

Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council
How the Process Could Work
Discussion Points
By
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There are many things that the LOHC will need to do in the near future to insure that the citizens of Minnesota get what they have asked for. In descending order of important Council actions, the LOHC needs to:

1. restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife across the entire State of Minnesota (**funding and action process**)
2. prioritize project requests and recommend funding within budgetary guidelines in an open and transparent manner (**the project selection process**)
3. develop a simplistic system that encourages submission of project requests for funding (**the application process- Regional Review Team**)
4. develop a means to identify resource concerns within the entire State of Minnesota and provide a means for all citizens of Minnesota to have a voice in identifying resource concerns (**the identification process- County Conservation Review Team**)
5. incorporate existing resource plans that identify resource concerns across Minnesota (**the inclusion process-Existing State, County, and Federal Plans**)

To achieve each of these important actions we need to implement each component in ascending order.

5. **Inclusion Process**

There are a number of State, County, and Federal plans that already exist that identify resource concerns across Minnesota. The Council should receive a summary of these plans that identifies the resource concern. This will serve as an educational overview and reference for prioritizing future requests.

4. **Identification Process**

I suggest that the Council identify a group that is closest to the recourse to identify concerns and needs. The **County Conservation Review Team** consists of all stake holders at the County level. All citizens, conservation and resource groups, and governmental agencies may participate in identifying local resource concern and recommending solutions for the concern. The Soil & Water Conservation Districts are in an excellent position to provide the administrative oversight necessary to convene the Team and carry its conservation concerns and objectives forward.

3. **Application Process**

Minnesota should be divided into geographic regions. The regions should follow geographical boundaries and encompass counties that have similar resources and geography. The **Regional Review Team** should convene a regional resource review with representation from all County Conservation Review Teams in the designated region. This Team should work together to identify top priority resource concerns in the region. The Regional Team will process the application and funding request. Application processing should be simple yet effective. The application for recourse project funding will be forwarded to the LOHC staff for Council consideration.

2. **Project Selection**

The Council will review summary project requests for funding. The Council will prioritize all project requests and forward those selected for funding along with a recommendation to approve. The Council may recommend project approval up to 80% of the proposed budget until a FY budget carryover of \$30 million is achieved. This carryover will be held into the next FY to fund projects deemed critical when there is consensus within the Council.

1. **Funding and Action**

Project and funding is approved by the Senate. Once approved, the project is cleared to begin with full expectation for funding as prescribed in the authorization and approval documents. Once the project is on the ground and completed, the project will be certified by an authorized representative as appointed by the Council. The project is on the ground and funding completed. The LOHC staff will complete the accounting and provide a report to the LOHC.