**Department of Natural Resources
Division of Fish and Wildlife**

Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program Applicant and Grantee Survey Report

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Executive Summary

This section provides a high-level summary of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program survey of past grant applicants ("applicants"). Those who received funding were also asked about their experience as a grantee ("grantees").

Background and methods

The CPL Grant Program provides $5,000 to $400,000 to organizations to restore, enhance, or protect forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife in Minnesota. The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) appropriates funding for CPL using revenue created by the 2008 Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to encourage local conservation efforts. As of November 2016, CPL has funded 463 grants to about 140 applicants, for a total of $43 million.

As Phase I of its evaluation efforts, CPL asked Management Analysis & Development (MAD) to conduct a survey of its past applicants to better understand their perceptions of the grant application process and process of fulfilling grant requirements. In all, 216 applicants responded, for a response rate of 43 percent. Respondents represented 75 percent of all applications submitted to CPL, both funded and unfunded.

MAD also conducted a social network analysis of grantees to learn more about the extent of their collaboration and whether collaboration improved outcomes.

In CPL's evaluation, MAD focused on two overarching research questions that are central to the LSOHC:

1. Is CPL funding good projects?
2. Are small organizations benefitting from CPL?

Findings

These findings highlight the most prominent themes among applicants and grantees regarding the CPL Grant Program. While many of the findings relate more to the statutory requirements, rather than the program's administration, they provide useful insight into the applicant and grantee perspective.

1. Overall, applicants and grantees are pleased with the CPL Grant Program.

Nearly all respondents had positive things to say about the CPL Grant Program.

95 percent rated their experience somewhat successful or very successful

94 percent said they would apply again

Many respondents expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the CPL Grant Program. One grantee commented:

I have been very satisfied and grateful to the staff, it is an excellent use of OHF dollars, I can easily explain to someone on the street how the increase in their sales tax has gone straight into a habitat improvement project in an efficient and effective manner.

2. Respondent were generally positive about the application, with some specific feedback.

Over half of respondents said the application and grant requirements were very easy or somewhat easy (see Figure 1). Several respondents said they struggle with the mapping feature and indicated various challenges with the budgeting tool. CPL staff are currently working on a new version of the electronic application.

Figure 1: Ease of completing application
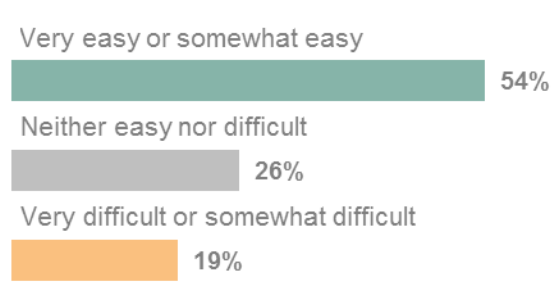
First-time applicants and small organizations may have more difficulty navigating the system and finding the capacity to complete the application and fulfill grant requirements.

Examples of such feedback include:

o *Because I have been through the process many times, it has become familiar and is not a difficulty. At first, it can be a bit confusing.*
o *Small organizations struggle to get matching funds because their project partners are short on funds as well. Maybe consider lowering the match requirement for first time recipients.*

3. While most found it manageable, some respondents found grant requirements difficult.

While most respondents found the process of fulfilling grant requirements relatively easy, some provided constructive feedback (see Figure 2). Feedback involved both the granting process and challenges with policy.

Figure 2: Ease of fulfilling contract requirements

Respondents highlighted challenges, such as covering indirect costs (i.e., technical assistance, administrative costs, and costs associated with grant planning), completing forms and fulfilling contract requirements, obtaining matching funds, and completing the land acquisition process.

Respondents also mentioned that some aspects, such as competition for grants, overhead costs, and matching funds, have become more difficult in recent years and may continue to do so.

4. Organizations are collaborating to achieve goals

Many of the organizations that have received CPL grants are interconnected. Most of them have worked together on multiple CPL grant projects over the first seven years of the program. A few key organizations have served as key connectors among all the organizations (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Network of all grantees by fiscal year
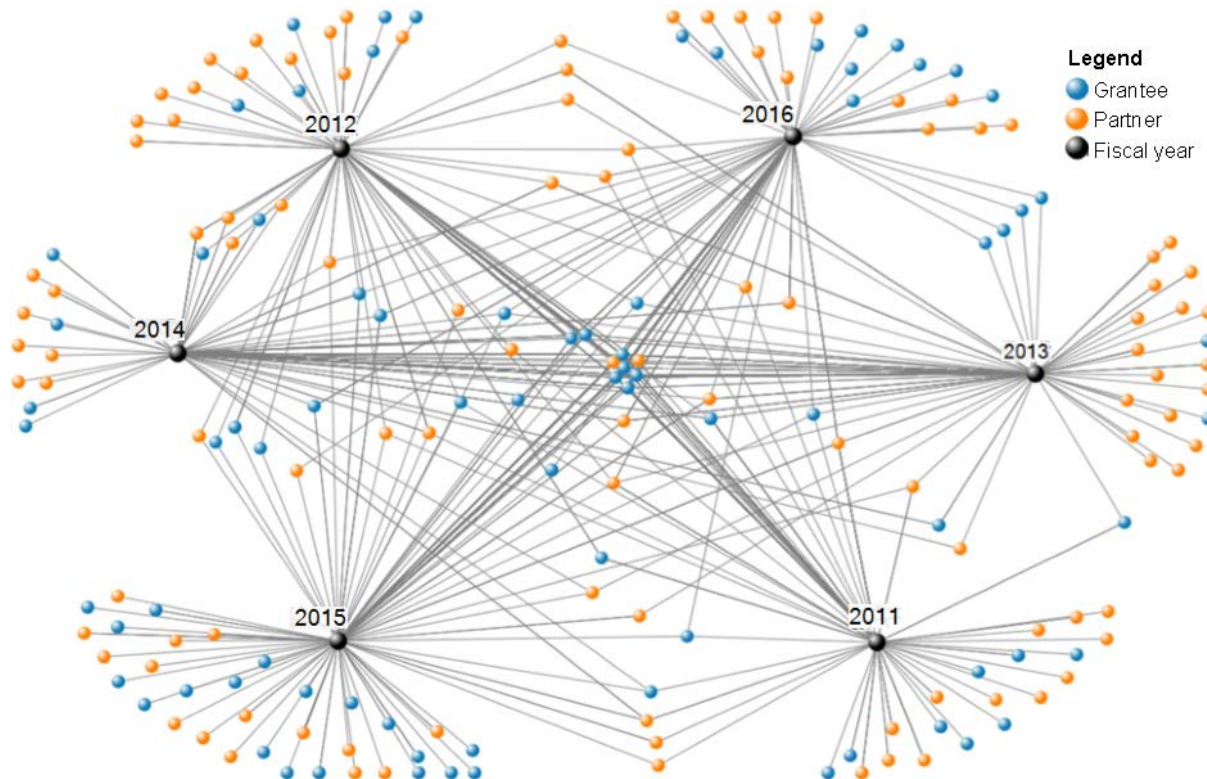
Without prompt, several survey respondents mentioned that they have worked with other organizations on CPL grants. Many of them said that collaboration has not only helped them be successful but that they have continued to collaborate with the same organizations. An example of this feedback:

> *Outcomes have far exceeded expectations. The program has led our organization to further collaboration… and has acted as start up or seed money to leverage more conservation across a larger landscape.*

5. Respondents provided very positive feedback about CPL staff

Applicants and grantees generally value the help they receive from CPL staff, and these interactions correspond with more favorable perceptions of the CPL Grant Program.

At least 80 percent of respondents agreed that staff were helpful, courteous, efficient, able to resolve issues, and available to help (see Figure **4**). Additionally, whether an applicant asked for feedback from

staff on their application and found it helpful was highly correlated with whether they would apply again.

Figure 4: Positive feedback on CPL staff assistance to complete both application and grant requirements
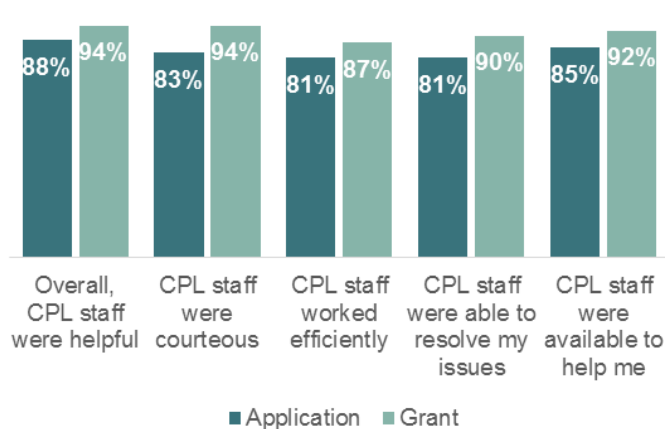
Table 1: Whether staff feedback was helpful and whether respondent would apply again

Was feedback helpful?	Applicant would reapply	Applicant would not reapply	Total
Yes	59	1	60
No	1	4	5
Total	60	5	65

One respondent who requested and received feedback on multiple applications said:
Understanding the deeper goals of the program and what the CPL program - as it applies to my project(s) - is looking for was also helpful.

6. Most organizations are pleased with the results of their work

The survey asked organizations to indicate whether their grant project had produced its desired outcomes. While most respondents were positive about their results, some said it was too soon to tell (see Figure 5). A few cited unpredictable events, such as weather, as reasons they had not yet seen the results they had hoped for.

In all, 45 respondents provided updates on their projects, with the majority having positive results. Examples of results include:

- Converted acquired property into prairie site.
- Enhanced biodiversity in landscapes.
- Reduced or eradicated invasive species.
- Reduced erosion.

Specifically, respondents said:
- *In some cases we have exceeded the original goals.*

- *The prairie/savanna look much healthier with much of the invasives removed.*

Figure 5: Desired outcomes

Produced none of the desired outcomes: 0%
Produced some desired outcomes: 30%
Produced all desired outcomes: 53%
It's too soon to tell: 16%

Recommendations

1. Strive for a process that balances rigor with promoting grantee success

A few respondents mentioned that processes were too cumbersome. CPL should explore methods of simplifying processes, for example using feedback included in this report in the Frequently Asked Questions page on its website.[1] CPL and others should also further explore applicant and grantee feedback on aspects such as grant timeline and simplified applications and present any necessary information to the appropriate decision-makers.

2. Ensure processes are inclusive of small organizations and first-time applicants

Applying for grants and fulfilling their requirements may be more difficult for small organizations and first-time applicants due to limited organizational capacity, not being connected with other organizations that do similar work, or lack of experience with CPL processes. CPL should work with these organizations to help them understand application a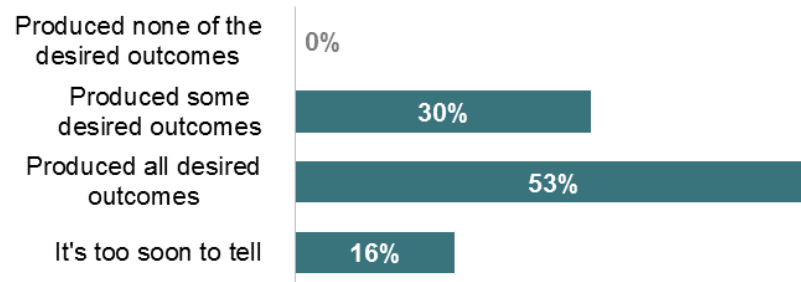nd grant requirements and plan for the time it will take to apply for and complete a grant. For example, CPL could encourage new applicants to contact CPL staff for technical assistance.

3. Continue to provide good customer service

Most respondents expressed gratitude for the assistance or guidance they have received from CPL staff. Some attributed that assistance to later successes. CPL staff should continue to provide grantees with the information and guidance they need to be successful in achieving program outcomes.

4. Encourage networking among new and returning applicants

Survey and social network analysis findings suggest that repeat organizations have developed or strengthened partnerships over time, and those partnerships have led to successful outcomes. CPL should work with organizations to leverage partnerships to ensure success and build local capacity for conservation throughout Minnesota.

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[1] Since the survey closed, CPL has developed a Frequently Asked Questions webpage, available at http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/grants/habitat/cpl/cpl-faqs.pdf

Background

In 2008, Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to "to preserve and enhance some of the most important elements of our state; protect drinking water sources; to protect, enhance, and restore wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat; to preserve arts and cultural heritage; to support parks and trails; and to protect, enhance, and restore lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater."[2] Of the three-eighths of one percent increase in sales tax, one-third is dedicated to the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) to "restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forest and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife."[3]

In 2010, the Minnesota House of Representatives Cultural and Outdoor Resources Division published the Legislative Guide Principles for use and Expected Outcomes of Funds from Dedicated Sales Tax. The document lists the following expected outcomes from the OHF:

- "Increase in the percentage of Minnesotans of all ages, ethnicities, abilities, and income who participate in the enjoyment of the outdoors.
- It is acknowledged that some of the game species in Minnesota are not native, but are desired and that this money may be used to protect their habitat.
- Increase in the fish, game, and wildlife populations in the state.
- Existing public properties will be complemented by acquisitions that provide expansions, connections, or otherwise close gaps providing less fragmented ecosystems and habitat.
- Endangered, threatened, or species of concern will be protected.
- Invasive species will be prevented or mitigated.
- The biodiversity and functions of prairies, forests, wetlands, and other habitat will be increased to improve the production and protection of fish, game, and wildlife."[4]

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) oversees funding for OHF projects, including those funded by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program to encourage local conservation efforts. CPL funds manage a "reimbursable program to provide competitive matching grants from $5,000 to $400,000 to local, regional, state, and national nonprofit organizations, including government entities,"[5] which is appropriated annually by the LSOHC.

