

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MEMO: **Agenda Item 4a - Executive Director Report**

DATE: June 28, 2018

SUBJECT: Update - ML2009/FY2010 MN Forests for the Future/Upper Mississippi Project Ph 1 & 2.
Dick Peterson, Forest Legacy Coordinator, MN DNR

Suggested Procedure:

Council members will receive an update from LSOHC staff regarding Blandin easement lands involved within the Great Northern Transmission Line conveyance approved by the Council on July 31, 2017.

Background:

At its July 31, 2017 meeting, the Council approved a conveyance regarding two OHF funded Conservation Easements. The easements were under ML2009/FY2010 MN Forests for the Future/Upper Mississippi Project Phase 1 & 2 and ML211 Forests for the Future Phase 3 and granted to Blandin Paper Company and Meriwether MN Land & Timber LLC. The conveyance concerned Minnesota Power's proposing to acquire an easement for the Great Northern Transmission Line over Blandin lands in Itasca County and Meriwether lands in Koochiching County.

Subsequent to Council approval, and in accordance with ML 97A.056, subd. 15(b), Blandin proceeded to define potential land parcels to purchase and use as replacement. Blandin had been working with DNR to validate equal market value, equivalent location, equivalent useful conservation purpose, etc.

Since this was the first conveyance brought before the Council where replacement acres being considered to be employed, and in an effort to provide complete transparency, DNR has been asked to provide with a full overview of the replacement considerations prior to Blandin closing on the designated replacement parcels.

Since July of 2017, Blandin decided to not seek replacement acres and agreed with DNR to return the OHF portion of the agreed upon compensation. The State's share of the total funds that are being returned to the OHF is \$39,156.00.