

LIGHTLY EDITED FILE

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Zoom Meeting

December 8, 2020

8:00 - 11:04 a.m.

* * * * *

DISCLAIMER

This file is being provided in a lightly edited format and is the work product of the CART captioner. Any reproduction, publication, or other use of this CART file without the express written consent of the captioner is strictly prohibited. Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings, nor should it be considered in any way a certified document. Due to the live nature of the event, some names and/or terms may be misspelled. This file may also contain phonetic attempts at sounds and words that were spoken and environmental sounds that occurred during the event.

* * * * *

CART PROVIDED BY: Angie Sundell, RDR, CRR, CBC, CCP, AE
Veritext/Paradigm Reporting & Captioning Inc.
Captioning-paradigm@veritext.com

>> Ms. Schnabel: Good morning, thanks for your

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

patience, everyone.

We're just dealing with a couple little caption issues.

Which I think we've got sorted out now.

>> Yup.

They're going really good now.

>> Dr. Hartwell: I'm glad you're working on it, not me.

Tom, you look cold!

[no audio from Tom]

>> Dr. Hartwell: Here on mute, too.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: I just chased my dog down the street.

She was chasin' a truck and I was chasin' her.

I'm not cold.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Sounds like you need a little training.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Yeah, here she is.

This is correct.

But it's nice up here, too, you know, as it is down there.

For December.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yeah.

[dog barking]

[silence]

>> Ms. Schnabel: For those of you who are just joining and missed the first announcement, thanks so much for your patience.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
We were having a little issue with our captions, and it's all good now, but it slowed us down a little bit

letting people into the room.

So thanks for your patience if you are sitting in the waiting room for a while.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Well, we have a quorum, that's a good thing.

>> Rep Fabian: It is a good thing.

Good morning, everyone.

Merry Christmas.

>> Ms. Swenson: Good morning, merry Christmas to you, too.

>> Rep Fabian: I got all of pie chores -- I got all of my chores done around here, the garland is up, the trees are trimmed, I've got my Christmas card ordered.

>> Ms. Swenson: You can come south.

>> Rep Fabian: Went to my first city council meeting in a long long time.

Getting ready for that, next move.

[background conversation]

>> Dr. Hartwell: Are you on the city council now?

>> Congratulations, Mr. Mayor.

>> Rep Fabian: Yeah, they wrote me and I couldn't --

[indiscernible] so, yeah, we had 529 unsuspecting people that write my name in to be mayor of the city of

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Roseau.

So now I will take office January 11th.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Congratulations.

>> Ms. Swenson: Congratulations.

It was a good article.

>> Rep Fabian: Yeah, thanks a lot.

Yeah.

It was an interesting process.

What's that?

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Head ram.

>> Rep Fabian: Yeah, exactly.

Looking forward to playing hockey against you Iron
Rangers again.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: I'm sure it will happen sooner or
later.

>> Rep Fabian: Yup.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Who's got the picture of the kids?

>> Ms. Schnabel: I think that that's Senator Tomassoni.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Okay.

>> Ms. Schnabel: And it looks -- yup, here we go, he's
still connecting to audio.

And then other than -- there he is.

It looks like other than that, we're missing --

[ringing]

-- Ron and we're missing Senator Lang.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Dr. Hartwell: And Ron is going to be late.

>> Ms. Schnabel: As far as members.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Ron let me know --

>> Ms. Schnabel: I'm so sorry.

Will you say that again?

I lost you for a second there.

Ron let you know...

>> Ms. Eggerling: I think he said that Ron let him know that he's going to be late.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yeah, Ron is going to join us about 9:00.

So I think we ought to get going.

>> Ms. Schnabel: Okay.

So, Julius, go ahead and start the stream and then give us a thumbs up when we're good.

Okay.

He says good to go.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

Well, welcome, everyone.

Good morning.

I will call the virtual meeting of the Lessard Sams

Outdoor Heritage Council to order.

It is July -- or July -- it's December 8th, 8:04 in the morning.

This meeting's being held in accordance with the memo

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT dated April 21st, 2020, from the LCC chair and vice

chair regarding commission meetings being held remotely.

You may have already seen or heard these procedures, however, for those of you who may be unfamiliar, mute yourself when you're not talking, use the raise hand

feature if you want to speak and click lower hand when you're finished speaking.

And other than approval of the minutes and the agenda, we'll use a roll call vote.

Hopefully you've all been able to look at the materials on the website today and we'll get on with the meeting.

So the first order of business is to review and approve the agenda.

Can I get a motion for that?

>> Ms. Swenson: I make a motion to approve.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Any discussion?

All in favor?

Thumbs up.

>> Aye.

>> Aye.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Opposed?

Motion carries.

You were sent the minutes of the last meeting, can I get a motion to approve the minutes?

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Mr. McNamara: McNamara moves the minutes.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Any discussion, suggestions, corrections?

If not, all in favor of approval of the minutes signify by saying aye or thumbs up.

One of the two.

>> Aye.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Opposed?

Motion carries.

Thank you very much.

Any conflicts today that have not been previously reported?

Great.

I would just say it's going to be an interesting meeting.

You all got the memo that indicated once again revenue did not forecast what we expected, and we have significant extra funds to figure out whether or not we should spend or hold onto.

And we'll spend some time, obviously, later in the meeting talking about that.

Ron and I did put a proposal together for you and I want to you know, we got it out just as quickly as we possibly could.

We did not get the forecast until late Friday, the

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
confirmation of it.