As of November 2016, CPL has funded 463 grants to about 140 applicants, for a total of $43 million.

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[2] Minnesota Legacy Fund website: http://www.legacy.leg.mn/about-funds.

[3] Minnesota Legacy Fund Outdoor Heritage Fund website: http://www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/outdoor-heritage-fund.

[4] Minnesota Legislature. Legislative Guide: Principles of Use and Expected Outcomes of Funds from Dedicated Sales Tax. 2010. Website: http://www.legacy.leg.mn/sites/default/files/resources/HouseLegislativeGuide.pdf.

[5] Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program website: http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl/index.html.

CPL Evaluation Phase I Methods

As Phase I of an overall evaluation, the DNR asked Management Analysis & Development (MAD) to conduct a survey of its CPL Grant Program applicants and grantees.

In CPL's evaluation, MAD focused on two overarching research questions that are central to the LSOHC:

1. Is CPL funding good projects?
2. Are small organizations benefitting from CPL?

To better understand the application process, MAD developed a survey for all people who were involved in applying for a CPL grant (applicants). Additionally, those who had received a grant were asked questions about the granting process (grantees). The survey was open from July 11 to August 1, 2016.[6]

MAD also conducted a social network analysis of grantees and their partner organizations. Using CPL grantee information on partner organizations from 2011 to 2016, MAD analyzed partnerships on CPL grants to determine:

o how common it was for organizations to collaborate;
o which organizations collaborated the most; and
o whether there were any observed benefits to the collaboration.

MAD used the information from the analysis to calculate a network score[7] that measured the overall amount of collaboration among organizations in four categories: no collaboration ("zero" or "0"), collaboration with one organization ("one" or "1"), collaboration with two to four organizations ("some" or "2"), and collaboration with more than four organizations ("many" or "3"). Network scores were compared with survey responses to determine whether respondents observed benefits from the partnerships. All collaborations were included in the analysis, with the exception of letters of support.

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[6] A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

[7] To obtain the network score MAD assigned each organization a 0, 1, or 2, based on whether they had worked with zero, one, or more than one organization on their grant application. MAD repeated the process for each organization based on the number of times another organization worked with them on a grant. MAD then added the two scores for each organization. The possible sums were 0 (indicating zero partnerships), 1 (indicating one partnership), 2 (indicating more two to four partnerships), 3 (indicating more than four partnerships), or 4 (indicating many partnerships). Category 4 was combined with category 3 due to the number of organizations that fell into those categories. The remaining categories were 0 ("zero), 1 ("one"), 2 ("some"), and 3 ("many").

Results

Response rate

Of the 506 people that received the survey, 216 people from 132 organizations completed the survey, for a response rate of 43 percent. Additionally, those who responded to the survey played a role (generally project manager, land manager, or fiscal manager) in 75 percent of all the applications and grants submitted to CPL since 2011. Table 2 illustrates the response rate in detail.

Table 2: Survey respondents, n=216

	Number responded	Total	Percent
Respondents	216	506	43
Unfunded projects	99	167	59
Funded projects	303	370	82
Total projects	402	537	75

Respondent characteristics

CPL provided applicant and grant information, such as primary county and activity, to supplement survey data and allow analysts to better understand respondent perspectives.

Number of applications and funded grants

Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of respondents by the number of times respondents applied for and received grants. Most respondents have been involved with three or fewer applications and grants. The largest group of respondents has been involved with one application or grant.

Figure 6: Number of applications and grants represented by respondents, n=216 applicants, 178 grantees
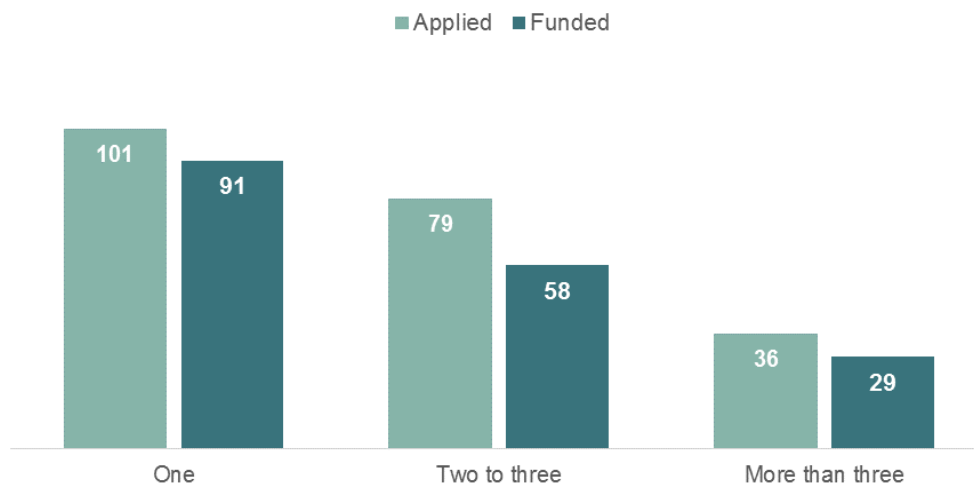
Roles

Respondents were asked to indicate their role in the application and grant process (see Figure 7). The majority of respondents had been in the role of project manager. Of the 215 people that responded to the roles question, 42 had held more than one role. Most commonly, respondents were either the Project Manager and Land Manager (13), Project Manager and Fiscal Manager (12), or they held all three roles (12).

Figure 7: What is your role/involvement with the CPL Grant Program? Please select all that apply to you. (n=215)[8]
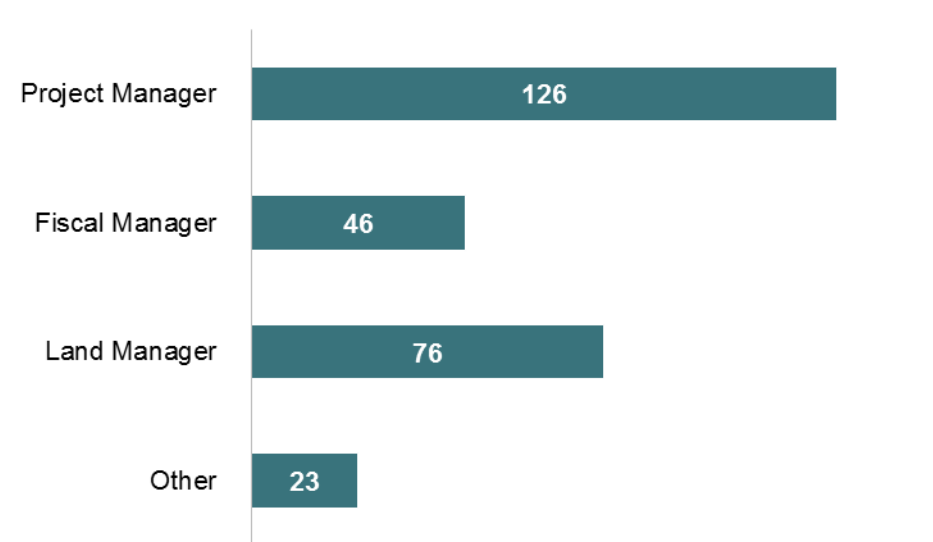
Those who chose "other" were asked to explain their role in the CPL grant application and process. Most respondents said they provided professional assistance, such as accounting, consulting, or grant writing. Others were project partners and grant reviewers. A few said they provide technical or clerical assistance.

LSOHC planning section

Table 3: Applicant and grantee respondents by LSOHC planning section

LSOHC planning section	Number of projects	Percent of all section projects
Forest/Prairie Transition	38	86
Metropolitan Urbanizing Area	97	68
Northern Forest	106	78
Prairie	145	78
Southeast Forest	14	58

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[8] Respondents often had different roles for different projects and were asked to select all the roles they have had. Therefore, figures will add up to more than 215.

Table 3 shows the breakdown of projects (both funded and not funded) represented by respondents by LSOHC planning section. While over half of respondents with projects in each section responded, the highest proportion of responses were from those with projects in the Forest/Prairie Transition section, and the lowest responses were from those in the Southeast Forest section.[9]

Figure 8: Map of LSOHC planning sections
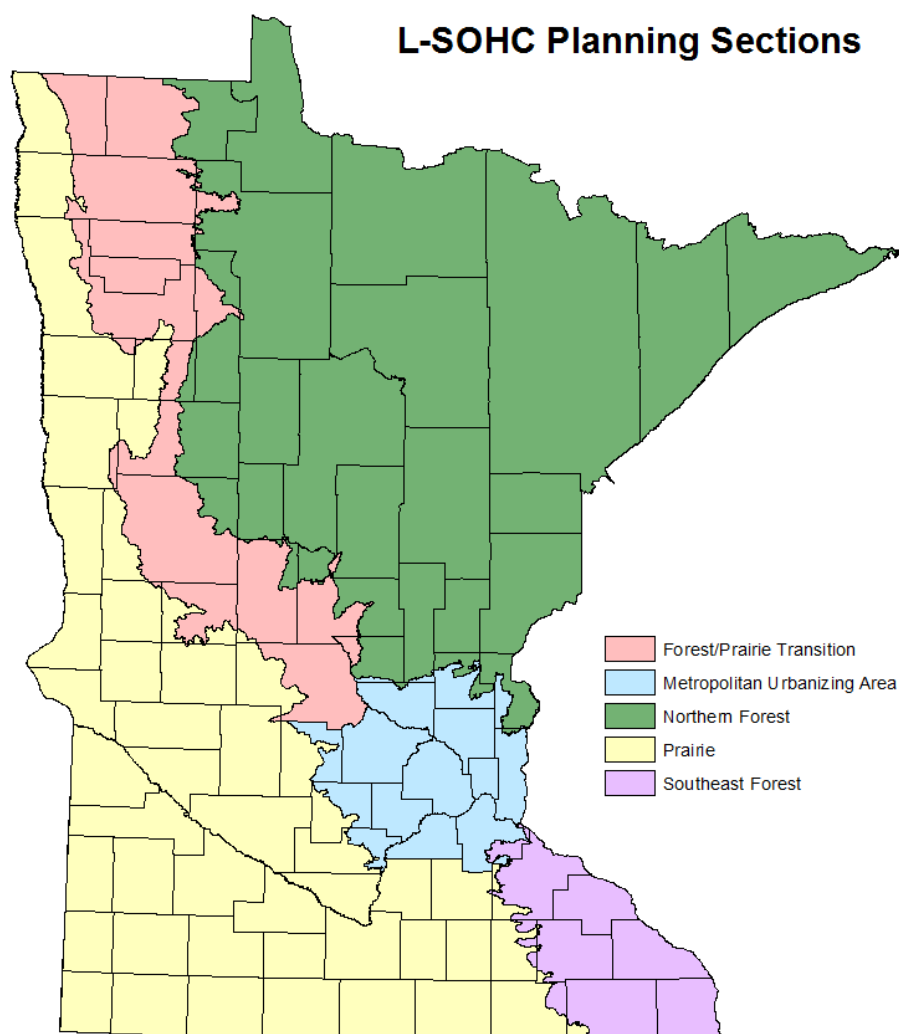
Habitat and activity

Figure 9 illustrates the grant activities that occurred in each habitat type. Overall, most projects represented by respondents have occurred in prairies, and most activities focused on enhancement. The

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[9] Readers should note that due to the low number of overall projects in the Southeast Forest section, percentages fluctuate more per respondent than sections with more projects. For example, if just two more people had responded from the Southeast Forest section, respondents would represent 67 percent of all projects in that section.

fewest number of projects represented by respondents occurred in wetlands and involved land acquisition.

Figure 9: Number of applications by habitat and activity
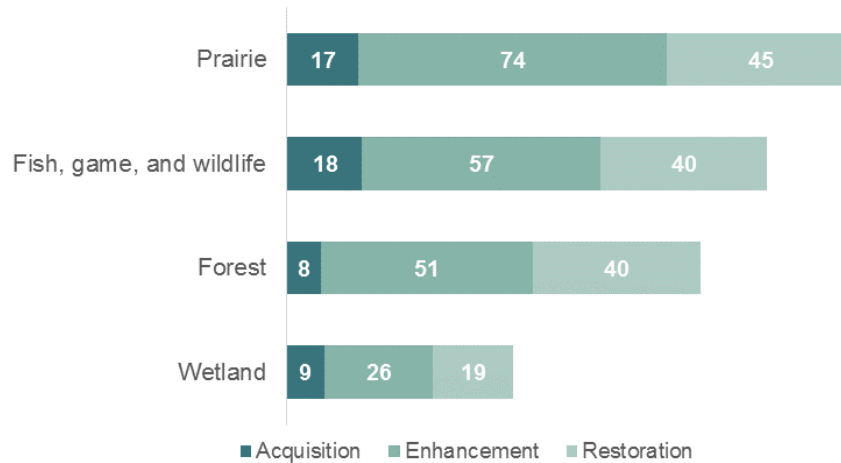
Primary landowner

The vast majority of landowners are governments, with a few private landowners (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Primary landowner of project site
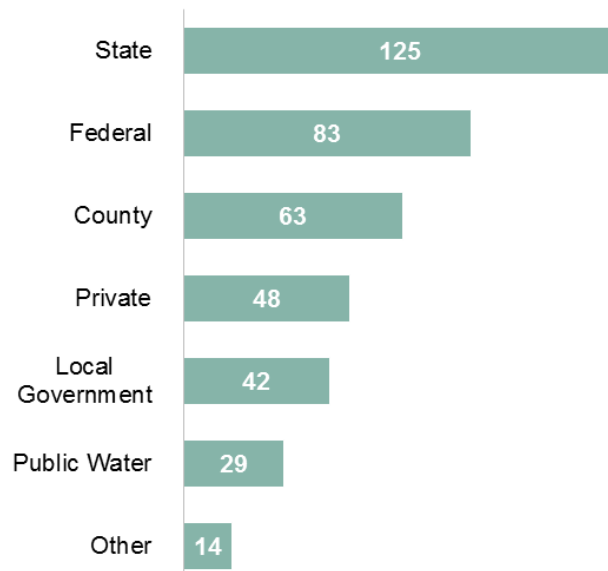
Primary counties for projects

Figure 11 illustrates the primary counties represented by respondents, the primary counties not represented by respondents, and the counties that have not functioned as a primary county for a CPL grant. Respondents represented 76 counties that have functioned as the primary county for CPL grants.

