

## Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund

### Projects List - 2024 Appropriations (\$13,401,879.49 M Funded)

- (1) **Protecting Riverine Habitat, Military Readiness, and Improving Recreation on Lands and Waters in Mississippi (\$1,500,000.00)** - This project will allow Wildlife Mississippi to leverage \$6,000,000 in federal and private funds to implement land conservation, outdoor recreation enhancements, and conservation education and outreach measures at five sites throughout Mississippi. Specifically, Wildlife Mississippi will utilize grant funding to secure conservation easements on 394.5 acres along the Buttahatchie River in Lowndes County to provide a buffer against incompatible development adjacent to Columbus Air Force Base; secure a conservation easement on 265 acres and implement trail and access improvements at The Old Cove Natural Area in Webster County; construct additional trails and boardwalks at the 3,000-acre Fannye Cook Natural Area in Flowood, Rankin County; and implement conservation and outreach programs along the Gulf Coast (Jordan Natural Area in Jackson County and Logtown Natural Area in Hancock County).
- (2) **Enhancing Waterfowl Habitat in the Mississippi Delta (\$1,000,000.00)** – This proposed project aims to restore and enhance approximately 700 acres of wetland habitats in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley (LMAV) by focusing on Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Howard Miller Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The project will involve restoring 300 acres at Panther Swamp NWR and enhancing 400 acres at Howard Miller WMA through the construction of new waterfowl management impoundments and upgrading existing infrastructure. This includes grading, constructing and renovating berms, installing wells and pumps, and improving road access. The initiative, led by Ducks Unlimited (DU), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the MDWFP (MDWFP), aims to provide high-quality foraging and roosting habitat for waterfowl and other waterbirds.
- (3) **Landscape-Scale Forest Management Anchored Around Four Wildlife Management Areas in the Mississippi Delta (\$408,000.00)** – This project represents a partnership between Wildlife Mississippi (WM) and the MDWFP (MDWFP). We seek to capitalize on recently awarded federal funds targeting forest management on four state-owned Delta Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), Malmaison, O’Keefe, Shipland, and Phil Bryant. Federal funding will be used to conduct timber inventory, timber stand improvements (TSI), restore hardwood forests, and treat invasive plants on more than 1,700 acres of public ownership. We seek to target approximately 1,950 acres of private lands within 3 miles of the affected WMAs to increase the potential benefits of forest management to game and non-game animals in the greater landscape surrounding these public lands
- (4) **Reducing the Land Management Gap in North Mississippi: Initiation of a Multi-Partner Habitat Specialist Crew (\$266,151.00)** – This project represents a partnership between Quail Forever (QF) and MDWFP. We will develop a Habitat Specialist Crew (HSC) to conduct forest and wildlife habitat management (i.e., prescribed burning, invasive plant control, timber stand improvement, etc.) on private and some public lands in a 15-county focus area in North Mississippi. The focus area was selected because of its importance to existing conservation plans and grants, limited private contractors, and reduced commercial timber

markets. QF will serve as the primary employer of the HSC, while MDWFP will provide field supervision and support as well as share equipment (e.g., burn trailers). The HSC will focus on small private projects (<50 acres) where landowners have difficulty finding private contractors to conduct the work. The goal is to create or enhance approximately 4,000 acres of early successional habitat on private and public lands through the term of the project.