At the time Friday, we thought we were going to have maybe four and a half million based on the preliminary numbers, and it was a complete surprise to come up with more than 17 million.

So we spent some time Saturday working through various thoughts and scenarios.

Would be so much easier if we didn't have open meeting laws to contend with, but Ron and I did what we could.

We have for you a proposal, which we'll discuss later on.

But we did get it to you just as quickly as we possibly could.

We had a little more than a day from the time we heard until we got that to you.

And that is kind of the extent of my comments, unless there are any questions.

I'll turn it over to Mark --

>> Ms. Schnabel: Mr. Chair, I believe that

Representative Fabian has his hand up.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Oh, I didn't see that.

Dan.

>> Rep Fabian: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hopefully you can hear me.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yeah.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Rep Fabian: Before we get started on the serious

stuff, Representative Tomassoni -- excuse me, Senator

Tomassoni has a very interesting outfit on.

Is that some sort of Christmas garb, is it a hockey

Jersey?

I think he should show it to us before we get going

here.

>> Sen Tomassoni: I don't think I will.

[Laughter]

No, it is a hockey Jersey, though.

Actually, I'm kind of proud of it.

It's a Jersey that my -- it's my -- my dad was at a tournament named after him, Chet Tomassoni tournament.

Your kids probably played it in at some time.

So it went on for about 30 years.

And I just happened to find this the other day in my closet, decided to put it on.

>> Dr. Hartwell: And it matches your grandkids.

>> Rep Fabian: Yeah.

>> Sen Tomassoni: Yeah.

That thing in the background, that's my daughter-in-law, she's spectacular about putting these kind of things together.

And I guess you guys already saw that when I wasn't on, but the little boy's name is Crosby, he turned 1 and

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
his sister's 2 1/2, I was there the other day, and we just had a great time with them.

So you can all tell stories about your grandkids now if you want.

>> Dr. Hartwell: We don't have time.

[Overlapping conversation]

>> Rep Fabian: I could tell you stories about the Chet Tomassoni tournament in Hibbing when my kids were playing over New Year's, but I'll refrain from that.

Thank you.

>> Sen Tomassoni: Thanks.

Yeah, I figured they played in that.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

Well, Mark, I'll turn it over to you on that note.

>> Mr. Johnson: Sure.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members, good morning, nice to see you all.

Just a short report for you, a couple of things, first of all, I wanted to issue my thanks to staff for their endurance and also my apologies to you all.

We've had some -- we ran into a few software problems, as well as some, you know, just some interesting timeliness problems here over the last many days in getting materials up and getting materials prepared so, again, thank you to staff for their endurance through

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
that whole thing.

And, again, my apologies for the delay in getting some of these materials to you.

A couple other things, the closed-captioning, there is closed-captioning again today.

We tested at the November meeting with LCC's primary provider, and that went well.

Today we're testing with a secondary provider and -- so this is just to inform the public, mostly of what's going on.

There may be a slight delay in the closed-captioning.

The primary provider, as could happen in the future, is not available today because of the need for that provider by the Senate.

So this is a good opportunity for us to test out the secondary provider, so on.

So the Council knows, the closed-captioning costs -- closed-captioning was requested through LCC by a citizen member -- or by a citizen, I should say, and that's why we're going this route and giving it a try, testing it all out.

The closed-captioning costs will be paid by the LCC operational budget.

We don't know exactly what that figure is yet, but, you know, that's a cost of doing business and it will fit

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
into our budget.

Either way, the cost is ours to bear.

Another note for you, Joe had sent an email that was regarding clarification of bill language.

And that will be taken up, I've already had a question asked of me, where is that in the agenda, and that's going to be taken up under item number 11, which is where we talk about the bill and the bill language and, of course, the appropriation numbers that the Council will finalize to put into the bill.

And, Mr. Chair, unless there are any questions, that's all that I have for you today.

All right.

Are there any questions from the Council, Mark or anyone else on the staff.

I would echo Mark's comments in terms of the staff bending over backwards the last few days have been, if anything, a huge challenge, so thank you to our staff rising to the challenge and getting us to this point today.

We appreciate it.

Ashley.

I see your hand.

>> Ms. Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was just cheering on staff for the work that they've

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
done.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right, great.

With that, we're going to do -- move to a presentation on DNR land acquisition and partnerships.

We have, I think, Pat Rivers, Joe Stangel and Bill Schuna, or at least that's what the agenda says.

>> Ms. Schnabel: Mr. Chair, members, we definitely have Joe Stangel and Pat Rivers, we had Bill Schuna in the waiting room a minute ago but he's disappeared so I'm going to see if I can locate him.

But Mr. Stangel and Mr. Rivers are entering the room right now.

>> Mr. Johnson: Mr. Chair, if I may.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yes.

>> Mr. Johnson: Members, just to preface this a little bit, in past meetings, this fall and last summer, there was a request from the Council, it seemed the Council

wanted to find out more about how DNR works with partners, how decisions are made on who buys what lands or who restores and enhances lands, things like that.

So that's the reason for this informational presenting from DNR.

Again, it's one of your requests, and the following is one as well, I'll have a little more information for you as we get to that, Mr. Chair.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Dr. Hartwell: Great.

So, Pat and Bill, there you go.

>> Good morning.

>> Dr. Hartwell: I'm going to turn it over to you.

Joe, I know you're on mute, if you haven't figured that out.

Welcome.

>> Thank you.

>> Hello.

>> Good morning, I need to share my screen.

This is the first time I've tried this.