Figure 11: Survey respondents by primary county of organization that responded to survey

Primary county of survey respondent(s)
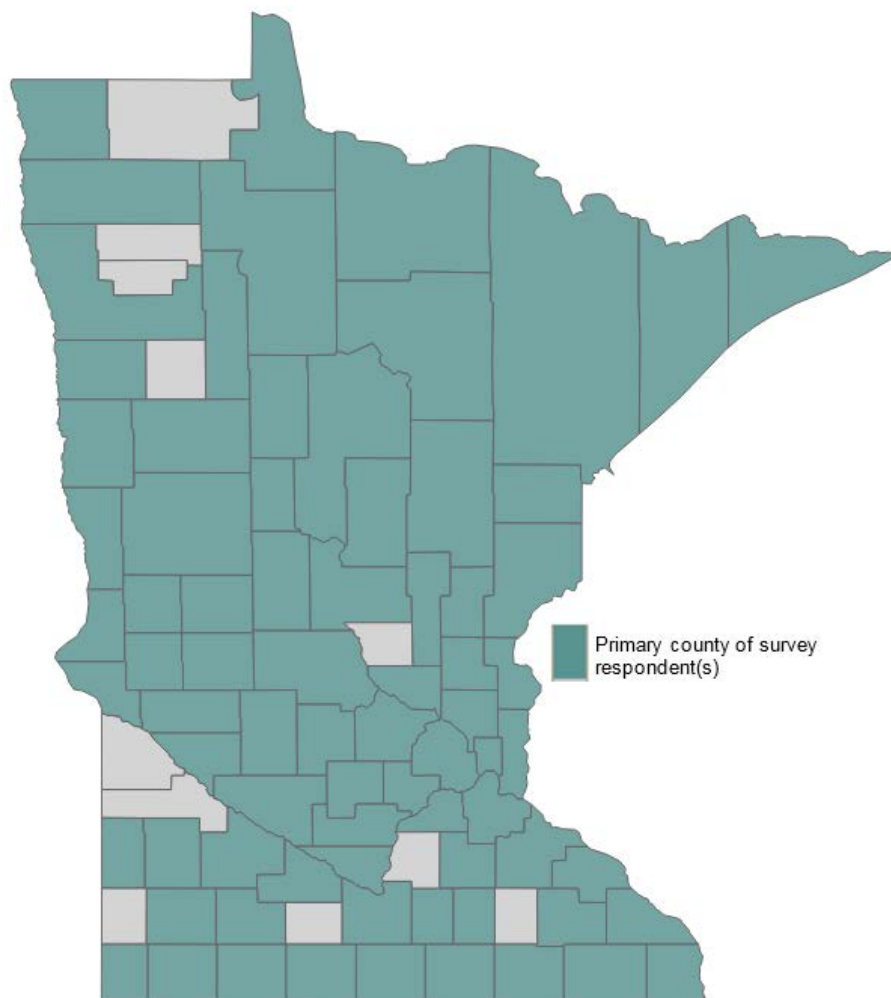
Findings

The findings below are the most prominent and most relevant themes that emerged from the data. While many of the findings relate more to the statutory requirements, rather than the program's administration, they provide useful insight into the applicant and grantee perspective. This section highlights data that support these findings and does not necessarily follow the sequential order of the survey.[10]

In this analysis, MAD attempted to provide as much information as possible without disclosing private or non-public data. MAD adopted two conventions in this analysis:

- For qualitative data, general terms like *about half*, *most*, *several*, or *a few* are used instead of reporting frequencies or percentages of responses.
- To provide more concrete qualitative information, statements from interviewees are included in italics. Though analysts strived to preserve the exact wording of the response whenever possible, some comments have been edited slightly for spelling and grammar. Information that might identify the respondent has been removed.

To inform continuous improvement efforts, analysts examined critical feedback in depth. While many of the findings include thorough descriptions of such feedback, most responses were positive and complimented the CPL program, and critical feedback was relatively uncommon.

Overall, applicants and grantees are pleased with the CPL Grant Program

In nearly all categories, as illustrated throughout this section, the majority of responses were positive. When asked if they would apply again, 94 percent of respondents said they would. Respondents who said they would not apply again most commonly stated that the CPL grant is no longer applicable to their work.

Many respondents added that the CPL Grant Program is a great program and that they are grateful for the opportunity to participate.

Examples of respondent comments include:

- *I have been very satisfied and grateful to the staff, it is an excellent use of OHF dollars, I can easily explain to someone on the street how the increase in their sales tax has gone straight into a habitat improvement project in an efficient and effective manner.*
- *I always recommend to NGOs and other NR agencies/entities to consider CPL for their projects. As well, I encourage staff to do the same.*
- *I am thankful that it is in place to assist in managing our public lands.*

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[10] To view the survey and a breakdown of the results of each survey question, see Appendices A and B, respectively.

o *It has been very valuable to my organization to obtain funds to manage invasive species and plant native plants on land acquired with partial Legacy Grant funding.*
o *Excellent program. Makes our restoration work possible!*
o *I think it's a model program. Great focus, niche, process, people, outcomes. Thanks for all you do.*
o *Please continue the program as I believe it is a good way for organizations to get needed money to do needed community projects! Also allows people to get involved in volunteering.*

When asked to rate their overall grant experience, 95 percent of respondents rated their experience somewhat successful or very successful, and an additional three percent said it was neither successful nor unsuccessful, or it was too soon to tell.

Respondent were generally positive about the application, with some specific feedback.

When asked about the application process, respondents were mostly positive. Over half of respondents said the application was somewhat easy or very easy, while less than 20 percent found submitting the application difficult (see Figure 12). Examples of their comments include:

o *Much easier than most state grant applications.*
o *CPL is a very straight forward grant process and easy for partners to apply for.*

Figure 12: Ease of completing CPL grant application (n=177)
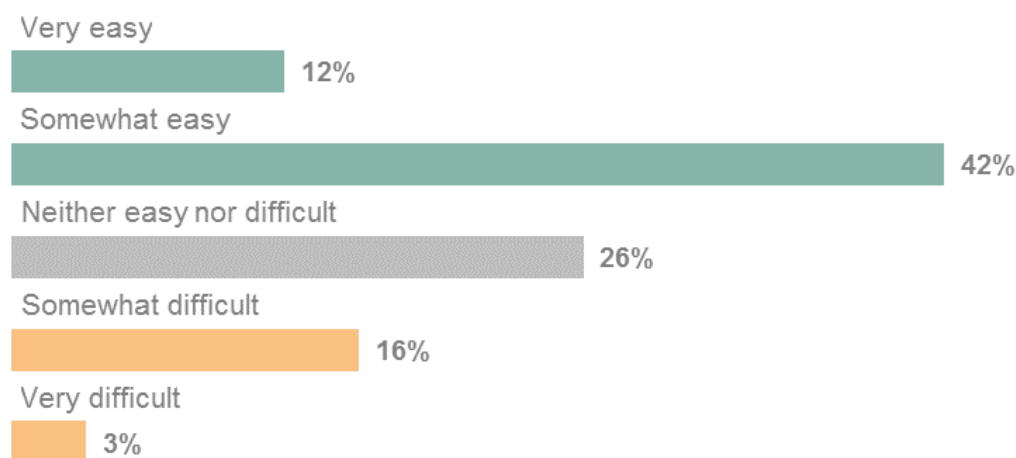
When asked for suggestions on how to improve the online application system, some said the process is streamlined compared to other grant applications, while others said there are too many hoops to jump through. Specific feedback included several respondents saying they struggle with the mapping feature and the budgeting tool. CPL staff are currently working on a new version of the electronic application.

Figure 13: Ease of navigating website (n=178)
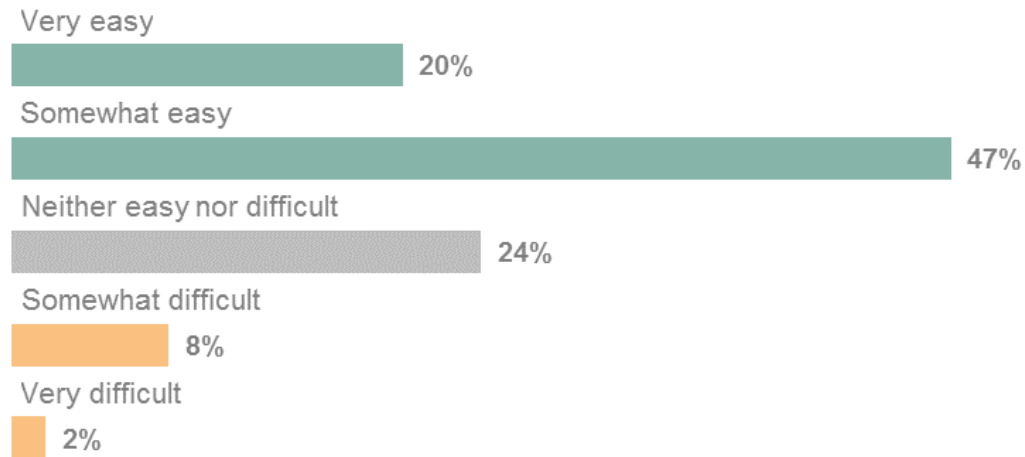
Most applicants found the CPL website easy to navigate (see Figure 13), but a few respondents found it difficult. Most of those who found it difficult requested that CPL keep its website simple and intuitive. Others suggested making it easier for first-time users to find forms and including a Frequently Asked Questions page.

> *The site is pretty good, but a more intuitive set-up would be nice. Things like tabs or boxes for new grant submittals (vs. just linked text) or reimbursement submittals might help. Overall, you can find everything you need on the site; it just takes some reading.*

First-time applicants and smaller organizations found the application and grant process more challenging than more experienced grantees

Anecdotal feedback from both experienced and first-time applicants in qualitative responses suggested that first-time applicants and small organizations had more difficulty navigating the system and finding the capacity to complete the application and fulfill grant requirements. A few applicants indicated that they would not reapply because the process is too cumbersome. One respondent commented that feedback on the application helped them realize the resource requirements were too substantial to warrant another application.

Examples of other feedback include:

o *We are in the beginning stages, but it has already taken quite a bit more time than we expected. It has been challenging to wade through the steps of bidding the job. This is our first time receiving a grant like this and undertaking a project like this, so there is a large learning curve for us.*
o *Because I have been through the process many times, it has become familiar and is not a difficulty. At first, it can be a bit confusing.*
o *I do not have dedicated staff to administer the paperwork, and I am not an accountant. Thus, the endwork of a CPL grant for me has seriously considering applying for future grants (not really a reflection on CPL, more a reflection on small entities that do the actual work versus funneling the paperwork).*

- o *Small organizations struggle to get matching funds because their project partners are short on funds as well. Maybe consider lowering the match requirement for first time recipients.*
- o *The first year I had to fill this out was difficult for me because was not familiar with the processes and our numbers and CPL numbers didn't match at the time. The staff was very helpful to me at this time and got back to me with answers very quickly with answers. This year when I filled it out it was much easier.*

Feedback on the application process supports this notion. For example, two-thirds of the respondents who said they would not reapply were first-time applicants. When asked if their applications were funded, one-third of respondents who would not reapply were funded, one-third were not, and another one-third had not been part of the application process. Respondents added:

- o *Somewhat cumbersome for a first time applicant even with an example to follow.*
- o *The CPL grant program is really practical and I like the small dollar amounts. However, some of the administrative aspects of the grant application and management would be relatively difficult for a small nonprofit or landowner to complete. I think the goal of the CPL grant program is to make this money available to people who aren't applying to the larger LSOHC funds. There are still barriers to the CPL grant process that could be removed or made less cumbersome.*

Of those who were not funded, the respondents that said they would apply again were more positive about the feedback they received from CPL. Those who said they would not apply again provided more critical feedback. Of the nine respondents that provided feedback, four said the grant is no longer applicable to their position, the same proportion said the process was too cumbersome, and one respondent said they thought their project was a good fit and was disappointed they did not receive funding.

Figure 14 and Figure 15 illustrate feedback on the application by how many times respondents have applied and how many grants they have received, respectively. Those who found the application difficult were most commonly first-time applicants, followed by those who said they had applied for some grants, but not many. However, a large proportion of first-time applicants also found the process easy, compared to the proportion of those who had applied for some grants.

