year (currently the maximum is ten).

**4 Acquisitions of lands or interest in lands; commissioner approval.** Adds § 97A.056, subd. 20. Requires all interests in lands, except conservation easements to be held by BWSR, to be approved by the commissioner of natural resources prior to acquisition, and establishes criteria the commissioner must use when approving an acquisition.

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- 5**      **Value assessment.** Adds § 97A.056, subd. 21. Requires a recipient of outdoor heritage funds to submit the most recent tax assessed value and the amount the recipient plans to offer for an interest in real property prior to acquiring the interest.