It says host disabled participant screen sharing.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Amanda, help him out, please.

>> Ms. Schnabel: Pat, sorry about that.

It should be enabled now.

Go ahead and try it.

>> Thank you very much.

Let me know when you can see it.

>> Dr. Hartwell: We can see it now, thank you.

>> Well, great, good morning, thank you for allowing us to come here today.

My name is Pat Rivers, I'm the deputy director for the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

With me are Joe Stangel, the assistant regional wildlife manager out of New Ulm, and Bill Schuna, area

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
wildlife supervisor out of Slayton.

I've been the deputy director for about five years, and prior to that time I was in the land acquisition program, Division of Fish and Wildlife, and I sat before the Council a number of times presenting WMA acquisition proposals.

So it's nice to be back before you.

As was mentioned by executive director Johnson, we were asked to come here after the hearings in August and September to talk a little bit about how the DNR partners with our conservation community to coordinate on proposals and projects.

Our talk today will be primarily about acquisition, but the concepts and coordination also apply to our restoration enhancement projects.

We should have plenty of time to talk after our presentation for questions.

And I'll share that we did consult with a number of our conservation partners ahead of time.

It's unfortunate that the current arrangement is such

that we can't have our partners up here with us, but I encourage you to talk with them about how coordination with the DNR works throughout the OHF process.

So our agenda for today is to share some key messages, take-home things that I hope you all take away that

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
give you confidence that the coordination is happening

frequently and often with our partners.

Share some strategic planning documents with you that you probably are familiar with that help guide the work of the DNR and also our partners.

And then talk briefly about some of the attributes of our partners that make collaboration important and also complementary.

Joe is going to talk specifically about that coordination overview and then Bill will share a couple of examples and, again, we should have plenty of time for questions.

Okay.

Can you see my third slide here?

Okay.

Coordination with the DNR and partner dates back decades long before the Outdoor Heritage Council, probably back to before the days of save our wetlands in 1951 when the WMA system was established.

The DNR is a large fish and wildlife agency, but even with our size, there's still too much work for us to do

or for any of our partners to do alone.

We have a wide variety of partners in Minnesota, from the likes of Nature Conservancy and others on the national scale to small local groups like the Nevis

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Women's Club.

All of these groups bring a passion that fuel conservation delivery in Minnesota.

The DNR's role on any given project or program can vary from holistic coordination to more of a behind-the-scenes supporting role.

For lands that become part of the WMA system, the DNR works with partners making sure statewide requirements are consistently met.

Finally, I believe the DNR and partner collaboration reflects the intent of the Council when formed, when dollars grow the conservation community.

This slide shows a sample of strategic plans that guide land and water protection and restoration strategies in Minnesota.

While some of these are DNR plans or others are partner plans, each receive significant input and review by partners and stakeholders across Minnesota.

We are blessed in Minnesota with dozens of conservation organizations that help protect and restore habitat.

Some partners are geographically focused while others concentrate on specific habitat type or a species.

They all bring their own expertise and capacity, such

as engineering or real estate expertise.

In a few minutes, Bill will share two projects where

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
complementary missions came together to benefit the WMA

system.

But, first, let me have Joe Stangel introduce himself

and give us a coordination overview.

Joe, take it away.

Joe: All right.

Thanks, Pat.

Yeah.

Mr. Chairman and Council members and staff, I'm going

to kind of try to draw a parallel between our

acquisition project and restoration enhancement project

efforts and the coordination overview that goes through

and you'll see a common theme throughout this is that

there's kind of a mish match of both formal and

informal coordination between our DNR partners -- our

DNR staff and our NGO partners, clubs and local

citizens.

So to start off, you know, whether we're talking about

an acquisition project or restoration enhancement

project, these are all grassroot-type projects that

start at the local level.

That local level, these projects might be identified by

a local area wildlife manager, a club member, a chapter

member, or maybe the NGO national chapter get contacted

by a landowner.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

But regardless, they all start at that level.

And that's where the coordination kind of begins, both the formal and the informal.

So often after those projects are identified our local staff, along with the NGO biologists vet those project, talk about their interest, and start to weigh the merits of a particular project, you know, whether it's in either of these arenas.

You know, you probably saw the kind of the graphic of the puzzle piece, and it is, it's really an interwoven landscape where we all kind of have different goals and objectives and most of the time those fit together quite well.

I would say the same when we're vetting these projects, a lot of times there's puzzle pieces, and things -- considerations go into these projects, whether we might -- there might be a strong local interest for maybe a club to lead a project.

It could be a budgetary issue, maybe grant dollars available in one LSOHC planning section versus another or grant dollars available, period.

Can be logistical.

You know, the DNR, obviously we have a geographic range where our offices are but some projects tend to be further away from an office, so that takes coordination

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

between partners and the DNR to decide who's going to lead maybe implementation of an enhancement project or restoration of an acquisition project.

There might be a previous or a historical priority, like was mentioned, we go back a long time.

There might be historical reasons for one group to lead a project over another or maybe the DNR to lead a local project.

Habitat considerations, you know, Pat also alluded to all these species plans and landscape plans, and that weighs in, you know, whether a particular project is being proposed in a forested region, it's a brush land project or maybe it's a prairie project.

So that is also a consideration we look at.

And last but not least, you know, grant, every NGO and including the DNR have different priorities laid out in their particular OHF grants and we need to make sure that, you know, we're meeting those priorities.

So that can determine in the coordination who leads a project and who doesn't.