Compared to other grantees, more first-time applicants responded neutrally about the ease of completing grant requirements. First-time applicants rated the process of finding matching funds as difficult more often than other applicants.

Figure 14: Ease of application by times applied

Legend: ■ Very easy ■ Somewhat easy ■ Neither easy nor difficult ■ Somewhat difficult ■ Very difficult

	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult
Overall	16%	48%	32%	18%	1%
Many	20%	64%	32%	4%	
Some	11%	42%	36%	20%	1%
One	21%	50%	24%	24%	2%
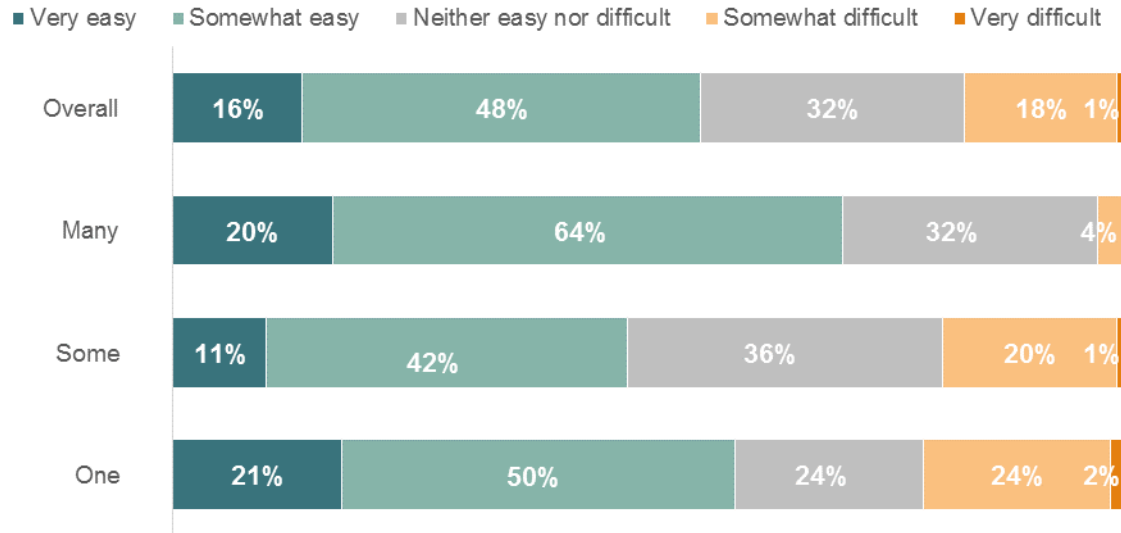
Figure 15: Ease of fulfilling grant requirements by number of grants received

Legend: ■ Very easy ■ Somewhat easy ■ Neither easy nor difficult ■ Somewhat difficult ■ Very difficult

	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat difficult
Overall	15%	52%	37%	11%
Many	13%	54%	33%	13%
Some	21%	54%	35%	12%
One	10%	49%	41%	10%
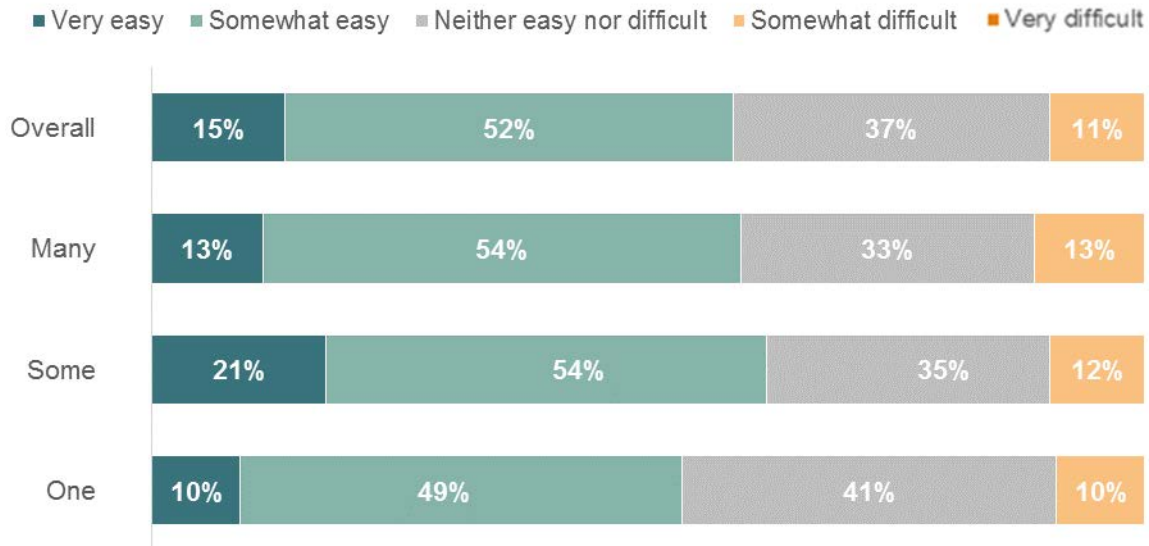
Additionally, when asked about the process of applying for and fulfilling requirements for grants, many respondents indicated that they had dedicated staff to carry out some of the work for them. While not conclusive, this supports the notion that organizations with the capacity to add more staff to application and grant management found it worthwhile to do so.

While most found it manageable, some respondents found grant requirements difficult.

While most respondents found the process of fulfilling grant requirements relatively easy, this section focuses on the feedback from the minority of respondents that saw room for improvement. Most grantees who provided such feedback did so in a constructive manner. For example, one grantee wrote:

> *I do think there should be coordination between agencies if materials are needed… I tried working with area wildlife staff, but the distance from their site to ours was not economical. This comment is not to be taken negatively, but to let you know that if materials are needed and the DNR potentially has them available - that would be good for a grantee to know.*

Several comments related to the need for additional funding for overall grants and specifically for technical assistance, administrative or overhead costs, and costs associated with grant planning. One respondent related this to increased demand for CPL funding:

> *Earlier in its history, the CPL Grant Program was somewhat unknown, but now there is much greater competition for the funding.*

Contractual requirements

Figure 16: Ease of contractual requirements
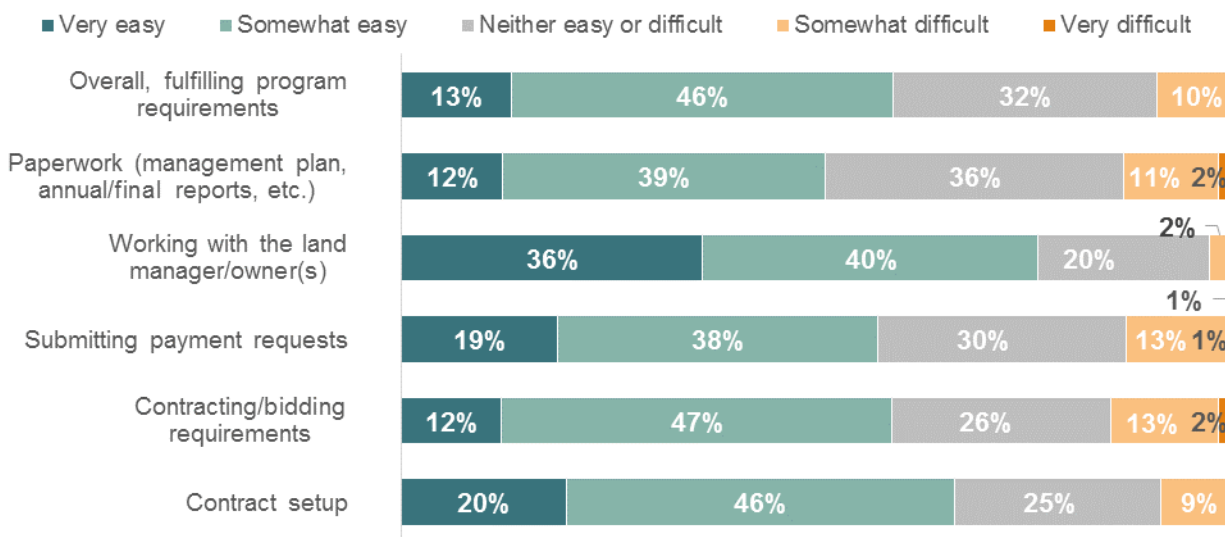
Figure 16 shows how easy or difficult respondents perceived contractual requirements. Most respondents responded positively about all aspects of the contract setup process. Those who found the process easy called the process "easy to administer," "very straight-forward," and "streamlined." One respondent said, "requirements are good, stringent enough to keep things organized and demonstrate accountability but not so difficult that reporting/contracting becomes onerous." Another said recent modifications to reporting forms have made things "much easier."

As illustrated in Figure 16, 10 percent of respondents found the overall process of fulfilling grant requirements difficult, though some volunteered that CPL staff have been very helpful in guiding them through the process. Particular challenges respondents identified include:

- Reimbursement process is confusing, has long waits, and is different from other OHF reporting.
- Documentation of staff time, difficulty documenting federal match.
- Difficulty securing multiple bids.
- Difficulty matching in-kind funds with funding requirements.
- Unclear definition of acreage.
- Determining which tasks required prevailing wage.

One respondent provided a comment that seemed to sum up most of the comments regarding contract setup:

> *Understanding the language of program documents, understanding the requirements, obtaining the needed information, and ensuring that the required documents and the information I provided was complete and accurate was somewhat challenging and required a lot of time and communication between me and staff in our partner agencies, as well as communication with CPL program staff. Sometimes I wearied of it and was irritated by the requirements. But looking back over the documents I was asked to submit, they seem succinct.*

Matching funds

Over half of the respondents said that finding matching funds for the grant was "easy" or "very easy" (see Figure 17). Those who have applied for many grants found the process easy overall, while those who had applied only once said finding matching funds was difficult more frequently. Those who had applied more than once, but not many times (some), rated the process as "easy" or "very easy" less often than the other applicants.

Figure 17: Ease of obtaining matching funds/in-kind support

■ Very easy ■ Somewhat easy ■ Neither easy nor difficult ■ Somewhat difficult ■ Very difficult

| 18% | 38% | 24% | 16% | 3% |
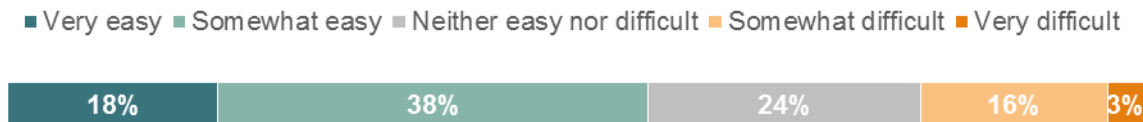
However, without being prompted, eleven respondents provided feedback on current match requirements. Most respondents said that it can be difficult, especially for small organizations, to find the required match. Several respondents offered suggestions to make obtaining the required match easier, especially for small organizations and first-time applicants. Suggestions included introducing a sliding scale for small organizations and lowering the match requirements for first-time applicants. Below are examples of respondent comments.

o *As time goes on I feel it will become more and more difficult to derive the required match funding from our traditional local conservation group partners--there is some "burn-out" starting. We need ideas for*

acquiring "non-traditional" sources of match funding, especially as the size of our grants grows. Or perhaps a "sliding scale" of required match funds?

- o *It would be helpful to reduce the required matching amount as smaller conservation groups/local chapters are really struggling to raise matching funds, especially for projects that cost over $50,000. Lots of high quality projects are not being submitted due to the lack of matching funds.*

Land acquisition

While respondents overall did not seem to find any particular aspect of land acquisition difficult, 43 percent of respondents said the overall process was either somewhat difficult or very difficult (see Figure 18). Two respondents described the process in their own words, indicating that they found the process long and complicated. One respondent wrote:

> *I have seen a flow chart showing the DNR's acquisition process timeline, but it's too complicated. I wish there was a specific, step-by-step timeline for acquisitions showing tasks and who is responsible for each one. I would love to provide something like that to the volunteer project managers who assist me with acquisitions. I am also more than a little frustrated with the amount of time it takes to get these projects moving. We've had sellers back out because it took too long to get to a closing date. I would love to be in on some sort of task group to help with this process.*

Figure 18: Ease of land acquisition process
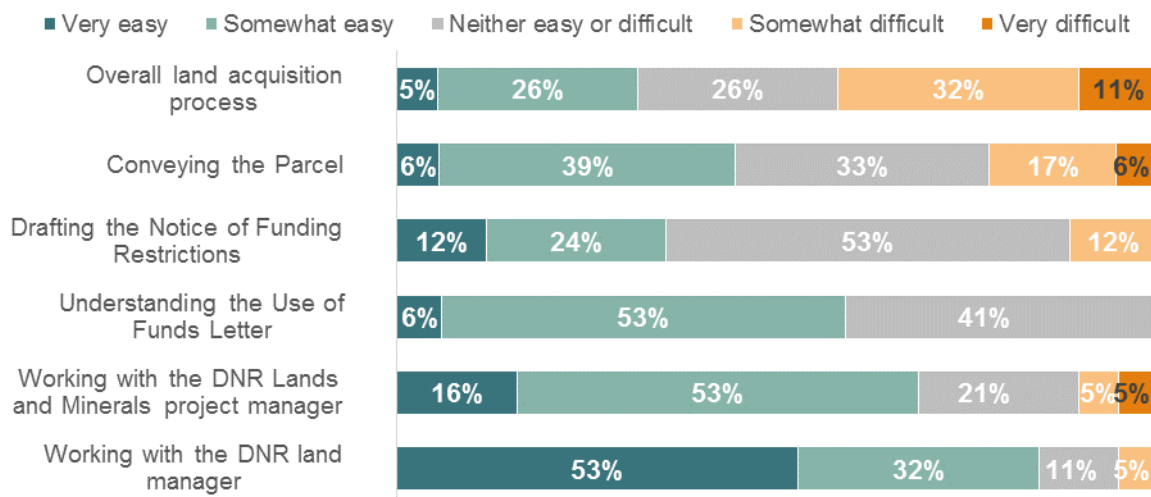
Organizations are collaborating to achieve goals

Anecdotal feedback from the survey and social network analysis concluded that many of the organizations that have received CPL grants are interconnected. For example, over half of the organizations heard about the CPL grant program through a colleague or professional reference or through an agency referral. Half of those that said they had heard from some other sources indicated someone outside CPL or OHF who told them about the grant.