- (5) **Enhancing Habitat on MDWFP Wildlife Management Areas through Partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation (\$210,150.00)** – For nearly four decades, MDWFP has relied on a steadfast partnership with the Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (MS-NWTF) to enhance MDWFP WMAs for the benefit of wild turkeys and turkey hunters. This proposal seeks to expand this partnership by augmenting NWTF and MDWFP's efforts across eight Wildlife Management Areas during 2025 with funding from the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund (MOSTF). As part of this project, we will: (1) Improve 2,945 acres across eight MDWFP WMAs using combinations of forestry mulching, herbicide application, reforestation, and prescribed fire. (2) Of the total, 740 acres of bottomland hardwoods will be enhanced through combinations of TSI techniques or hardwood seedling replanting. (3) An additional 620 acres of invasive plant species will be eliminated. (4) Finally, 1,590 acres of early successional habitat will be created or enhanced within upland forests to provide wild turkey brood habitat.
- (6) **Bridge for Better Bottomland Access on Yockanookany Wildlife Management Area (\$56,250.00)** – This project will construct a bridge across the Yockanookany River to improve bottomland access on the 2,379-acre Yockanookany Wildlife Management Area (YWMA) located in Attala County. The WMA is long and linear and located on both sides of the Yockanookany River. There is currently only one access point to cross the river. An additional bridge is needed on the north end of the WMA, 1.6 miles away from the existing bridge, to provide access for the public as well as management access for WMA staff.
- (7) **Wells for Waterfowl at Trim Cane Wildlife Management Area (\$500,000.00)** – This project aims to improve water management at the 891-acre Trim Cane Wildlife Management Area (TCWMA) in Oktibbeha County by establishing a reliable water source for seven waterfowl impoundments. Currently, these impoundments depend on rainfall, which is often insufficient, leading to late-season flooding that affects hunting opportunities. The plan involves drilling two deep wells, each equipped with a 30HP motor and a 6" submersible pump, and installing piping to distribute water to the impoundments. Additionally, about one mile of electrical infrastructure will be set up to power the system. The project also includes modifying existing water control structures, purchasing materials, renting equipment, and hiring contractors.
- (8) **Long Beach Urban Forest Restoration (\$141,625.00)** – This 30-acre tract was acquired by the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain in April 2024 through a collaborative effort between the original owner, local neighbors, and the City of Long Beach to preserve one of the last sizable undeveloped parcels along Highway 90 in Harrison County. The property was acquired for the purposes of free, daily public access to an Urban Forest. As the only remaining stretch of land extending from Highway 90 to the railroad tracks, the property also offers critical relief from urban encroachment. The property is recognized in Long Beach's Comprehensive Plan (2013) as a key area for providing residents with open recreational space. The Land Trust aims to restore the tract's ecological integrity to enhance its value as

a public recreational area, improve its function as a wetland, and serve as a vital stopover for migratory birds. Its strategic location also helps increase the community's resilience by offering natural vegetative buffers against intensifying storm events.

- (9) **Museum Trail Levee Repair and Erosion Control (\$65,750.00)** – The MDWFP's Museum of Natural Science educates the public on the natural heritage of our state. The museum has nature trails on the property that show the public some of the habitats that make up LeFleur's Bluff. Hikers get to experience the vistas of a floodplain forest, cypress swamps, oxbow lakes, backwater areas, Eubanks Creek, and the Pearl River. The trails allow people to observe the variety of plant and animal life associated with this area. The trails vary in width (typically 4-6 ft) and meander through the forest for about 2 miles. The trails are composed mostly of gravel and have bridges and boardwalks in some segments. The trails are used mainly by families who come visit the museum, Mayes Lake visitors, and joggers looking for a scenic exercise track. Awarded funds would be used to contract with the Bureau of Buildings to repair a crucial section of museum trail destroyed by erosion. The ravine responsible has eroded upslope around 50 feet, destroyed our trail, breached our retention pond levee, and is releasing a large amount of sediment into the ephemeral slough below. Funds will be used to grade eroded banks and add erosion matting, add erosion control structures, repair the pond levee and trail, add a drainage pipe connecting the retention pond to the slough, and adding gravel to the repaired trail.
- (10) **Educational Outreach Pavilion and Deer Interaction Pen (\$749,000.00)** – Public education and outreach efforts surrounding deer conservation, biology, hunting, land management, and disease issues are badly needed throughout Mississippi to preserve this important resource. The MSU Deer Lab has historically played an important role in meeting these objectives (<https://www.msudeer.msstate>). Unfortunately, there is no facility in the state that provides the kind of hands-on education and recreational outreach on deer management needed to connect people to this important resource. We propose an Educational Outreach Pavilion and Deer Interaction Pen to meet this urgent state need. The pavilion will display kiosks, graphics, videos, interactive displays, and a research station to inform visitors about the important role deer play in our ecosystem, their biology, and the value of hunting to their management. Adjacent to the pavilion will be an interaction pen with semi-tame deer to allow hands-on interaction and reinforce the learning objectives.
- (11) **Ulman Ave Beach Access ADA Low-Level Pier (\$499,270.00)** - The City of Bay St. Louis is proposing an ADA Beach Accessible low-level pier with a water's edge low-level platform at Ulman Avenue. This proposed project is approximately 90' long and 8' wide ADA low-level pier with Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic (FRP) panels connecting to a 24'x12' ADA low level platform. This ADA low-level pier allows water access for all tourists and locals to enjoy the Gulf of Mexico while being in a safe and accessible environment. The low-level pier will also provide a 32'x32' ADA platform around the existing 12' diameter firepit with additional benches for visitors to enjoy being on the beach. An addition to this project is construction of 2 volleyball courts at Ulman Ave. This project is an extension to a current project under construction to connect ADA beach/water access to the downtown ADA boardwalk which is along the existing concrete seawall connecting Ulman Ave to the Municipal Harbor. Please see attached for more details of the project description

