

MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

To: Board of Managers **Date:** May 18, 2022
From: Mike Kinney
Subject: Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application

Background/Discussion

The purpose of this agenda item is to consider directing staff to apply to a grant program that is new to the District. This program is the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund <https://www.lsohc.mn.gov/>. The grant proposal would fund acquisition and wetland/prairie restoration on a property just south of Bone Lake.

This site, referred to as the Bone Lake South Wetland, is identified as a priority implementation area in the CLFLWD 10-Year Watershed Management Plan due to its multiple overlapping benefits including wetland habitat, native plant communities connected to groundwater, high groundwater pollution sensitivity, and effect on Bone Lake's water quality. The Bone Lake Diagnostic Study identified a 75 lb/yr phosphorus load from this tributary. Acquisition of this property would help achieve multiple District goals. Staff recently met with the landowner and confirmed the landowner is willing to sell the property to the District, pending likelihood of getting funded and price negotiation. The District received a letter of support from the landowner to supplement the application to the Lessard-Sams OHF grant program.

The District has not applied to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund grant program in the past largely due to the program's emphasis on habitat restoration compared to Clean Water Fund funds that target water quality. Also, the minimum grant request was historically \$400,000 (recently raised to \$500,000 effective July 1, 2022), and the District has historically had success with the Clean Water Fund Projects & Practices program for its water quality-focused projects. Now that the District is close to reaching its water quality goals and transitioning into more habitat-focused projects, the Lessard-Sams grant program is becoming a better fit for us.

As of May 19th, staff do not have a final proposed grant request amount. However, we expect it will be in excess of \$1 million. Staff will bring more information to the May 25th meeting.

Managers are encouraged to send questions/comments to staff in advance of the May 25th meeting.

Recommended Action

Proposed Motion: Manager _____ moves to authorize the Administrator to apply to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund for acquisition and restoration of the Bone Lake South Wetland Property. Seconded by Manager _____.