Social network analysis indicated organizations that have worked as either a grantee or collaborator on CPL grants are highly connected.[11] Most of them have worked together on multiple projects throughout the years that CPL has granted funding. There are a few key organizations, which represent a mix of grantees and collaborators, and government and non-government organizations, that serve as key connectors among all the organizations. According to the analysis conducted to date, these include:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)[12]
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Minnesota Deer Hunters Association (MDHA)
- Pheasants Forever

Detailed Social Network Analysis findings

Figure 19: Network of all grantees
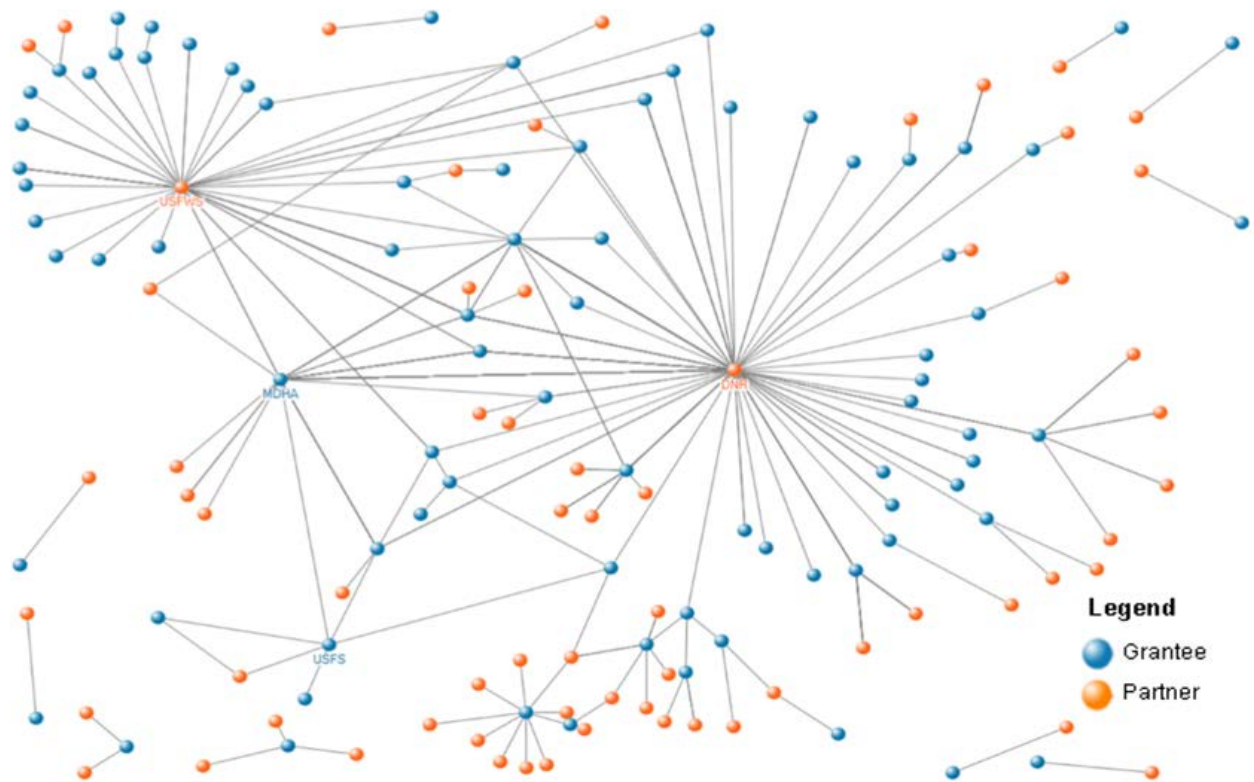
Network of all grantees

Figure 19 represents all grantees that have collaborated with at least one other organization since 2011. This figure illustrates the interconnectedness of organizations, particularly those that partner with

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[11] Figure 19 through Figure 21 illustrate different social network analyses. The figures are meant for illustration purposes. It is not intended that one may decipher each individual connection from the illustration, but take the illustration as a whole to understand the connectedness and complexity of the network. Larger versions of these network maps can be found in Appendix C.

[12] Collaboration with the DNR excludes working with CPL staff in obtaining and managing a grant.

either the DNR, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, or both (see Appendix C). Not only are they connected to those two large organizations, but they are highly connected among one another, signifying strong collaborative relationships.

Network of all grantees by fiscal year

Figure 20 illustrates the connection among all grantees and collaborators, grouped by the fiscal year of the project. There are two takeaways from this figure:

1. Many organizations collaborate over a number of years, rather than for a single year or single project.
2. A central cluster of organizations have worked together on grants every year or nearly every year the CPL grant has been available.

Figure 20: Network of all grantees by fiscal year
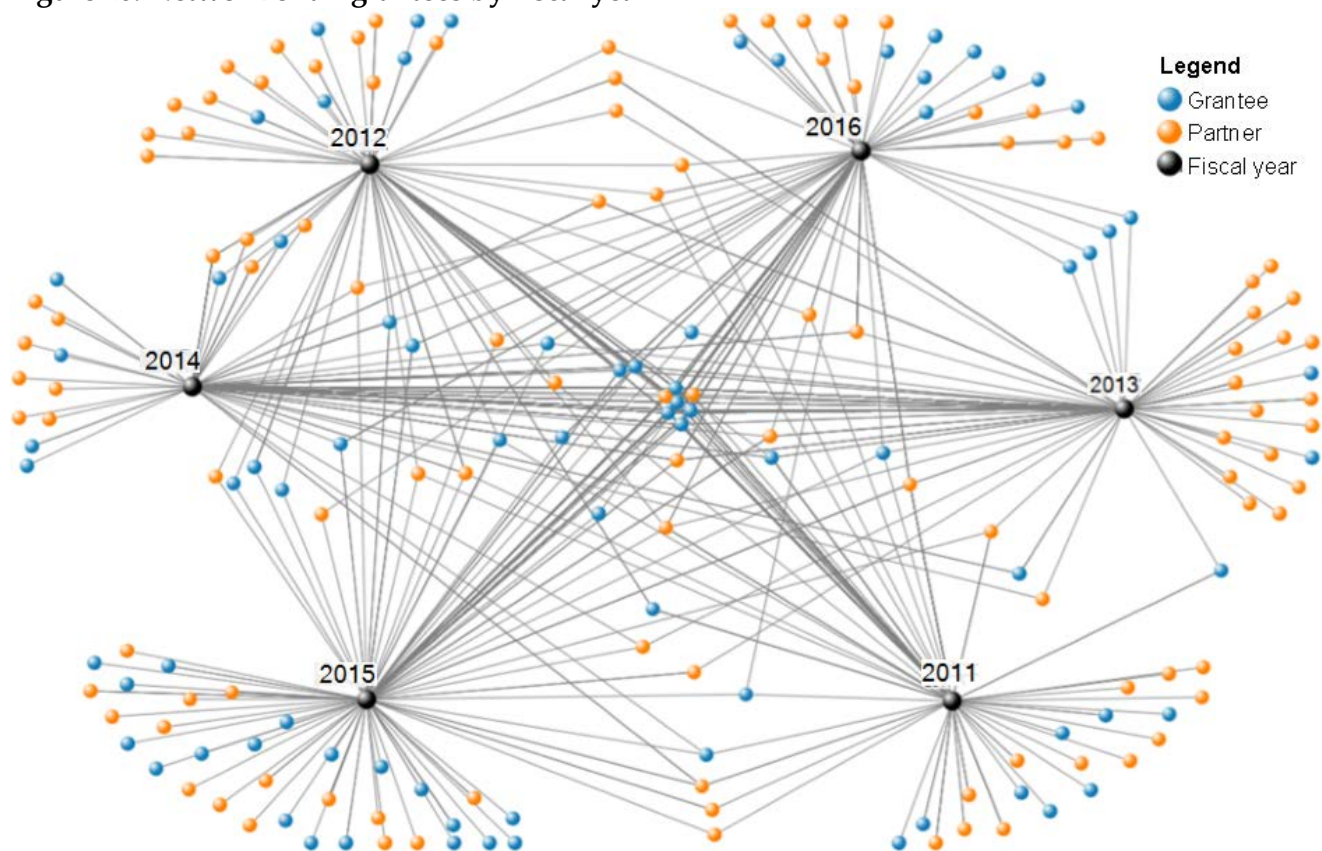
Network of Fiscal Year 2016 grantees

Figure 21 represents organizations that collaborated on grants in 2016. While many of them worked on grants in other years, analysts isolated 2016 to illustrate what a single year might look like. Here, we see much the same patterns as in Figure 19, with the same key players. Thus, the patterns in Figure 21 are less likely to be a random arrangement of organizations over a number of years, but rather an overlay of similar partnerships that occur every year.

Figure 21: Network of 2016 grantees
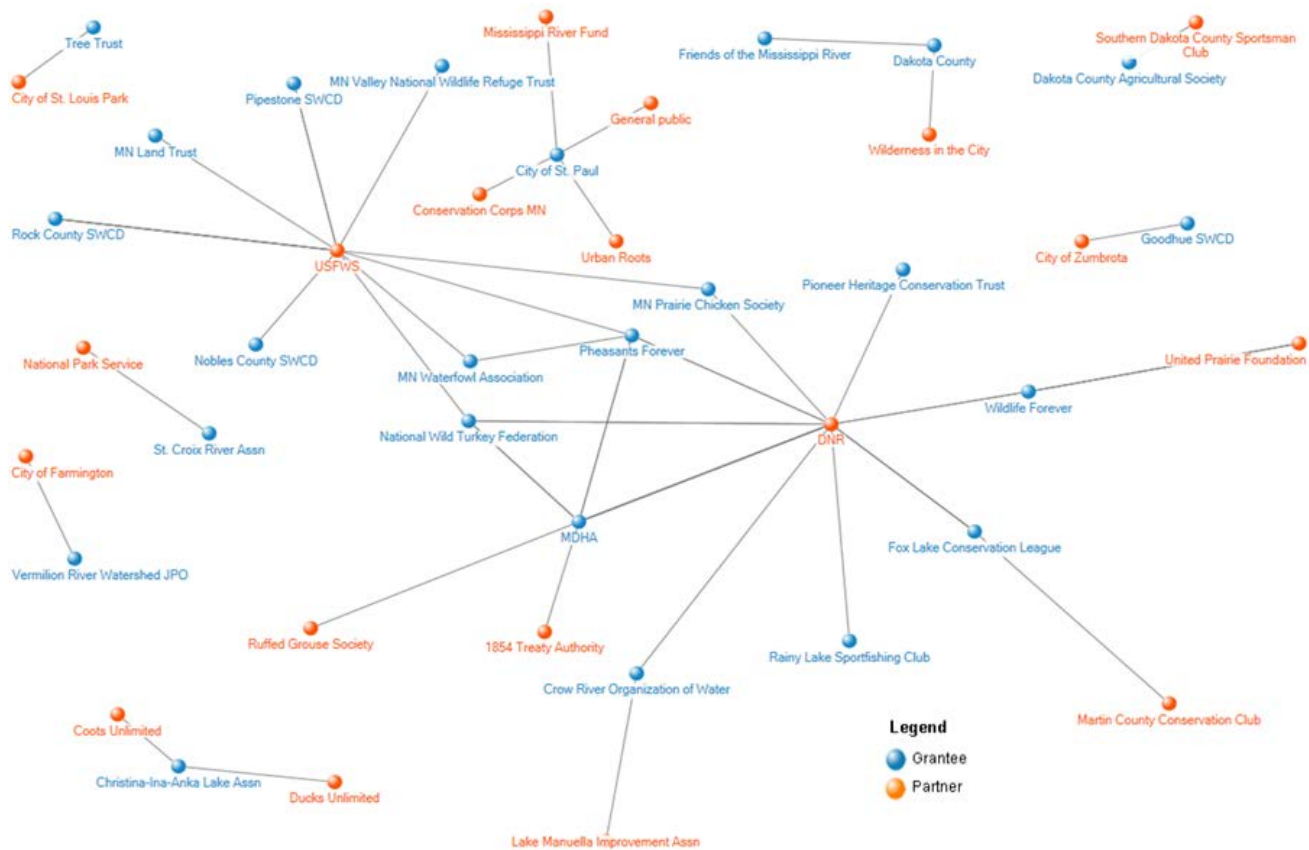
Survey findings by network score

When analysts matched information on collaboration with survey data, it was clear that grantees that collaborated with one other organization found both the application process and fulfilling grant requirements more difficult than any other groups. Those that did not collaborate with any other organizations seemed to have less difficulty with the application and fulfilling grant requirements, but as Figure 24 on page 29 illustrates, both groups received fewer grants than groups that collaborated more.