- (12) **Mobile 5-Stand Skeet Trailer (\$15,000.00)** – To expand the reach and accessibility of Mississippi's public shooting sports facilities on state-owned and/or managed lands, the MDWFP are proposing the acquisition of a mobile five-stand unit. "Five-stand" is a recognized shooting sport and consists of five shooting stations at which shooters are presented with a variety of shots from six to eighteen strategically-placed clay target throwers. The unit will consist of a mobile kiosk and laptop computer for processing shooters, a printer, 5 shooting platforms, 8 clay target throwers activated through an electronic target release system, and a 40-foot gooseneck enclosed trailer with built-in generator and heater that will transport other unit components. We are also requesting 4 pallets of clay targets, and a charger to maintain batteries.
- (13) **Lake Calling Panther Nature Trail Improvement (\$11,300.00)** – Due to the drought during 2023, there are numerous dead trees along the Calling Panther State Lake nature trail causing a safety concern. The dead trees will be removed to a safe distance from the nature trail. The pathway will be cleared and leveled by MDWFP personnel. Gravel will be added in areas of need. Native hardwood and flowering shrubs will be added to areas along the trail with the most tree loss. This will benefit the safety and pleasure of hikers as well as the safety of staff maintaining the trail. The added hardwood trees will also benefit wildlife in the area.
- (14) **Terrene Landing River Park Project (\$2,523,375.49)** – Terrene Landing River Park was developed to promote tourism in Bolivar County and the Delta, by providing public access directly to the Mississippi River, including a location for docking and off-loading of tourists from Mississippi River cruise ships, scenic overlook, and public boat ramps. Terrene Landing River Park is the only public scenic overlook and boat ramp directly on the Mississippi River in Bolivar County and one of only a few such locations in the entire state of Mississippi. There is no other access location within 50 miles north and south of Terrene Landing. The proposed project includes a second concrete docking ramp, expansion of the existing paved parking and bus turnaround areas, site lighting, water line extension, boardwalk with fishing pier, picnic area, and reconstruction of the 2.0-mile access road, Terrene Landing Road, from MS Highway 1 to the levee. The frequency of both commercial and private boating, along with the need for additional outdoor recreational activities, has required upgrades of the boat ramp capacity and expansion of the River Park. As such, the County is seeking financial assistance to complete improvements. We have received funds from the State of Mississippi and MDOT TA program to begin working on the ramp expansion. We are currently seeking assistance with funding needed for the required improvements to the access road. These will provide further opportunities to experience the Mississippi River beyond the pavilion and boating ramp areas
- (15) **Wildlife Restoration on Mississippi's Public Lands (\$183,982.00)** – Camp Shelby's Environmental program and the DeSoto National Forest both struggle with limited capacity to carry out their conservation and outdoor stewardship goals. This project conducted by the Nature Conservancy is an effort to help both agencies carry out their shared goals of the conservation of the endangered Gopher tortoise and the Black pinesnake, both of which are federally protected in Mississippi. We propose to headstart gopher tortoises for eventual release to increase their population, conduct research on the Black pinesnake to inform future habitat management actions, and spray cogongrass and provide capacity for prescribed burns to improve the habitat.

