

## Memo

**Date:** 6/22/20

**To:** Mark Johnson, Executive Director, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

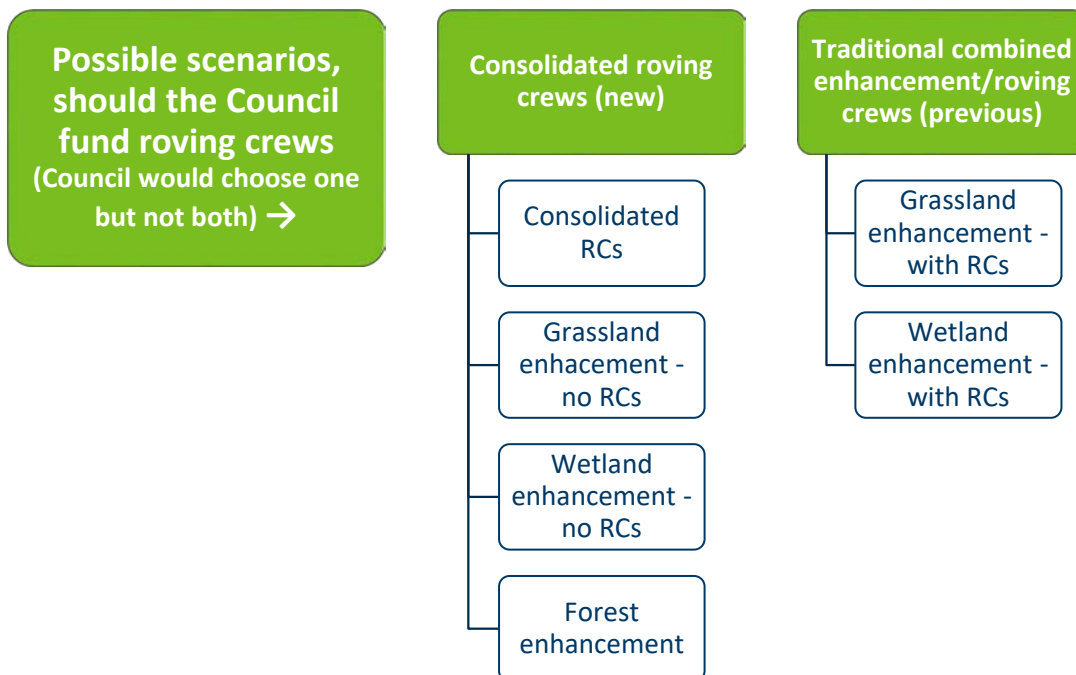
**From:** Kelly Wilder, LSOHC/DNR Liaison

**Re:** DNR's ML 21/FY 22 OHF Roving Crews Proposals

This memo details adjustments in DNR's ML 21/FY 22 OHF roving crews proposals. DNR anticipates that additional details will likely need to be discussed between the agency, Council staff and Council members, should the Council choose to fund the roving crews. This document, however, aims to provide an overview of the topic.

### Proposal structure

The DNR has five OHF-funded roving crews, each partially funded from different appropriations. This has historically included three eight-person crews funded 75% grassland and 25% wetland. More recently, the Council funded an ML 19 six-person grassland crew and an ML 20 four-person forest crew. With the exception of the new forest crew, roving crews funding has been one component of a larger enhancement request and appropriation. This year, DNR submitted a simplified proposal that consolidates all roving crews, alongside our traditional complement of combined enhancement/roving crew proposals, to give the full Council the chance to evaluate the new approach. The following visual displays two scenarios for the Council's consideration.



For further background, DNR presented on roving crews at the January 2020 Council meeting and participated in discussion with the Council. Subsequently, the Council Chair and Vice-Chair held two call with the DNR/LSOHC liaison and leadership from the Fish and Wildlife Division. Based on this consultation, the new proposal is intended to increase the crews’ effectiveness by:

- Providing stability to the roving crews through more consistent and predictable funding.
- Reducing the complexity of developing, managing and reporting on multiple, staggered proposals.
- Allowing each crew flexibility to work on multiple habitat types.

DNR requested further input on how to structure a revised set of roving crew proposals. Council leadership advised that DNR submit the new “consolidated” proposal as well as the “traditional” proposals laid out in the visual scenarios above. The Council as a whole could then consider the merit of the two approaches, should they wish to fund DNR roving crews.

## Proposal phasing

The DNR’s revised proposal allocates funds one year in advance. This approach provide staffing and budgetary stability and mirrors the state’s biennial budget process (i.e., the FY 20-21 biennial budget was established during the 2019 Legislative session). This would involve an initial year of transition where existing funds can be amended to cover the revised proposal for FY 22, and new funds would be used to fund subsequent years, aligned with the biennial budget schedule.

Two-year long proposals would offer more staffing and funding stability; flexibility in habitat work over multiple years; and a lower administrative burden for proposal development, management and reporting.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Calendar year when we submit (May) and defend (Aug/Sept) proposals	2020	2021	No proposal	2023	No proposal	2025
Minnesota laws	2021	2022		2024		2026
Fiscal year funding received	2022	2023		2025		2027
Fiscal year crews supported	2022	2024		2026		2028
	2023	2025		2027		2029
Biennium		FY22/23 biennium		FY24/25 biennium		

DNR’s five current open roving crew appropriations are staggered on three year cycles, as illustrated below. We can foresee at least two scenarios for future/unspent roving crew funding on existing appropriations. The DNR could return funds to the Council or we could transition these dollars to contracts and supplies, within each respective enhancement proposal.

Appropriation source	Crew size	Region	HQ	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
				Spent			Current fiscal yr	Could return/amend	
¾ grassland, ¼ wetland	8	Region 4 (SW)	Lac Qui Parle						
¾ grassland, ¼ wetland	8	Region 1 (NW)	Mentor						
Grassland	6	Region 1a (WC)	Elbow Lake						
¾ grass, ¼ wetland	8	Region 3 (SE)	Vermillion						
Forest	4	Region 2 (NE)	TBD						

## Proposal hearing order

If presentations are organized by habitat as usual, the following order might be most advantageous for the Council to hear DNR’s proposals.

- Prairie R/E:
  - DNR Roving Crews (O1)
  - DNR Grassland Phase XIII (PRE01b)
  - DNR Grassland Phase XIII – with Roving Crew (PRE01a)
- Wetland R/E:
  - Accelerated Shallow Lakes and Wetland Enhancements Phase 13 (w/o Roving Habitat Crew) (WRE01b)
  - Accelerated Shallow Lakes and Wetland Enhancements Phase 13 (with Roving Habitat Crew) (WRE01a)