

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Agenda Item Memo

DATE: June 17, 2014

SUBJECT: ML 2011, First Special Session, Ch. 6, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4a RIM-WPR, Ph. III

PRESENTER: John Jaschke and Sarah Strommen, BWSR

Background:

BWSR's recent amendment request for the above-referenced accomplishment plan included a reduction of acres from what was anticipated in the original proposal. The number of acres protected and restored decreased from 9,657 to 5,828 acres. This amendment request was due to a number of factors, including:

1. Easement costs have risen significantly due to a variety of reasons on the Federal side, including staffing challenges. Sequestration and the lack of a Federal Farm Bill have contributed to the length of time necessary to close RIM-WRP easements than was originally proposed. When the proposal was submitted in June of 2010, easement acquisition was estimated to be \$3,500 per acre. In 2013, the cost for an easement increased to an estimated \$5,800 per acre, primarily due primarily to rising land and commodity prices.
2. Rapidly escalating land values and a pressure to put/keep land in production resulted in a 25 to 40% cancelation rate during sign-up years 2009 to 2012. Once a cancelation occurs, a new application uses the available funding, but the entire easement closing must start over from scratch.

Suggested Procedure:

Members question BWSR staff as needed.

Agenda Item # 8