So, as we move into, you know, after these get vetted out at the local level, that's when it moves into sort of my arena, and that's kind of the regional evaluation.

And that's done in a couple different parallels.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
I kind of liken myself as kind of an air traffic controller where I'm kind of reviewing and collating

plans together.

You know, my background, just to pull that in, I've been at the regional office for almost four years now, but previous to that, I was an area wildlife manager, and so, I have that perspective that allows me to ask the right questions and kind of review this.

So once we're at the regional level, you know, when it comes to acquisition, we do go through a scoring and prioritization process that we do.

And enhancements projects, our staff enter it into a project proposal system called WAMA and then I do some review in there and collate projects and prioritize projects that then the grant managers can pull together and put in.

And all the time this is happening, I'm conferring with our partner biologists, with our NGOs, area staff, and so on, to look at these considerations.

You know, we're not just talking about, you know, the acquisition itself, but maybe the initial development plan that goes along with it.

How that workflow is going to work, reviewing budgets and reviewing the overall plans.

So then all this, like I said, in either parallel gets

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
collated into -- and sent to St. Paul where, again,

they have a spring allocation meeting and on the restoration enhancement side, the grant managers

receive these proposals and start to collate projects for their respective proposals.

At this step, you know, we're moving into partners and the DNR after they've done all this coordination submitting proposals of their parcels, collating the projects, and this is getting more in the realm that the Council is probably more familiar with for your ongoing review.

But all along this parallel there's always ongoing formal and informal project coordination going on.

As we move to implementation of these projects, the DNR's coordinating with partners on things like, you know, seed mixes, if we're implementing a prairie seed on a new acquisition, and we're also helping out, you know, with different permitting aspects, you know.

State historic preservation office, public waters permits, and we're working with our partners to help guide [indiscernible] too.

In addition, our fisheries -- our fishery section within the Division of Fish and Wildlife is also leading projects and obviously they have a smaller but a very focused acquisition program and they're always

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT collaborating with partners, very similar to how we are, but they do it through a project team process to help align with the goals of what they're looking at in their very narrow acquisition program.

So with that, you know, again, a lot of informal and

formal acquisition going on, but it's probably best to sort of lay out a couple examples to help you visualize.

And we've kind of laid out a couple of examples that I think will help maybe answer some questions about how this goes on.

I can kick it off first, the Sanborn Lake WMA project.

And some of you may have -- may remember doing the field tour on this and have been on this site.

So you have some in the field familiarity, which helps.

The Sanborn project is unique because, as you probably saw in your field tour, there's a lot going on here.

We had an acquisition program -- or acquisition project by two different NGO partners.

It involves a designated lake.

It involves an enhancement, shallow lakes enhancement DU grant and a structure.

And it's been kind of a long project that has really beared a lot of fruit and ended up being a really good project.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

So what we have here, back in 2012 when the first acquisition was made, this was a good example of a budgetary consideration.

If I remember right, the first offer from the landowner, which was a much smaller piece along the lake that would have took in the water control

structure site for the future water control structure site, DU was interested in this as an acquisition project, but then as the landowner kind of thought it over more, they decided, well, we want to sell our entire parcel here.

And that's where the budgetary consideration came in because at the time, DU didn't have enough left in their grant to cover it so PF said, hey, this meets our grant, our grant qualifications, so there's not only coordination between DNR and partners, but coordination between partners.

PF was able to step in, buy this property, and then ensure that future foothold for that water control structure work that DU would eventually do in their enhancement group.

Now, as you can see, DU went on to include this in future grants to take in a lot of the lakeshed, wetland restoration projects and another small wetland project, all within the lakeshed of Sanborn Lake, making this

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
real successful.

So this is just one example of how partners coordinate together, DNR coordinates with partners, and how the puzzle pieces all fit together.

So with that, I'm going to drop it off here to Bill to give his example of Lake Maria.

Thank you.

Bill: Thanks, Joe.

Chairman Hartwell and Council members, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the importance of partnerships from an area office perspective.

Working with partners to develop habitat is the most rewarding part of my job.

A lot of fun to work with.

As you're aware, natural resource professionals are a passionate bunch.

Seeing the restored habitat, the home for critters, the multiple resource benefits and the smiles on the faces of outdoor enthusiasts.

But no project is successful without a good plan.

After a purchase agreement is signed, we discuss -- go into an individual development plan with the partners.

The plan is drafted and the plan identifies all the steps needed to bring a parcel up to wildlife management area standards.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
And the plan divides the tasks between partners and DNR

so none of the development steps are missed, like boundary survey, posting, historic property review that Joe mentioned, et cetera.

In the Lake Maria area, which we'll discuss here, Lake Maria is a 425-acre designated wildlife lake with a long and storied history of waterfowl hunting.

There are two important fisheries downstream of Lake Maria, Lake Sarah and Lake Shetek and the flood of 2018

put renewed emphasis of restoring water upstream of these important basins.

And there have been multiple projects over the years in this area.

The tract outlined in red on the map to the right is 590 acres and was purchased by the DNR in 2008.

The Minnesota Waterfowl Association restored a large wetland on this tract and DNR restored the prairie.

All this work was done prior to my time in Slayton.

I started here in 2013.

The tract outlined in black is 621 acres and was transferred by Pheasants Forever in 2018.

The prairie restoration started with phone discussions with Pheasants Forever staff regarding site prep, soil types, and the best seed mix for each.

Pheasants Forever purchased the seed and DNR planted

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
over two growing seasons due to crop rotations.