Figure 22 and Figure 23 illustrate how easy respondents found the application process and the process of fulfilling grant requirements by their organization's network score. Generally, the least networked and most networked organizations found the process easier than those who were more in the middle. Those who collaborated with just one organization generally found the application process more difficult than those who collaborated more or those that did not collaborate at all. This indicates that collaborating with one other organization can increase the difficulty of grant application and administration without providing added benefit. In nearly all cases, those that collaborated with only one other group were small organizations without as many resources as larger, more networked organizations. Results for fulfilling the grant requirements were more mixed but followed a similar trend as those for the application process.

Figure 22: Ease of application by network score[13] (zero = not collaborating, many = collaborating highly)

	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult
Overall	12%	42%	26%	16%	3%
Many	18%	41%	26%	12%	3%
Some	6%	51%	23%	17%	3%
One	9%	38%	28%	21%	4%
Zero	16%	41%	26%	13%	3%
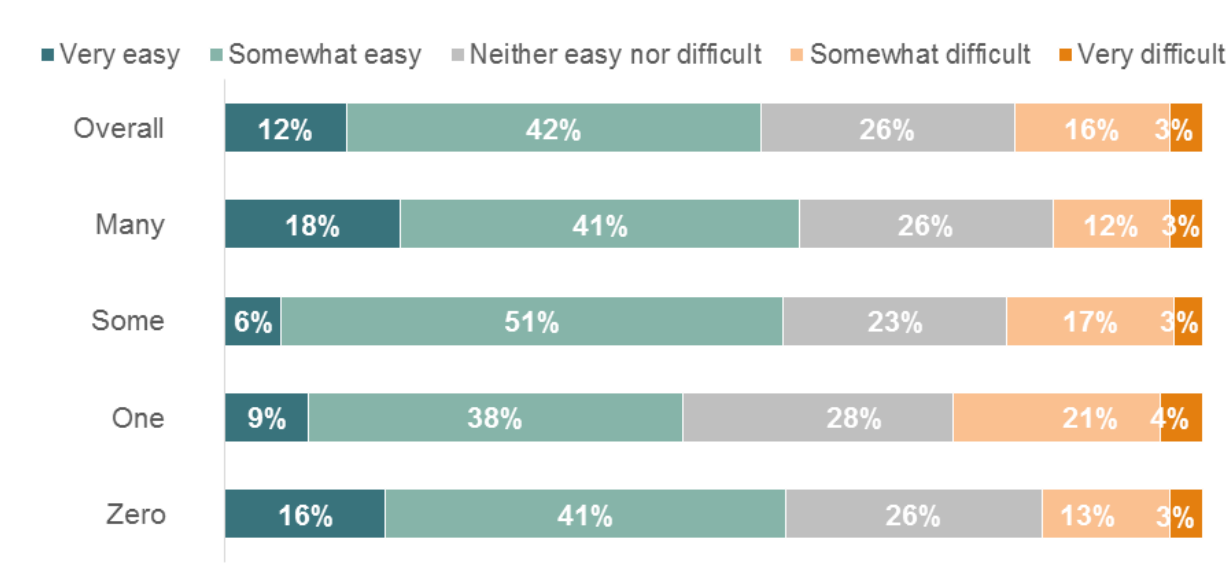
Figure 23: Ease of fulfilling requirements by network score

	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult
Overall	13%	46%	32%	10%	
Many	15%	52%	25%	4%	
Some	9%	42%	36%	12%	
One	18%	44%	24%	15%	
Zero	12%	45%	36%	7%	

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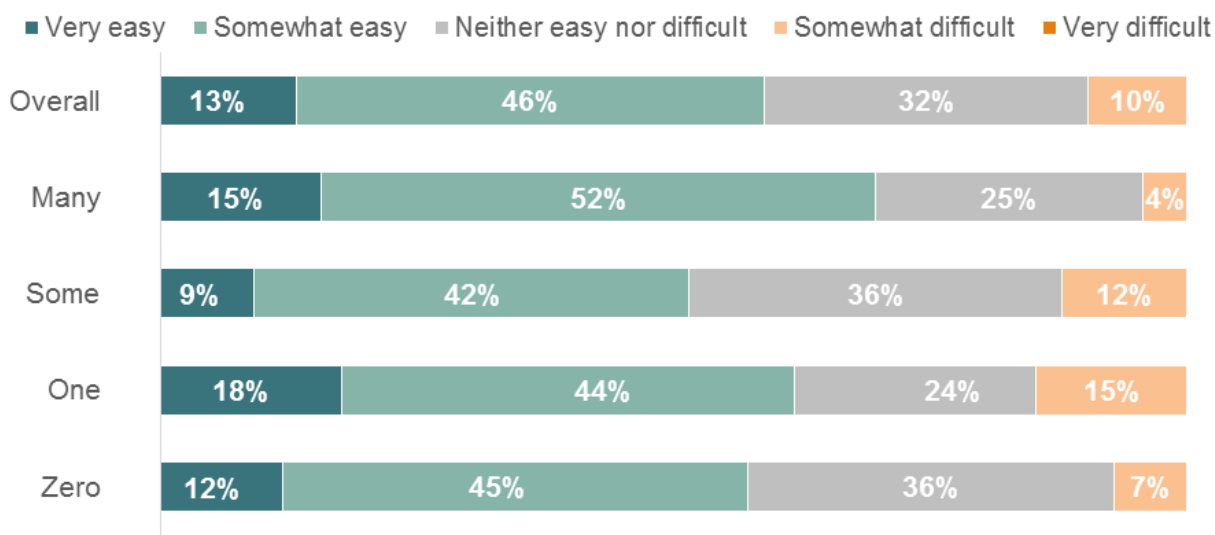
[13] For more information on the network score, see CPL Evaluation Phase I Methods on page 12.

Figure 24: Grants received by network score

Legend: ■ received many grants ■ received some grants ■ received one grant

	received many grants	received some grants	received one grant
many partners	32%	41%	26%
some partners	24%	62%	14%
one partner	7%	40%	52%
no partners	12%	41%	47%
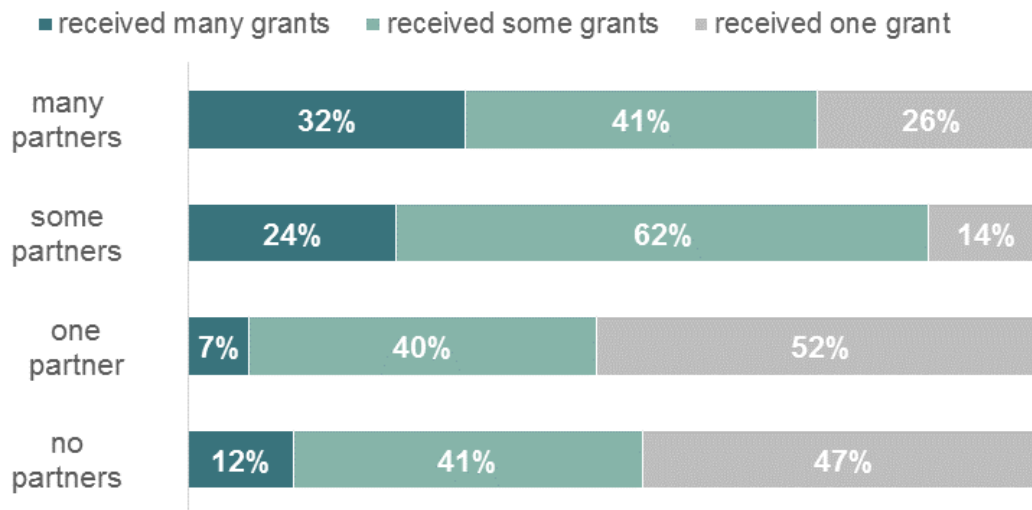
Organizations benefit from collaboration

Without prompt, several survey respondents mentioned that they have worked with other organizations on CPL grants. Many of them said that that collaboration has not only helped them be successful, but they have continued to partner with those organizations. Below are examples of such feedback:

- *Outcomes have far exceeded expectations. The program has led our organization to further collaboration with… and has acted as start up or seed money to leverage more conservation across a larger landscape.*
- *And more!! We have had great working relationships with [organization name redacted], and they have overachieved so much for us in meeting our project goals. The partnership with [organization names redacted] on CPL has been amazing!!*
- *I think because we work so closely with Area Wildlife staff, Forestry staff, etc., the outcomes of each of our projects are right on par with what we outlined in the original applications.*
- *For my grant, I collaborated with several other departments to accomplish tasks. I applied for the grant, compiled the information for reporting, and surveyed the work during and after completion, however actual contracting and implementation of project tasks were completed by other departments.*

Respondents provided very positive feedback about CPL staff

Table 4: Mean respondent ratings of staff based on whether application was funded (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

	Application funded	Application not funded
Overall helpful	4.38	3.95
Staff were courteous	4.46	4.05
Staff worked efficiently	4.22	3.57
Staff were able to resolve issues	4.21	3.52
Staff were available to help me with my application	4.22	3.70

Respondents were also asked to provide additional feedback on their experience with CPL staff during both the application process and in fulfilling grant requirements in their own words. In all, 91 respondents provided additional information on why they found CPL staff helpful. In both areas, at least two-thirds of respondents said that CPL staff were good to work with. Over half of applicants who responded also said that CPL staff provided helpful feedback and the necessary information they needed to complete the application. One applicant mentioned that even when staff had to tell them "no" they did so in a "supportive and courteous" manner.

Examples of positive feedback about CPL staff include:

o *Very helpful, and got back to me quickly!*
o *Since our project did not fit a typical CPL application, CPL staff helped me complete the application based on the information we were able to provide.*
o *Excellent. The staff were easy to reach by phone or email, prompt with their replies, patient, and provided clear and helpful explanations, answers, and suggestions. I am grateful to them.*
o *From the initial days of the program through this recent experience, CPL staff have always been great to work with. Solutions oriented, focused on shared goals of good conservation outcomes, helpful in navigating issues. [You] are a model grant program in my mind.*
o *Some of my grant-funded projects encountered problems... CPL staff were able to advise in a professional manner.*

Feedback applicants received from CPL staff on grant applications

Respondents were also asked if they requested feedback from CPL staff on their grant applications. Of the 73 respondents who requested feedback on their grants, 65 provided input on whether the feedback was helpful. As Table 5 illustrates, there is a strong correlation between whether respondents valued the application feedback and whether they would reapply. Only one respondent who found the

feedback helpful said they would not reapply, and, similarly, only one respondent who said the feedback was not helpful said they would still reapply.

Table 5: Comparison of application feedback and whether respondent would reapply for a CPL grant

Was feedback helpful?	Applicant would reapply	Applicant would not reapply	Total
Yes	59	1	60
No	1	4	5
Total	60	5	65

Additionally, 33 respondents provided input on the application feedback they received in their own words. Over half of those said they received good information. Several said they have used the feedback in subsequent applications or would use the feedback they received in future applications.

- *I was told why my application wasn't awarded and how to better address those concerns in a future application.*
- *The staff is really good at explaining where an application may have failed or could have used more detail to be successful. They are very valuable in allowing us to learn from our mistakes and try again.*
- *Understanding the deeper goals of the program and what the CPL program - as it applies to my project(s) - is looking for was also helpful.*
- *It's nice to hear if there was discussion about our proposals among the graders, what was confusing or unclear to them, what aspects were compelling, etc. It helps me write better, more clear proposals in the future to get this kind of feedback. Also, if a proposal isn't funded, it's nice to know why - was the proposal unclear, or is the project itself just not something the graders felt was appropriate for this funding source.*
- *It made our 2nd attempt much stronger and we were able to get funding.*

A few respondents whose applications were not funded expressed disappointment:

- *CPL staff seemed to indicate that the project was eligible for funding, but the final evaluation results indicated it was not.*
- *Very, very helpful, but apparently not on the same page as the reviewers.*
- *I was told the project didn't fit into the guidelines but others had received grants for the same type of projects.*
- *Though strongly encouraged by DNR staff to apply for a CPL grant, our project was rejected by the review committee because it "was not a good fit for the CPL program". This response made it clear that CPL funding would not be available for this type of project, so we have not applied again.*

Information about interactions with staff indicate that applicants and grantees generally value the help they receive from CPL staff, and these interactions contribute to more positive perceptions of the CPL Grant Program.

Most organizations are pleased with the results of their work

The survey asked organizations to indicate whether their grant project had produced the desired outcomes. As Figure 25 illustrates, most grantees said that their project has produced all of the desired outcomes, and 30 percent said the project produced some desired outcomes. While no grantees said that their project has produced none of the desired outcomes, 16 percent said it was too soon to tell.

Figure 25: Amount of desired outcomes produced
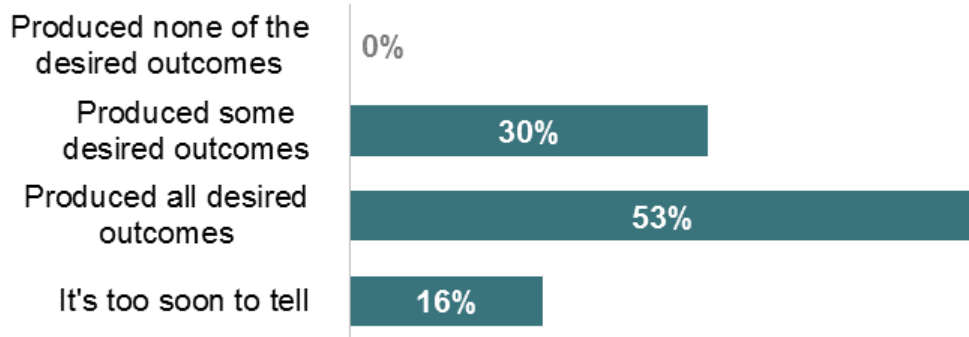
The survey also offered an open-ended question where respondents could include more information. This is the first step in the CPL evaluation at understanding the impacts of grant projects. From these responses, it was clear that for many projects it is too soon to determine their full impact.

