

September 3, 2020

TO: Mark Johnson, Executive Director
LSOHC Members

FROM: Sandy Smith, Project Analyst Manager

RE: Information on Status Updates due on August 14, 2020

Status Updates were due for all programs on August 14, 2020. Attached are two lists that may be helpful; 1) by approp year with percentages spent to date, 2) by phased program showing final report and update figures.

The programs that were near completion and a final report expected were given the option of completing a status update or not. Generally, final reports for ML 2015 programs are due November 1.

Although the percentage of funds spent-to-date can provide members with a basic idea of program progress, recognize that it doesn't tell the entire story. Each is unique with their own circumstances and details. Some managers reported a high level of accomplishments and low spending. This is the case where some managers included encumbrances and others did not. Overall, staff reviewed the updates to make sure that programs appeared to be making progress for timely completion and accomplishment of the stated outputs.

As a reminder, acquisition programs have 3 years to acquire land, while Restoration/Enhancement programs have 5 years to complete work or up to 5 years after the acquisition, if applicable.

	Acquisitions	Restoration / Enhancement	Final Reports due November
ML 2009 - 2013	All appropriations are closed and reported		
ML 2014	June 2017 – programs will close except for federal fund extensions or R/E work done on late acquisitions, IDP money left to spend	June 2019 (or 5 years after acquisition)	2019
ML 2015	June 2018 – should be completed and money spent	June 2020 (or 5 years after acquisition) **C-19 extension for a year to 2021	2020
ML 2016	June 2019 – should be completed and money spent **C-19 allowed for an extra year to close on identified parcels to 2021	June 2021 (or 5 years after acquisition)	2021
ML 2017	June 2021 - should be spent or options in place, options that are cancelled would result in turned back money **C-19 allowed for an extra year to identify and secure parcels	June 2022 (or 5 years after acquisition)	2022
ML 2018	June 2021 - one year left to spend or secure options	June 2023 (or 5 years after acquisition)	2023
ML 2019	June 2022 – two years left to spend	June 2024 (or 5 years after acquisition)	2024
ML 2020	Appropriations started July 1, no status updates were due		2025

As always, let me know if you have questions. If you would like a copy of a specific program's Status Update, please let staff know.

DNR IDP Money

Non-state agencies transfer money over to the DNR for IDP (Initial Development Plan). These monies are estimates on various tasks (parking lots, signage, R/E work, etc) that need to be completed relating the development of the parcels transferred to DNR for inclusion in the public land system. In several cases, as indicated by "IDP money left" this is the second, third, and sometimes fourth status update where the last bit of the appropriation (IDP) needs to be spent. This primarily affects the closing of ML 14, ML 15 and a few ML 16 appropriations. There are several concerns over the slowness in which DNR is accomplishing this task:

- 1) Managers who have completed the appropriation years earlier are continuing to report and follow up on the IDP progress therefore adding to the administration for work not in their control.
- 2) The inability to officially close out the appropriation with MMB, therefore prevents remaining money from these programs, although usually small, to be re-deposited into the OHF for future recommendations.
- 3) Without an official final report in the system, those accomplishments are not captured via system reports when staff has to produce information for reporters and legislative presentation.

Staff has discussed this with DNR. A IDP Coordinator position was funded in the ML 2020 DNR WMA program. This position will help to expedite spending of these expenses. We anticipate the closing of those programs IDP monies so that close out can happen prior to the next status update in February 2021.

COVID-19 Extensions

While the extension of time in the 2020 Appropriations bill (details in the above table) bill helped extend time beyond the pending deadlines in the following ways:

ML 15 – Restoration and Enhancement programs received an extra year. This was helpful for crews that were pulled off site during the state shut down and were later allowed to resume activities within the extended time for final completion.

ML 16 – Acquisition programs received an extra year to close on parcels that were under commitment. This was helpful to assist in the coordination of title work, surveys, and closings that were scheduled and delayed.

ML 17 – Acquisition programs received an additional year to find parcels, but no change in the closing period. This assisted with negotiations that were delayed with landowners due to social distancing, and delayed completion of survey and legal work associated with negotiations.

In reading the updates, it appears that ML 18 programs may benefit from additional time as well. Since these programs started July 1, 2018 and many of the activities were interrupted or stopped for a period of time in the middle of the programs, therefore they would not benefit from the entire time of the appropriation availability.

Programs of Concern

RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water

			Approp \$	Spent to date	
2015	2(f)	Minnesota Buffers for Wildlife and Water, Phase V	\$ 4,544,000	\$ 2,828,200	62% spent to date, received a legislative extension of time to 2024
2016	2(g)	RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water, Phase VI	\$ 6,708,000	\$ 4,926,400	73% spent to date, received a legislative extension of time to 2025
2017	2(g)	RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase VII	\$ 5,333,000	\$ 166,800	no acquisition money spent to date, money will expire in June 2021 that is with the C-19 extension - may need a legislative extension
2018	2(g)	RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase VIII	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 35,000	no acquisition money spent, easements must be committed by June 2021 and close by June 2022

RIM Wetlands

			Approp \$	Spent to date	
2016	4(c)	RIM Wetlands, Phase 7	\$ 13,808,000	\$ 9,214,700	71% money spent expired June 2019, received a legislative extension until 2022
2017	4(c)	RIM Wetlands - Phase 8	\$ 10,398,000	\$ 6,941,500	51% spent to date, money expired June 2020, received a C-19 Extension until 2021
2018	4(c)	RIM Wetlands - Phase 9	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 7,114,100	45% spent to date money expires in 18 months

Wild Rice Watershed Program

The ML 2015 program received a Legislative Extension in ML 18 law until 2021. This extension was to allow additional time to work out details regarding a MOA with BWSR for RIM easements.

Staff will be scheduling a conference call with the manager to get an update on progress and plan for completion. Overall the program is slow to spend and appears that no money has been spent to date in any of the approp years.

2015	2(j)	Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration "We have two applicants who have put in applications for that have reached the stage where we have sent \$1,164,999.09 for them to secure RIM easements on 334.7 acres of land." Their acre goal for this program is 480.	\$ 2,270,000
2017	5(c)	Goose Prairie "We are in process of acquiring the temporary and permanent right-of-ways along with the flowage easements. We are currently working on the final design and then will be moving forward with construction in 2019. We have secured additional funding from the Red River Water Management Board for the easements and right-of-ways."	\$ 600,000
2019	2(e)	Lower Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration - Phase II Nothing reported – no money spent	\$ 2,975,000
2020	2(e)	Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration - Phase III No report submitted	\$ 1,888,000