The wetland restoration started with an on-site meeting with Pheasants Forever staff who did the survey design and hired a private contractor to do the work.

The wetlands were restored last summer.

The tract outlined in yellow is 136 acres and was transferred by Ducks Unlimited in 2020, this year.

In June.

We met with Ducks Unlimited staff late last spring or early summer on site to discuss the wetland restorations on the tract.

We discussed the scope of the work and the site nuances, there's county tile on the east side of the tract that needs to be dealt with.

Ducks Unlimited conducted a topographic survey last summer and is currently in the design phase.

The wetlands should be restored by the fall of next year.

The prairie restoration was completed last month by DNR staff.

And as we speak, Ducks Unlimited is a contractor working on the outlet of Lake Maria to improve this shallow lake.

They're putting in pumps, weir and replacing the electrodes on the fish barrier which had failed.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
So, as I discussed, I enjoy working with partners.

And this project, this watershed is so important from a fishery and a wildlife standpoint and outdoor recreation, of course.

>> Thanks, Bill.

Pat: We just talked about a few examples of acquisition, along with the restoration of those pieces and here are just a few other examples, more on the restoration side.

The Willowsippi WMA in Aitkin County was a CPL project by Minnesota sharp-tailed society along with Pheasants Forever partnering with DNR to acquire this land.

In addition to acquiring the land, they were able to restore the land by removing a lot of the brush and trees that are not consistent with good sharp-tailed grouse habitat.

We talked a lot about Fish and Wildlife Division projects, but that coordination happens in other divisions.

The Division of Ecological and Water Resources partnering with the Minnesota Land Trust to restore 29 acres of Radio Tower Bay in the St. Louis River benefitting lake sturgeon.

As a fisheries biologist by training, there's nothing more exciting to think about restoring a species like

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
lake sturgeon and having adult fish coming back to the St. Louis River and using these spawning grounds and establishing a strong, viable population.

Finally, in the upper right corner, you can see that the local technical teams, which are partner organizations and citizens, helped provide potential project for potential native prairie bank or SNA acquisition.

So, we've come a long way in terms of partner and DNR collaboration over the decades.

But we still have a continuous improvement mindset.

We can get better and we are working to do that.

You may have heard about a Common Ground Summit, which is a series of four different sessions to investigate

things like how do we better share information to inform and develop conservation priorities.

Those summits will continue through the spring.

In the Division of Fish and Wildlife, internally, we are doing strategic planning, looking at ways to improve our own internal processes related to acquisition and management.

Finally, the Division of Lands and Minerals hosts monthly partner calls to talk specifically about projects and also to talk about how we can improve the way that DNR works with our partners.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
That concludes our formal talk.

I think we have some time for questions.

So I really appreciate the opportunity for us to be here today.

Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Are there questions?

Well, I have one, which is, how do you look at the entire state and figure out your priorities for what you should be working on and what your partners should be working on?

You know, we see all these different proposals, and it's hard for us to -- it's hard for me, everyone else I'm sure gets it, but how do you prioritize one property in the southeast versus something else in the west versus something in the north that have different

features, different costs, you know, different partners?

What's the process that DNR uses to sort this all out?

Pat: Mr. Chair, that's a good question.

Part of it is through the initial acquisition nuts and bolts, what is a partner looking to acquire and what is the intended fate of that parcel?

Is it meant to be an aquatic management area or is it a wildlife management area?

As Bill and Joe will talk about or know well, they turn

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
back a lot of acquisitions that partners bring forward

that just don't meet our conservation portfolio or intended end game, if you will.

So, really, it's about looking at the attributes of a given parcel, how is it funded, how will we look at it in the future, how will we be able to manage it going forward, and then deciding whether that is in the long-term best interests of the state.

Projects -- [indiscernible] area, region, statewide level, they are approved by the director's office, and ultimately they are signed off into a designation order by the Commissioner.

So there's a lot of vetting of these projects.

I hope that answers your question, if not, I can try again.

>> Dr. Hartwell: It helps.

But I'm still confused why this WMA over that one.

Obviously your staff are passionate people and they love the areas that they're working in.

It's one of the risks of being in this business is you fall in love with everything you see.

But what's -- you know, how do you -- I just struggle when we see requests come in from all the folks you're partnering with, how do we know that's the highest priority in that region or in the state?

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
How do we sort that out with you?

Pat: Mr. Chair, there are -- sorry -- we have a scoring system, as Bill talked about, looking at the attributes of a given parcel.

We're also working with willing sellers.

If we could go out and use eminent domain to acquire the most critical habitat, we might be talking about a different portfolio.

But the things that we are acquiring as a state are truly high quality or have the potential for high quality with restoration work.

You just heard Bill talk about Lake Maria and that the plan to take a designated waterfowl lake and turn it into not only a strong waterfowl lake but also upland habitat with watershed benefits.

So we're doing that at the area and region and statewide levels with our partners.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Oh, go ahead, Joe.

Joe: I was just going to say, I can add to that a little bit, too.

You know, we look at a lot of different attributes, and as Pat mentioned, we're offered a lot of properties.

We see properties come in through our own lands and minerals division and then through partners that we often have to just do the initial vetting.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

Our acquisition list in the southern region has

probably 110 parcels on it.

So, yes, you're right, we have to find a priority.

I can just tell you from our perspective, in the southern region, the kinds of things we look at, you know, we look at where the WMA sits, is it a good complex, or the offering, we want to make sure it's not a small, isolated piece, we might look at things like deer wintering areas, the amount of native prairie, possible restorable wetlands, adjacency to another WMA, adjacency to a designated wildlife lake.