In all, 45 respondents provided updates on their projects, with the majority having positive results. Examples of results include:

- Converted acquired property into prairie site.
- Enhanced biodiversity in landscapes.
- Reduced or eradicate invasive species.
- Reduced erosion.

Specifically, respondents said:

- *In some cases we have exceeded the original goals.*
- *The prairie/savanna look much healthier with much of the invasives removed.*
- *While the grants I applied for did not cover the entire scope of the projects I would have like to complete, where we were able to implement the results were everything we had hoped for*
- *I am pleased with this program. We are restoring a degraded area into a beautiful landscape that will be diverse in species and aesthetically pleasing to all. This restoration would not have been possible without the CPL funding.*
- *At the conclusion of the project, the site contains a diverse mixture of native vegetation providing the platform for maximum wildlife and water quality benefits. Over 20 native species were identified throughout the property. The aquatic plantings that were installed…were over four feet tall and very well established.*

For those whose projects have not produced all the desired outcomes, respondents cited the need for more time, weather, and contractors as factors that have influenced their success. For example, one grantee said:

> *As expected, weather has a significant influence on the outcomes of our restoration and enhancement projects, so I can't say we got all our desired outcomes at this point. We are, however, very pleased with our results, as are the DNR and FWS staff who work with us. Money well spent!*

Recommendations

Strive for a process that balances rigor with promoting grantee success

Respondents provided their own suggestions about specific ways the CPL Grant Program could improve, such as modifying matching requirements, providing funding for overhead costs, and allowing more time to complete work. Most requests involved program requirements that are set in statute, rather than by the DNR. CPL could explore whether there are opportunities within its purview to modify requirements without sacrificing a rigorous funding design. For example, CPL could use feedback included in this report as it creates its Frequently Asked Questions page on its website.[14]

CPL, with help from others, should also consider whether statutory changes are necessary or appropriate, such as adjustments to project timeline or threshold for a simplified grant application (currently $25,000). Such decisions will likely require more information. If such changes are necessary, CPL could pass the information on to the appropriate decision-makers.

Ensure processes are inclusive of small organizations and first-time applicants

Returning applicants were more positive about the application process and fulfilling grant requirements. A few mentioned that, now that they have been through the process once, they think next time will be simpler. CPL staff should work with first-time applicants and small organizations that may lack the capacity, connectedness, or experience to be successful. For example, CPL could encourage new applicants to contact them for technical assistance on the application, such as describing budgets, maps, or other aspects in depth—or refer them to organizations, with similar goals, that they may collaborate with for added success.

Continue to provide good customer service

Most respondents expressed gratitude for the assistance or guidance they have received from CPL staff. Some attributed that assistance to later successes. CPL staff should continue to provide grantees with the information they need to be successful in achieving program outcomes.

Encourage networking among new and returning applicants

Understanding the networks of organizations whose work aligns with the mission of CPL will function as a key strategy for future use and build local capacity for conservation throughout Minnesota. Preliminary findings from the CPL survey suggest that applying for CPL grants may be challenging for small organizations and first-time applicants. Leveraging existing partnerships, where appropriate,

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[14] Since the survey closed, CPL has developed a Frequently Asked Questions webpage, available at http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/grants/habitat/cpl/cpl-faqs.pdf

may be an effective way of ensuring that CPL funds high-quality projects proposed by new organizations. Encouraging such partnerships would be particularly advantageous for first-time applicants and small organizations, who can benefit from the experience and added capacity they gain from working with other organizations. The current CPL request for proposals states: "Partnerships are encouraged." CPL should increase its emphasis on collaboration among organizations, particularly first-time applicants and small organizations, to achieve conservation goals.

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Applicant Experience Survey

Introduction

Management Analysis & Development (MAD) is conducting a survey on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources to evaluate applicant and grantee experience for the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant program. Your input will inform the DNR on what is working well with grant processes and where modifications may be necessary.

This survey is not related to the Fiscal Year 2017 CPL grants cycle. Your responses will not affect your likelihood of receiving a CPL grant now or in the future.

Your individual responses are considered private information and will not be given to DNR staff. Any private information that you provide is protected under the Minnesota Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes §13.64). Your responses will be aggregated and sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). MAD will delete identifying information, such as your name, before sharing any of your feedback.

This survey will ask you questions about your experiences. MAD understands that you may not be able to answer every question and has provided an **N/A response option for questions that do not apply to your role** in applying for a grant.

If you cannot complete the survey at one time, you can exit the survey (without submitting your responses) and return to where you paused to finish. If you'd prefer a text based version of the survey (for example, if you use a screen reader), click on the "text only" link on the center of the top of the screen.

If you have technical problems accessing the survey, please contact Lisa Anderson at 651-259-3824 or Lisa.Anderson@state.mn.us.

Thank you for your time!

Applying for a Conservation Partners Legacy grant

The questions below ask about the application process and your experience **applying** for a Conservation Partners Legacy grant. If you were awarded a grant, we will ask questions about that experience later in the survey.

What is your role/involvement with the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant program? Please select all that apply to you.
- ☐ Project Manager
- ☐ Fiscal Manager
- ☐ Land Manager
- ☐ Other

Please describe your role/involvement

Land Managers that were involved in the application process may answer questions in this survey as if they were the applicant.

How often have you applied for a Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant?
- ☐ I have applied for many CPL grants
- ☐ I have applied for more than one CPL grant, but not many
- ☐ I have applied for one CPL grant
- ☐ I have never applied; I inherited a CPL grant
- ☐ N/A

How did you first hear about the CPL grant program?
- ☐ CPL presentation or outreach meeting
- ☐ Outdoor News advertisement
- ☐ Other news source(s)
- ☐ Email or list-serve announcement
- ☐ Colleague or professional reference
- ☐ Agency website
- ☐ Agency referral (e.g. DNR or Fish and Wildlife Service employee)
- ☐ Not sure/don't remember
- ☐ Other

Please specify where you first heard about the CPL grant program:

How would you rate the ease of obtaining matching funds/in-kind support?
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy nor difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

How would you rate the ease of navigating the CPL website?
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy nor difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

How might the CPL website be improved?

How would you rate the ease of completing and submitting a CPL grant application?
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy

- ☐ Neither easy nor difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving the online application system?

Were any of your applications funded?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

Application Process

Did you request feedback from CPL on your grant application(s)?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

Was the feedback you received helpful?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

Please explain why the feedback was or was not helpful.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience **as an applicant** with CPL staff.

I worked closely with CPL staff on my application.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

CPL staff were available to help me with my application.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

CPL staff were able to resolve my issues.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree

- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

CPL staff worked efficiently.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

CPL staff were courteous.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

Overall, CPL staff were helpful.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

Please describe your experience working with CPL staff during the application process.

Additional Application Feedback

Would you apply for a Conservation Partners Legacy Grant again?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If not, why?

Is there anything else you would like to share about the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant application process?

Grants Administration

The following questions ask about your experience as someone who was awarded Conservation Partners Legacy Grant funding.

How many CPL grants have you received?
- ☐ I've received many grants
- ☐ I've received more than one, but I wouldn't say many
- ☐ I've received one grant

Have you received a CPL grant for a land acquisition that was or will be conveyed to the DNR?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

Please indicate to the ease or difficulty of the following tasks during acquisition processes.
Working with the DNR land manager
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

Working with the DNR Lands and Minerals project manager
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

Understanding the Use of Funds Letter
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

Drafting the Notice of Funding Restrictions
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

Conveying the parcel
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

The overall land acquisition process
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

Please share any additional comments you have about the acquisition process.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about understanding and completing program requirements.
Contract setup
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

Contracting/bidding requirements
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

Submitting payment requests
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ N/A

Working with the land manager/owner(s)
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Neither easy or difficult

☐ Somewhat difficult
☐ Very difficult
☐ N/A

Paperwork (management plan, annual/final reports, etc.)
☐ Very easy
☐ Somewhat easy
☐ Neither easy or difficult
☐ Somewhat difficult
☐ Very difficult
☐ N/A

Overall, fulfilling program requirements
☐ Very easy
☐ Somewhat easy
☐ Neither easy or difficult
☐ Somewhat difficult
☐ Very difficult
☐ N/A

Reflecting on your answers above, please share any additional feedback you have about program requirements.

Grantee Experience

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience **as a grantee** with CPL staff.

I worked closely with CPL staff on my project
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ N/A

CPL staff were available to help me with my grant project.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ N/A

CPL staff were able to resolve problems.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither Agree or Disagree

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

CPL staff worked efficiently.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

CPL staff were courteous.
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

Overall, CPL staff were helpful.
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

As a grantee, please describe your experience working with CPL staff.

How would you rate your overall experience working with the CPL grants program?
- ☐ Very successful
- ☐ Somewhat successful
- ☐ Neither successful nor unsuccessful
- ☐ Somewhat unsuccessful
- ☐ Very unsuccessful
- ☐ It's too soon to tell

So far, has/have your grant project(s) produced the desired outcomes for habitat protection, restoration, or enhancement?
- ☐ The grant project(s) have produced **all** the desired outcomes.
- ☐ The grant project(s) have produced **some, but not all,** of the desired outcomes.
- ☐ The grant project(s) have **not produced any** of the desired outcomes.
- ☐ It's too soon to tell.

Please explain your response or provide additional information about the outcomes of your project, desired and actual.

Is there anything else you would like to share about the CPL funding program?

Thank you for your feedback!

Appendix B: Quantitative Survey Responses

Applicant Survey Responses

Table 0-1: What is your role/involvement with the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program? Please select all that apply to you. n=215

Role	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
Project Manager	126	58.6%
Fiscal Manager	46	21.4%
Land Manager	76	35.3%
Other	23	10.7%

Table 0-2: How often have you applied for a CPL grant? n=207

Amount applied	Number	Percent
I have applied for many CPL grants	34	16.4%
I have applied for more than one CPL grant, but not many	88	42.5%
I have applied for one CPL grant	52	25.1%
I have never applied; I inherited a CPL grant	19	9.2%
N/A	14	6.8%

Table 0-3: How did you first hear about the CPL Grant Program? n=214

How heard	Number	Percent
CPL presentation or outreach meeting	17	7.9%
Outdoor News advertisement	1	0.5%
Other news source(s)	9	4.2%
Email or list-serve announcement	27	12.6%
Colleague or professional reference	71	33.2%

How heard	Number	Percent
Agency website	7	3.3%
Agency referral (e.g. DNR or Fish and Wildlife Service employee)	47	22.0%
Not sure/don't remember	25	11.7%
Other	10	4.7%

Table 0-4: How would you rate the ease of obtaining matching funds/in-kind support? n=212

Ease	Number	Percent
Very easy	37	17.5%
Somewhat easy	76	35.8%
Neither easy nor difficult	48	22.6%
Somewhat difficult	33	15.6%
Very difficult	7	3.3%
N/A	11	5.2%

Table 0-5: How would you rate the ease of navigating the CPL website? n=212

Ease	Number	Percent
Very easy	35	16.5%
Somewhat easy	84	39.6%
Neither easy nor difficult	42	19.8%
Somewhat difficult	14	6.6%
Very difficult	3	1.4%
N/A	34	16.0%

Table 0-6: How would you rate the ease of completing and submitting a CPL grant application? n=211

Ease	Number	Percent
Very easy	22	10.40%
Somewhat easy	75	35.50%
Neither easy nor difficult	46	21.80%
Somewhat difficult	28	13.30%
Very difficult	6	2.80%
N/A	34	16.10%

Table 0-7: Were any of your applications funded? n=211

Whether funded	Number	Percent
Yes	168	79.6%
No	25	11.8%
N/A	18	8.5%

Table 0-8: Did you request feedback from CPL on your grant application(s)? n=201

Request feedback	Number	Percent
Yes	73	36.3%
No	91	45.3%
N/A	37	18.4%

Table 0-9: Was the feedback you received helpful? n=71

Whether helpful	Number	Percent
Yes	60	84.5%
No	5	7.0%
N/A	6	8.5%

Table 0-10: Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience as an applicant with CPL staff. (Number)

	Number replied	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I worked closely with CPL staff on my application.	200	22	65	52	22	6
CPL staff were available to help me with my application.	200	52	88	23	2	-
CPL staff were able to resolve my issues.	200	54	79	30	2	-
CPL staff worked efficiently.	200	59	78	30	3	-
CPL staff were courteous.	200	81	80	12	-	-
Overall, CPL staff were helpful.	199	76	76	19	1	-

Table 0-11: Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience as an applicant with CPL staff. (Percent)

	Number replied	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I worked closely with CPL staff on my application.	200	11.0%	32.5%	26.0%	11.0%	3.0%
CPL staff were available to help me with my application.	200	26.0%	44.0%	11.5%	1.0%	-
CPL staff were able to resolve my issues.	200	27.0%	39.5%	15.0%	1.0%	-
CPL staff worked efficiently.	200	29.5%	39.0%	15.0%	1.5%	-
CPL staff were courteous.	200	40.5%	40.0%	6.0%	-	-
Overall, CPL staff were helpful.	199	38.2%	38.2%	9.5%	0.5%	-