- (16) **Quarry Trails Improvements Project (\$392,925.00)** – The City of Brandon has been continually working to provide more outdoor access to the public in the area of Marquette Road, Boyce Thompson Drive, and the Brandon Amphitheater through the enhancement of gravel trails, bike paths, multi-use paths and other avenues. While many of the trails are already built, many need improvements or to be completed. The City of Brandon is requesting funding to assist in completing these nature trails and recreation facilities. This project is vital to the continued enhancement of this area by improving designated walking trails, providing signs and maps to assist in navigation, clearing and improving older trails, and providing visitors with a latrine building and information kiosk. These improvements will bring more visitors to visit the beautiful woodland trails at the Quarry Park.
- (17) **Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuge Long Branch Floating Boat Launch (\$45,567.00)** – The Long Branch, a 79-acre oxbow lake managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, is located on Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuge in Tallahatchie County, MS. It is a hub for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, kayaking, wildlife observation, and photography. This project proposes replacing a dilapidated fishing pier with a plastic floating dock to improve access and safety for the public. The proposed floating dock would improve lake access and allow boaters to secure their boats and load and unload passengers safely during all water levels experienced in the Long Branch Oxbow Lake. The USFWS does not have funding available for this project; however, it can provide an in-kind match for all in-kind services, including maintenance of the site, the pier, ramp, and parking area in perpetuity. Delta Wildlife will be responsible for administering the work specified in the grant, including procuring materials and soliciting and overseeing all contracted work.
- (18) **Wild Pig Trapping Partnership (\$100,000.00)** - As a strategy to reduce wild hog populations MDWFP wants to utilize a new model of management technique. The Wild Pig Trapping Partnership is to be a coordinated trapping effort between public land areas and surrounding private land properties. This project will focus on Trim Cane WMA and Oktibbeha County Lake and the private lands located in close proximity. The project goal is to create a blueprint for a systematic method to clearing wild hogs from strategic areas where wildlife management areas and private lands meet. For effective trapping efforts in the project area of 20,850-acres we intend to utilize one trapping system per 1000 acres at minimum to assure an appropriate and consistent level of intensity for the removal of large numbers of wild hogs from the project area.
- (19) **Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge (Wilkins Tract) Wetlands Restoration Project (\$136,356.00)** - Due to staff shortages in recent years, USFWS has had to resort to passive management of their properties, which means less food and water for migrating waterfowl through this area. Funding this project will provide significant value to waterfowl in the north Delta, where tracts of this size are uncommon, particularly considering it is an inviolate sanctuary with no disturbance from public use or refuge staff during the winter migration season. By improving these waterfowl impoundments and cultivating crops and moist soil habitat, the USFWS would significantly increase its contribution to Duck Energy Day (DED) objectives set by the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Joint Venture. There is significant support for this project from surrounding landowners who see the benefit this property provides to waterfowl and local waterfowl hunters.

- (20) **Mississippi Arboreta Trail (MAT) (\$365,050.00)** – The overall goal of this project is to establish a certified arboreta trail throughout the state of Mississippi. The Mississippi Urban Forest Council have already created and certified 25 arboretums. We would like to build on this progress by adding as many arboreta as possible but a minimum of 15 more to create a substantial arboretum trail system throughout the state. These arboretums would be located in both large and small communities, in low income, remote and popular communities. We will work hard to create beautiful low maintenance tree parks for all citizens to have quality places to visit and learn more about the environment. MUFC has been certifying arboreta for over 30 years, certification requires 30 native tree species and an educational program at each site. This project is very timely for all communities in our state due to the recent drought that removed much of our natural canopy. With this project we will have 40 certified arboreta in Mississippi.
- (21) **Church House Creek Elevated Boardwalk (\$312,500.00)** – The proposed project will link several public spaces and venues by way of Church House Creek which traverses Downtown Wiggins and serves as a primary drainage way for the area. This project, along with the city's recent efforts to improve the creek, will improve water quality of the creek by reducing erosion and flooding and will provide a venue for residents to interact with nature while enjoying an outdoor activity. The pathways constructed will provide space for running, walking, and jogging along the creek. The city has secured multiple NRCS-EWP grants to assist with repairing and stabilizing the creek over the past several years and recently secured a MDOT Transportation Alternative grant for the 80% of the cost of the boardwalk and remaining creek improvements. The City is seeking the remaining 20% of the improvement costs to ensure the completion of the project.
- (22) **Waveland Waterfront Improvements (\$500,000.00)** - The City of Waveland proposes the installation of a 300 foot fishing pier with added amenities such as benches, tables, and signage, along with the living shoreline that is being added to create a natural habitat for coastal animals. This overall project is Waveland's Waterfront Improvements to the coastal area south of Buccaneer State Park. This project includes a double boat launch to allow public access to the Gulf of Mexico from Waveland along with riprap jetty to allow a safe and calm harboring of boats entering and exiting the waterway. In addition, this project will install a 300 foot fishing pier with added amenities such as benches, tables, and signage for fishermen of all skill levels. This project will allow a safe and accessible place in Waveland for locals and visitors enjoy access to the waterway by boat or on the fishing pier. The preliminary design, planning, and permitting phases are in progress.
- (23) **River Avenue Pedestrian Bridge and Leaf River Overlook (\$674,638.00)** – The River Avenue Pedestrian Bridge would utilize the 26-foot wide, 350-foot long Old East Hardy Bridge to create a new pedestrian route between the City of Hattiesburg and Petal, Mississippi. The bridge would feature structural reinforcements and repairs, a new concrete overlay, safety railing, shade sails, and tower viewers that look out over the scenic Leaf River. The Leaf River is a part of the Pascagoula Watershed within the North American Coastal Plain, which includes the Black Creek, the only waterway in Mississippi designated as a National Wild and Scenic River. This area, recognized as a global biodiversity hotspot, is one of the most biodiverse ecosystems and is located right in our backyard. This project would introduce new

residents and visitors to extraordinary and scenic trails and waterways. The project is administered by the Hattiesburg-Petal-Forrest-Lamar Metropolitan Planning Organization.