So these are all kind of the boxes we check as we prioritize projects, and we do this not only on what we call a WAIF, or a wildlife acquisition information form, we check these boxes, but we also do it before these parcels are sent to St. Paul.

[video/audio frozen]

The wildlife managers decide which parcels are the highest priority and then kind of go from there.

So it's kind of about the projects with the most

attributes.

And you're right, it is -- you can ask our wildlife managers, it is really hard to choose sometimes.

But, yeah, we have to find priorities that way.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Jamie, you have a question.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Yeah, it's a related question.

I'm wondering how much, I haven't heard it mentioned yet, but I'm wondering if access by the public is a factor that you take into account.

And when I say "access" I don't mean, is it connected to other public land, is there a trail?

What I'm talking about is, you know, how far it from population centers, you know, is this parcel going to be something that members of the public are actually going to access.

You know, everybody pays the sales tax but not everybody has the ability to visit these places.

And, so, wondering how that plays into your selections and if you could talk a little bit about that.

Pat: Yes.

This is Pat.

Certainly location near a population center is an important factor.

So we try to weigh that along with the biological criteria as well because we appreciate lands that are in pristine shape, but if no one can get there, it

diminishes their value.

So, certainly access to the public is important.

I want to reiterate, too, that some of our partners

have geographically limited scope in terms of where

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
they can acquire the land.

So if you're talking about the Cannon River watershed,

we look to get the best properties within that area.

This goes back to Chair Hartwell's comment not too long
ago about priority setting.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Other questions?

Denny.

>> Mr. McNamara: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And I was glad to hear Representative Becker-Finn

mention the need and desire within the metro, I'm

thinking of the metro when you said about near

population centers.

You've got a real advocate in Director Rivers and his
past experience with the wildlife management area down
along the Vermillion River.

I'm drawing a blank, Pat, on the white-tail something.

But it's a fantastic area and it's got great
opportunities for expansion.

So I hope you'll continue to work on that.

It's literally 18 miles from the Capitol and a terrific
access, especially for people that have transportation
challenges.

So it's great to hear.

Thank you.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Chair Hartwell, if I could clarify,

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

I was referring to not just the metro area, but I

think, you know, whether it's Duluth or Rochester, you

know, but just making sure that our Minnesotans

actually have access to the public land that we're

talking about.

But glad to hear about that pro tip from Member

McNamara as well.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Other questions?

If not, thank you, gentlemen.

We appreciate your time this morning.

Pat: Thank you for your support.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Trust that your commute wasn't too

long.

Pat: It's not.

18 feet.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Oh, good.

Well, thank you, all, for sharing your time with us.

Pat: Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Next on our agenda is a discussion of

direct support services.

Mark, do you want to introduce this?

>> Mr. Johnson: Sure, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Members, this next item, our presenter's going to be

Katherine Sherman Hoehn, who is the grants manager,

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

grants supervisor, I think, actually, for the Minnesota

DNR.

She heads up all of the grants management personnel.

And, actually, she had forwarded a letter which was --

which is posted for you all back last week sometime.

At any rate, she'll be referring to that.

What led to the Council's request for this presentation

was really the discussions that we have every year over

direct support services, or DSS.

And as you listen to Katherine speak about the

intricacies of DSS and how the grants management deals

with them and views them, please keep in mind that

there are -- and she'll bring this up too -- but please

keep in mind that there are a few different areas of

DSS.

First of all, the agencies calculate, or they have

their own DSS calculators, or their calculations, and

those are very unique, but the nonagency partners, the

NGOs and local government units and stuff, if they

are available, if they have DSS available for them, if

they've made those agreements, then their calculations

are a bit different.

And that's kind of a juggling act that grants

management is very good at doing, and I think, as

you'll hear, they're very much on top of how they

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

manage those and supervise those and make sure things are on the up and up.

So, with that, Katherine, take it away.

>> Thank you, Mark.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members.

My name is Katherine Sherman Hoehn, I'm the manager for the OMBS grants unit which provides the pass-through appropriation administration on the DNR side.

And I am going to talk today about direct support services and how we -- how the DNR evaluates and analyzes the direct support service line that is approved by the Council on your accomplishment plans.

So we regard our role is to take what you've approved on the accomplishment plans and make sure that when the partner organizations are charging that and are billing that that they're doing so that results in allowable costs, that are direct and necessary to the program.

So my chief role is to work with the partner organizations and evaluate and analyze the methodology that they're going to use to determine what charges go on the direct support line.

We have about -- we have eight organizations for which we currently have approved their methodology, and we work with them every year, and we have several more that we're still in the back and forth stage of

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
approving it.

So they may -- they'll usually have an approved direct

support services line, but I haven't finished

evaluating their methodology.

To start off, I'd say we look at direct support services are the services that are -- it's the -- it's meant to capture the costs associated with support and administration of the program that are direct and necessary to execute the projects for which funding is appropriated.

So all of this goes back to direct and necessary.

This isn't the personnel time on the ground.

This is the personnel time doing things like accounting.

The expenses for computers and software and things, for instance, to support the work.

So for most of the organizations, as you'll see in their DSS lines on the accomplishment plan, for most of them we end up using a federal indirect rate, which is -- because they do a lot of work for the federal government, they've already developed a rate for them that is supposed to capture these costs.

And when we use indirect rate, in a sense, we are using the term "indirect" in the sense of billing and not in the sense of whether -- of how necessary those costs

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
are.