Table 0-12: Would you apply for a CPL grant again? n=202

Whether reapply	Number	Percent
Yes	190	94.1%
No	12	5.9%

Grantee Survey Responses

Table 0-13: How many CPL grants have you received? n=162

Grants received	Number (of respondents)	Percent (of respondents)
I've received many grants	29	17.9%
I've received more than one, but I wouldn't say many	74	45.7%
I've received one grant	59	36.4%

Table 0-14: Have you received a CPL grant for a land acquisition that was or will be conveyed to the DNR? n=161

Land acquisition	Number	Percent
Yes	21	13.0%
No	134	83.2%
Not Sure	6	3.7%

Table 0-15: Please indicate to the ease or difficulty of the following tasks during acquisition processes. (Number)

	Number replied	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy or difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	N/A
Working with the DNR land manager	21	10	6	2	-	1	2
Working with the DNR Lands and Minerals project manager	20	3	10	4	1	1	1
Understanding the Use of Funds Letter	21	1	9	7	-	-	4
Drafting the Notice of Funding Restrictions	21	2	4	9	2	-	4
Conveying the parcel	21	1	7	6	3	1	3

	Number replied	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy or difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	N/A
The overall land acquisition process	21	1	5	5	6	2	2

Table 0-16: Please indicate to the ease or difficulty of the following tasks during acquisition processes. (Percent)

	Number replied	Very easy	Somewhat easy	Neither easy or difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	N/A
Working with the DNR land manager	21	47.6%	28.6%	9.5%	-	4.8%	9.5%
Working with the DNR Lands and Minerals project manager	20	15.0%	50.0%	20.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Understanding the Use of Funds Letter	21	4.8%	42.9%	33.3%	-	-	19.0%
Drafting the Notice of Funding Restrictions	21	9.5%	19.0%	42.9%	9.5%	-	19.0%
Conveying the parcel	21	4.8%	33.3%	28.6%	14.3%	4.8%	14.3%
The overall land acquisition process	21	4.8%	23.8%	23.8%	28.6%	9.5%	9.5%

Table 0-17: Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about understanding and completing program requirements. (Number)

	Number applied	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Contract setup	947	147	342	226	78	8	146
CPL staff were available to help me with my grant project.	158	28	66	35	13	-	16
Contracting/bidding requirements	158	16	62	35	17	3	25
Submitting payment requests	157	24	49	38	16	1	29
Working with the land manager/owner(s)	158	44	49	25	3	1	36
Paperwork (management plan, annual/final reports, etc.)	159	17	57	50	16	3	19
Overall, fulfilling program requirements	157	18	62	43	13	-	21

Table 0-18: Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about understanding and completing program requirements. (Percent)

	Number applied	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Contract setup	947	15.5%	36.1%	23.9%	8.2%	0.8%	15.4%
CPL staff were available to help me with my grant project.	158	17.7%	41.8%	22.2%	8.2%	-	10.1%
Contracting/bidding requirements	158	10.1%	39.2%	22.2%	10.8%	1.9%	15.8%
Submitting payment requests	157	15.3%	31.2%	24.2%	10.2%	0.6%	18.5%
Working with the land manager/owner(s)	158	27.8%	31.0%	15.8%	1.9%	0.6%	22.8%
Paperwork (management plan, annual/final reports, etc.)	159	10.7%	34.0%	31.4%	10.1%	1.9%	11.9%
Overall, fulfilling program requirements	157	11.5%	39.5%	27.4%	8.3%	-	13.4%

Table 0-19: Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience as a grantee with CPL staff. (Number)

	Number applied	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I worked closely with CPL staff on my project	155	19	70	37	12	2
CPL staff were available to help me with my grant project.	155	49	80	10	2	-
CPL staff were able to resolve problems.	155	50	74	12	1	-
CPL staff worked efficiently.	153	60	61	16	1	-
CPL staff were courteous.	152	74	57	8	-	-
Overall, CPL staff were helpful.	155	69	64	9	-	-

Table 0-20: Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience as a grantee with CPL staff. (Percent)

	Number applied	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I worked closely with CPL staff on my project	155	12.3%	45.2%	23.9%	7.7%	1.3%
CPL staff were available to help me with my grant project.	155	31.6%	51.6%	6.5%	1.3%	-
CPL staff were able to resolve problems.	155	32.3%	47.7%	7.7%	0.6%	-
CPL staff worked efficiently.	153	39.2%	39.9%	10.5%	0.7%	-
CPL staff were courteous.	152	48.7%	37.5%	5.3%	-	-
Overall, CPL staff were helpful.	155	44.5%	41.3%	5.8%	-	-

Table 0-21: How would you rate your overall experience working with the CPL grants program? n=158

Amount of success	Number	Percent
Very successful	102	64.6%
Somewhat successful	48	30.4%
Neither successful nor unsuccessful	3	1.9%
Somewhat unsuccessful	1	0.6%
Very unsuccessful	2	1.3%
It's too soon to tell	2	1.3%

Table 0-22: So far, has/have your grant project(s) produced the desired outcomes for habitat protection, restoration, or enhancement? n=158

Desired outcomes produced	Number	Percent
The grant project(s) have produced all the desired outcomes.	84	53.2%
The grant project(s) have produced some, but not all, of the desired outcomes.	48	30.4%
The grant project(s) have not produced any of the desired outcomes.	-	-
It's too soon to tell.	26	16.5%

Appendix C: Social Network Analysis Maps
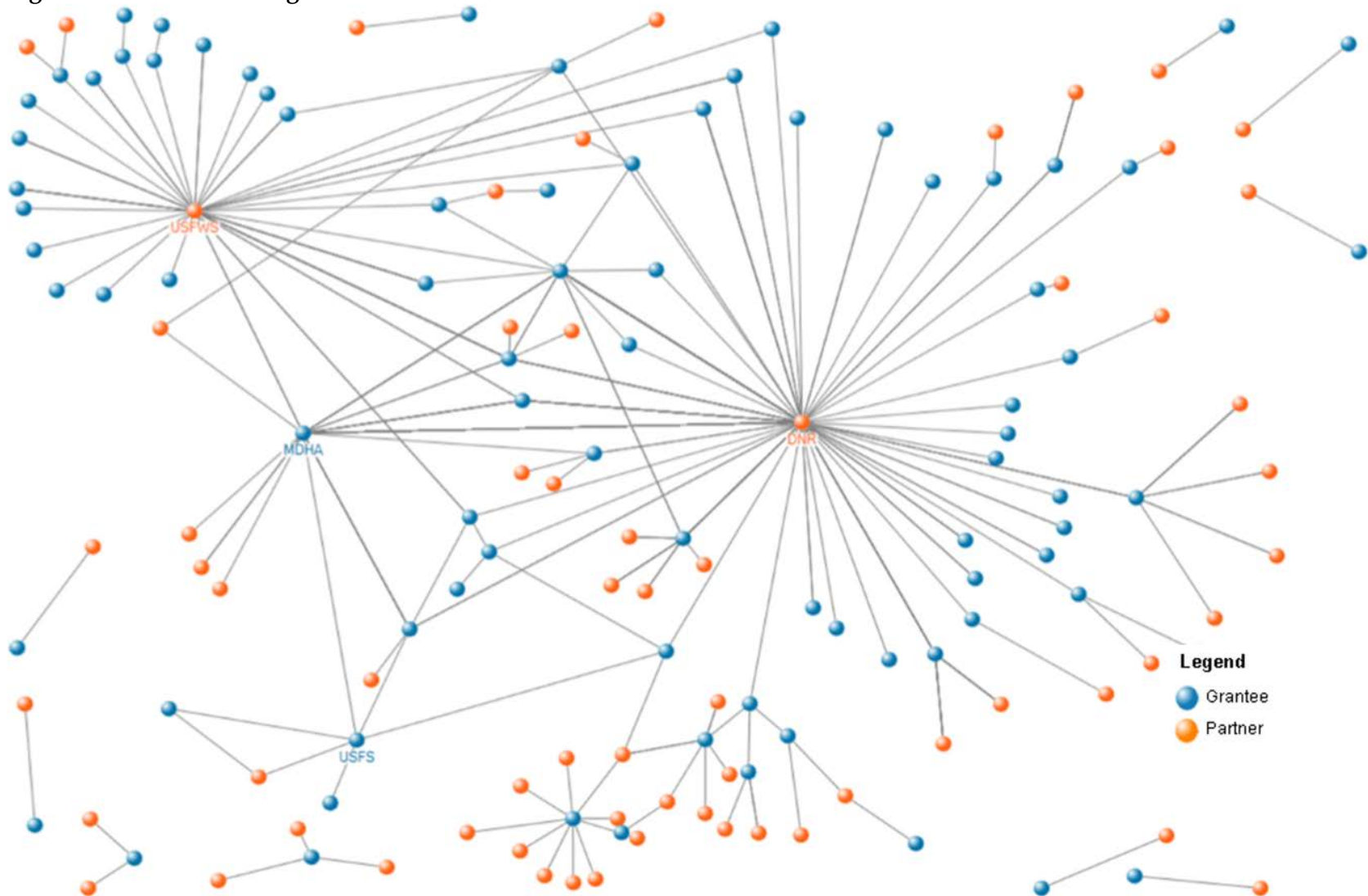
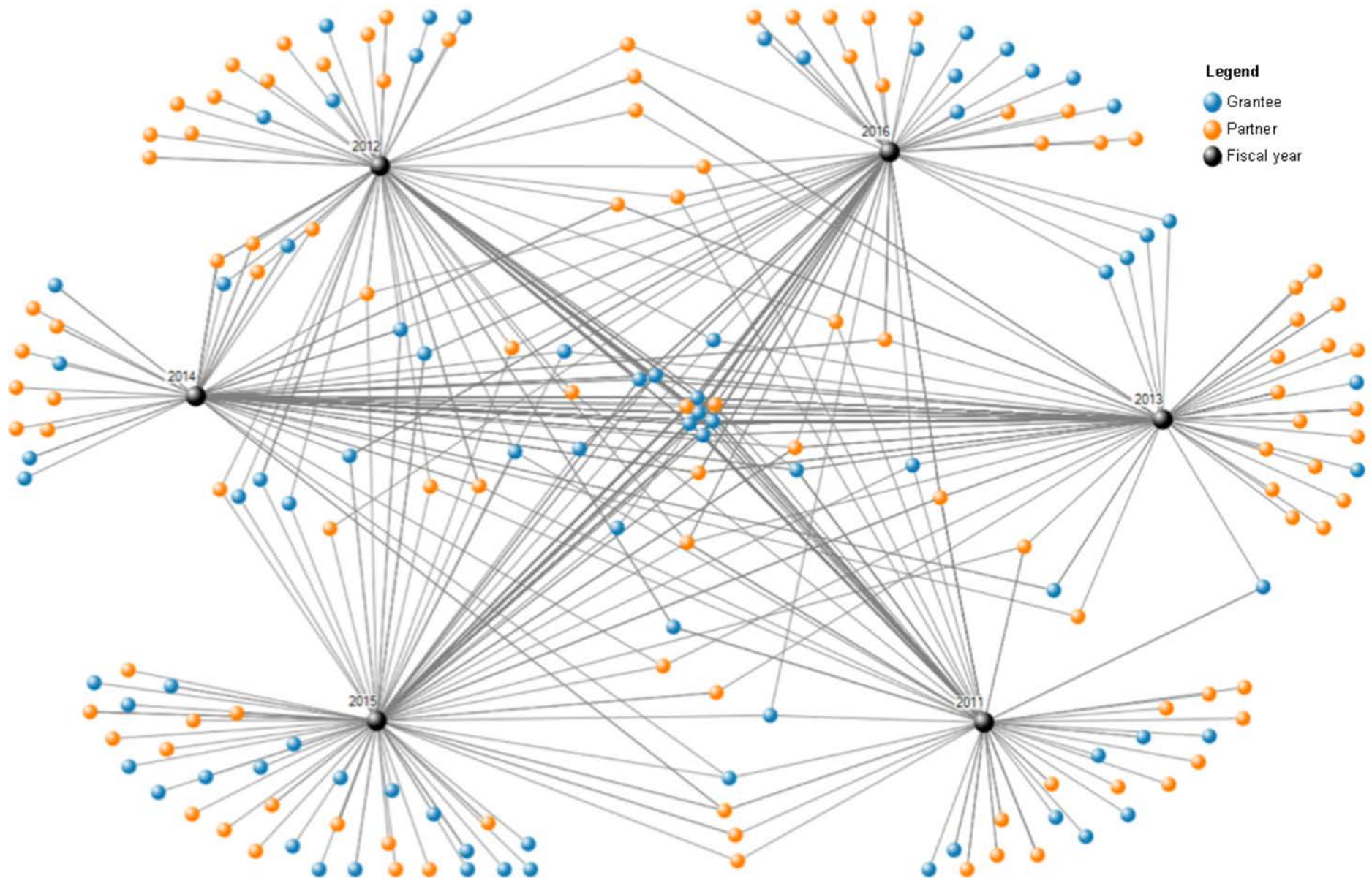**Figure 26: Network of all grantees**

Figure 27: Network of all grantees, by fiscal year

Figure 28: Network of Fiscal Year 2016 grantees