- (24) **McHenry Shooting Range - Skeet House Construction (\$29,550.00)** - The purpose of this project would be to rebuild the MDWFP's skeet houses at McHenry Shooting Facility located in Stone County in their current locations. The project would require rebuilding four skeet houses to serve the existing skeet field. The project would include constructing the four buildings and purchasing the electronic target release systems. Due to the age and exposure to the elements, they are in serious need to be replaced.
- (25) **Strawberry Plains Habitat Restoration (\$87,440.00)** - The Strawberry Plains Habitat Restoration project, administered by the Audubon Society, would restore a natural fire regime and set up a demonstration area on property that contains imperiled and vulnerable habitats. These habitats are important to many bird species that are in population decline. Approximately 139 acres of this would be early successional habitat, 67 acres of it would be removal and eradication of Japanese stiltgrass as a demonstration area for forest landowner education of how stilt grass is ultimately affecting the tree composition of the forest by creating competition with regeneration of native tree species. The grant would be used to restore the natural fire regime in imperiled xeric forests. The project will open opportunities for demonstration and education for local and adjoining communities and restored forest areas and its trails will be open for the public to use for recreation. Salaries are funded by the Margaret F. Shackelford Trust.
- (26) **Creating A City-wide Nature Based Model for Living with Outdoor Activities (\$878,000.00)**  
The City of Clinton has embarked on a plan to create a variety of nature based activities throughout the city. The City of Clinton is home to college students, veterans, under-served and Asian with over 35,000 people passing through the city every day along Interstate 20. The city has hired a number of consultants with expertise and experience in developing community conservation projects. This project will include multiple activities and nature based projects throughout the city, creating a model for other cities to replicate. Nature based activities will include, walk-able city with trails, nature based educational program for students and adults, arboretums, storm water management, exercise in nature sites, urban farm, landscapes that are climate change resilient, pollinator fields and more as described in project proposal. We will develop a city-wide conservation plan and implement many of these nature assets (natural capital) to serve as a model to other cities.
- (27) **Vicksburg Riverfront Park Development (\$1,500,000.00)** – The Vicksburg Riverfront Park Development project aims to transform donated land along the Mississippi River into a public park that provides accessible outdoor recreational space for the community. The park will feature walking trails, picnic areas, and outdoor fitness equipment, all integrated with the natural landscape to minimize environmental disruption and future maintenance needs. The development addresses the community's need for a safe and engaging outdoor space following the closure of the former Riverfront Park due to severe erosion. The County of Warren is seeking financial assistance because while state funding was allocated to the City of Vicksburg to cover its 50% portion of the project, Warren County has received no funding support for its share of the park's development. The County's financial resources are limited, and support from the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund is critical to ensure the successful completion of this collaborative project,

- (28) **Enhancing Lefleur's Bluff State Park Amenities (\$250,000.00)**- The LeFleur's Bluff Complex has brought world-class amenities to the capital city over the last year and a half. The LeFleur's Bluff Playground opened December 2021 welcoming over 350,000 guests. The park has become a central recreational hub of the Museum Trail that connects various recreational areas of the city. The day use area of the park features a new playground, adventure trail, and a large outdoor pavilion. This area of the park has aged facilities, including landscaping, pavilions, lighting, trash receptacles, and picnic tables. The conditions of these existing park elements need improvement to meet the increased recreational demand of this area. This request would fund park amenities. If granted the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Funds, we would match with our Land and Water Conservation Funds to provide the much-needed improvements including: 57 picnic tables (14-ADA), 35 Trash Receptacles, Site Lighting, and 5 Pavilions, Landscaping: Landscaping with trees, shrubs and sod is proposed. Trees will be added to replace trees that have been lost due to age and weather damage. Additional trees and shrubs will be planted to enhance the area. Sod will be installed in needed day use areas such as the picnic area. It is anticipated that there will be approximately 3,000 square yards of sod, 35 shade trees, 15 ornamental trees, and shrubs.