All of the costs are still directly necessary to the program, but they're billed in a central manner and

then allocated out to the different activities of the organization and there are several methodologies that they can use to make sure that when you're doing that allocation, you're only capturing work that was actually -- or you're only capturing work that you can say is actually direct to the program itself.

So, for instance, you may have an accountant or you may have an accounting director who has to sign off on all of the reimbursement requests that come to us.

They're not going to time charge to the 20 different programs that they have to sign this off on.

They're going to time charge centrally and then that's going to be allocated based on the amount of work done in each program.

So you can't actually get reimbursed, you can't actually do the work if that accounting director's not reviewing those funds.

So of the eight organizations five currently use a federal indirect rate.

Those rates are negotiated with the federal government and are then updated on a regular basis usually annually and we use the most current federally approved

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
indirect rate so that we're really -- so that we are still capturing the way the organization's actually structured in the way it works.

The organizations that don't use a federal indirect rate, there are two of them and I've worked with each

of them individually to use -- to calculate a rate for us based off usually a simplified allocation method, which means that they've looked over all of their programs and said, yes, these are services that we use equally with each program.

If you're doing a unit of work, an hour or two of work for a person, you're going to use the same amount of these central services.

And we've created the rate that way.

And then I evaluate it and approve it.

It's the same methodology that the federal government uses to approve the rates or it's one of the three acceptable methodologies.

There's also one organization that has decided instead to separate its Outdoor Heritage Fund billing and bill everything for that directly.

So they have no centrally allocated costs that they charge for that.

And, instead, they've developed service rates based on what kind of work they're doing that capture those

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
costs, bill them directly and they use a direct support services line for that.

So they've chosen, they've basically chosen to separate the way that they account for costs for this program from the way they account for costs for the rest of the organization.

So, when we're talking about the rate in all cases,
we're talking about basically a percentage.

This is the percentage of work that is done in support
services versus directly billed.

And it's applied only to the work that's actually done
by the organization.

So if you have someone, a project manager, someone out
in the field charging time, they're doing restoration
work or they're doing evaluation work on this project,
then for every hour of their time there's so much on
top of that that can be charged as the direct service
rate.

So even though the direct support services line may
have \$11,000 in it, you can only access all that
\$11,000 if you're doing the work on the personnel line.

So you can't ever charge all of your direct support
services but not have done other work on the ground.

When they developed the rate or we develop it with them
and when I approve the rate and test it, we're also

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
only creating the rate based on categories that
result -- that reflect the actual work done on the
grant.

So even when they're looking at, you know, saying how
much of this -- how much of this off the top is for
those accounting directors and computer software
support, we're linking it back to actual people hours.

So, for instance, when we calculate the amount of work

done on the grant, if they have several million dollars in land acquisition costs, that's how much it costs to buy the land, that line item is not considered in developing the rate or in charging the rate.

We call those distorting items because if you just looked at it as a, you know, they did \$7 million worth of work, and \$5 million of that is in buying that land, that distorts the view of how much work was done, how much effort was actually put in by people on the ground.

So it's already a very narrow calculation that's assigned to reflect only people hours and work that is directly related to people hours.

You have to do and so much of this work to get so and so much of the cost.

Oftentimes the federal government allows a somewhat broader application, but for our purposes, we've

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
narrowed it down to those few line items.

So essentially the rate becomes a reflection of the way each organization's chosen to organize its shared services.

You're going to have a higher rate if you bill more to shared services, if you have more people share accountants rather than having accountants for each divisions or accountants for each program, for instance.

And as long as the federal government or ourselves are finding that that's a true reflection of the work that's actually done, the variations between a higher and a lower rate for billing are less important than the fact that we can track that the work is really direct and necessary.

What that also means is that when you're seeing variation between, for instance, direct support services rate on something that has a personnel-level line, like restoration versus something like land acquisition where the bulk of the money is in the land and there's less personnel time on it, you should naturally see a variation in the direct support services rate simply because you're seeing fewer direct person hours being charged as a percentage of that grant.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

And, again, regardless of the method used on the rate, all of the organizations apply it similarly.

It's only on work done.

All of it is direct and necessary.

Once you have an approved rate, we do ask for it to be updated annually and one of the things that we require for approval is to know how the organizations are tracking to make sure their indirect costs stays accurate.

Federally negotiated indirect rate, the feds are asking that question and making sure that they've seen and

evaluated any differences.

If you've approved it with me, I check and ask what the differences are if there are any and how it's adjusted.

And there are different methods by which different organizations will do that.

If there are questions later, I can go further into detail, but they are already getting very technical and that gets even more technical.

Regardless of what measure is used, we never approve costs above the indirect line that you have approved.

So when the Council approved \$11,000 in direct support services, then even if more work is being done for which direct support services can be charged, we obviously can't approve costs above that \$11,000 and

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
you're out.

So any direct service support related cost that organizations would have them above them, and most of them do, I think many of them track that as match that they're bringing into the project.

Some I know don't track it as match, but they still -- the direct support services line is approved on the accomplishment plan is still usually quite a bit less than the true direct support services costs that they could be charging based on their methodology.

I believe that completes the information that was in the letter.

And I would stand for questions if anyone has any.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Are there questions?

I would just ask, I've been involved in negotiating federal rate, which is an incredibly complex and difficult thing to do.

And, you know, my experience is it's a matter of negotiating to get the greatest amount you can because you're usually doing that for federal money.

And let's just say there's wiggle room.

