

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Meeting Summary
November 13, 2014

Members Present:

Bob Anderson
Jim Cox
David Hartwell, Chair
Rep. Rick Hansen

Jane Kingston
Rep. Denny McNamara (phone,
ineligible to vote)
Sue Olson

Scott Rall
Ron Schara
Elizabeth Wilkens (phone,
ineligible to vote)
Sen. Tom Saxhaug

Members Absent: Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen

Call to order: Call to order at 1:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

Review and Approve Agenda

Motion by Ms. Olson to approve the agenda for November 13th as presented. Motion Adopted.

Review and Approve Minutes – October 7th, 2014

Motion by Mr. Schara to approve the minutes as presented. Motion Adopted.

Members Report any Conflict of Interest on Today's Agenda

No new conflicts were noted.

(00:02:02) Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Bill Becker presented the Council's 2015 draft schedule, to be reviewed and approved at a subsequent meeting. Mr. Becker distributed a letter to the Council from the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council.

(00:09:40) Action: Approval of Transfer of Land acquired under ML 2011, Ch. 6, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(c),
Shallow Lake Shoreland Protection: Wild Rice from Ducks Unlimited to the US Forest Service

Jon Schneider, Manager of Conservation Programs, Ducks Unlimited, and Elizabeth Schleif and Dan Ryan of the U.S. Forest Service, gave testimony to the Council. Members discussed the issue.

Motion by Mr. Rall to approve the transfer of the 28-acre parcel on Moose Lake in St. Louis County, MN to the USDA Forest Service. Motion adopted.

(00:20:30) Action: Approval of Amendment to ML 2014, Ch. 256, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(e), Accelerated
Protection of Grassland and Prairie Habitat with RIM and NPB Easements.

Dave Schad, Deputy Commissioner of the DNR, and Jason Garms from the DNR's Scientific and Natural Areas Program, provided testimony to the Council. Members discussed various aspects of the proposed amendment.

(00:44:40) Motion by Ms. Olson to approve the amendment to acquire the Wergeland parcel under this appropriation at a cost of \$3,815 an acre, subject to the condition that grazing or agricultural practices by the landowner be permanently discontinued and that any grazing be allowed only as determined by the DNR in a written conservation plan. Motion amended by Chair Hartwell that the DNR report to the Council the outcome of the transaction and any changes made to the Native Prairie Bank acquisition process going forward,

particularly with regard to formula-based payment rates. A roll call vote was requested.

Bob Anderson - No

Rep. Rick Hansen - Yes

Scott Rall - Yes

Jim Cox - No

Jane Kingston - Yes

Ron Schara - No

David Hartwell, Chair - No

Sue Olson - Yes

Sen. Tom Saxhaug - Yes

Motion passed (5-yes, 4-no).

(01:07:30) Action: Approval of Amendments to ML 2012, Ch. 264, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(a), RIM-WRP, Ph. IV And ML 2013, Ch. 137, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(a), RIM-WRP, Ph. V.

Sarah Strommen, Acting Deputy Director, and Bill Penning, Conservation Easement Section Manager of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), provided testimony to the Council. Members discussed the amendment. Chair Hartwell suggested consequences be developed for those projects not realizing funding matches specified in their proposals/accomplishment plans and asked that this topic appear as an agenda item prior to the next call for proposals cycle.

(01:46:40) Motion by Ms. Kingston to approve the amendment as presented without the extension of the completion dates for easement acquisition, however, restoration and/or enhancement can be completed within the time frame allowed in law. Motion passed.

(01:50:00) Action: Approval of Accomplishment Plan, ML 2014, Ch. 256, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4(a) RIM-Wetlands Partnership, Ph. VI.

(01:50:47) Motion by Mr. Rall to approve the amendment as presented without the extension of the completion dates for easement acquisition, however, restoration and/or enhancement can be completed within the time frame allowed in law. Motion passed.

(01:51:29) Information: Report on the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program

Jessica Lee, CPL Grants Program Coordinator, DNR presented the status of the CPL Grant Program.

(01:56:04) Discussion: Rider Language for ML 2015

Mr. Becker reviewed the suggested rider language for haying and grazing and donations to NGOs, developed by staff at the request of the Council. Susan Schmidt, State Director for The Trust for Public Land in Minnesota, provided testimony regarding donations to NGOs. Members discussed her testimony. Ms. Kingston suggested bargain sales be excluded from the prohibition language. A revised version of proposed language for the rider on this issue was distributed to the Council and Mr. Becker indicated it would be incorporated in the draft bill.

(02:16:05) Mr. Becker reviewed proposed technical amendments to the CPL and CPL Metro appropriations in ML 2014, Ch. 256, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. (5m) and (5n). Mr. Rall suggested the rider language include a requirement that any substantial shift of funds between CPL and CPL Metro be brought before the Council for approval.

(02:20:54) Mr. Becker reviewed suggested language on OHF appropriation extensions given due to availability of federal matching funds. Mr. Rall suggested implementing a minimum threshold requirement that a federal match must be at least 10% of the total appropriation for a program to qualify for an extension. Members agreed 10% was an appropriate proportion for such a threshold.

(02:25:15) Ms. Wilkens suggested language be included in the bill restricting the use of crops to prepare land for native seeding. She requested the DNR provide the Council with best practices for preparing land for prairie and forest restorations, including considerations of pollinators, which do not include planting row crops. Mr. Rall suggested rather than include such language in the OHF bill, a question be added to accomplishment plans

asking project managers to state that row cropping was used on OHF land for only the minimum amount of time required to prepare seed beds for native seeds. Members discussed prairie seed bed preparation, row crops, GMO as crops, food plot use on eased lands and promoting pollinator health. Mr. Penning offered testimony on the use of food plots by BWSR.

Mr. Rall recommended the Council not put forward suggestions for rider language for the upcoming bill regarding the use of row crops on OHF-acquired lands or GMO as crops, pending further discussion at a later date. Chair Hartwell suggested pollinator health be a part of those discussions.

(02:51:05) Ms. Olson proposed that the Council request (rather than mandate) grant applicants seek alternatives to using GMO as row crops. Chair Hartwell asked staff to implement this request.

Suggestions for rider language from members will be incorporated by the staff into the draft OHF bill, to be presented at the December 11th Council meeting.

(02:52:10) Action: Review and Progress Draft Accomplishment Plans for ML 2015

Project Analyst Manager for LSOHC, Sandy Smith, presented her analysis of the ML 2015 draft accomplishment plans. The Council recommended the staff pursue the issues outlined by Ms. Smith with project managers and then proceed with the draft bill.

Mr. Rall suggested a report could be prepared by staff identifying disproportionate budget changes made by project managers between the proposal stage and draft accomplishment plans, and that such a report be used to ask project managers for explanations for their changes.

Opportunity for Public to Address the Council

No public comment was heard.

Meeting adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

APPROVED:

Susan Olson, Secretary

Date