And I don't trust it, frankly, having gone through the process.

But you're defaulting to a federal rate.

What's the check on that?

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

Just because the feds like it why should we like it?

Katherine: So we're defaulting to a federal rate largely based on the accomplishment plans because that's the methodology that those partners are describing using in the accomplishment plans.

And, so, we take that as, you know, that's the method that was used on the budget line, that's the approved method we're going to use.

And I don't think that there's a larger philosophical reason for it than the philosophical reason that our job is to determine what has been approved in the accomplishment plan and how to implement that for reimbursement.

It has been a long time since I have been involved in

negotiating for a federally approved indirect rate.

And, so, I -- I guess I would hesitate to characterize whether I find it to be stricter or less strict than what we would do otherwise.

I would say that I would probably have more concerns if the -- about the direct and necessary if the direct support services lines were capturing the entirety of the federal indirect rate rather than in most cases a much lesser amount.

The amount of give that I've seen in a federal indirect rate is not that significant.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

But, you know, we really do defer to the Council on the decision about what they want to approve on the accomplishment plans and what you are comfortable with using for those.

And those -- the accomplishment plans are the mechanisms that we use to determine your intent.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Mark.

You're on mute, Mark.

>> Mr. Johnson: Sorry.

Having trouble unmuting.

Mr. Chair, thank you.

Katherine, so, what you're saying is that regardless of the federal -- of their federal rate, if the accomplishment plan says that we're only going to charge half of our federal rate and we're going to put

the other half in as whatever, or we're only going to charge 22%, you're keeping an eye on that split, too, and those -- and that those numbers are correct?

Katherine: So we check that the numbers are correct on the top line, but then we're keeping an eye on the total dollar value.

The \$11,000.

If there ever was a point in which -- at which their federal indirect rate changed significantly enough that that calculation would change significantly, yeah, we

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT would look at that too.

So if someone had calculated their accomplishment plan based on an indirect rate of 20% and then they dropped to a federal indirect rate of 10%, we would certainly be taking a look to make sure that we're still in line with the intent of the accomplishment plan.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Denny.

>> Mr. McNamara: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've got a question, Mr. Chair, about your proposal and it relates to DSS and I thought while the DNR was here to answer my question, yours and Vice Chair Schara's proposal is to increase funding for a number of projects, including DNR projects, but it said without an increase in DSS, and just a clarification question.

Is that in the rate of the DSS or are they expected to do the additional work with no DSS charge?

>> Dr. Hartwell: Our proposal is that 100% of the increase go directly to project work, not to administrative and DSS costs.

>> Mr. McNamara: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And my question then is, in the DNR's budget, almost all of it has no general fund.

It all comes from specific pots of money and when they're working on an outdoor heritage project, this

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT isn't going to sound real good, but I'll use the word

"take" instead of "steal," they would have to take that money from somewhere elsewhere it's not supposed to be applied to in order to not charge it to what they're actually doing.

I think we're putting specifically the DNR, I understand where you might try and tell an NGO they're supposed to do something for free, but those of us that came from, for lack of words that may offend people, from the real world, nothing's for free, including at the DNR, and, Mr. Chair, I'm not sure I understand how you expect the DNR to work on additional projects and where are they supposed to charge that overhead to because they can't charge it to somewhere else that they're told not to do.

Sorry for the pointed question, but I'd like to hear DNR say how they're going to buy more land or do more restoration with no overhead.

Katherine: Mr. Chair and Member McNamara,
unfortunately I'm the wrong person at the DNR to
comment on that.

We actually keep a pretty bright line between the
people who do the calculations for the DNR
appropriations and myself since I need to be evaluating
the pass-through grant recipients and we don't want to

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
create any conflict of interest between the two of
them.

So I'm not that familiar with how DNR appropriations
calculate our direct and necessary rate.

I think Kelly Wilder may be able to answer that.

>> Mr. McNamara: Okay, well, Mr. Chair, if I could,
just when we have that discussion that we're going to
have later, if DNR could have somebody in here, and I
would recommend it be the head number cruncher so they
come in and tell you how -- member Holsten would tell
you, we can't do it.

You can't tell DNR to do something with no overhead
because now we're telling public employees to cheat on
their time card.

Sorry to be so blunt.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Okay.

We can have the discussion.

Other questions for Katherine?

If not, thank you very much.

Katherine: Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Next on our agenda is a request for extension on the Anoka sand plain habitat 2016 phase IV project.

And Wiley Buck for Great River Greening is going to explain this.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Staff, do you want to say anything in advance?

>> Ms. Smith: I'll just say that we've got two requests.

They're both for appropriations that were Minnesota laws of '16.

Council members may remember that last year we gave a COVID-19 extension of time for projects and joust that you know, the restoration enhancement work in Minnesota laws of '16 were unaffected by that extension of time.

So they're coming before us now to ask for a little bit of extra time to get their work done.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Go ahead, Wiley.

Wiley: All right, Mr. Chair, members, thank you for your time today.

As Sandy alluded to, yes, I guess the simple -- not I guess -- the simple answer is that this extension request is COVID related.

We have a project at Crane Meadows national wildlife refuge that requires a lot of in-kind prescribed burning by them before we come in and do interseeding with the heritage funds.

And the fish and wildlife service shut down their burn crew last spring.

So we do not know the status of their burn crew this year, but anybody who deals with prescribed fire knows

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
it's a little risky to count on one good year to get all your burns in.

So I'm forecasting that we can very well have a decent amount of money left after this spring if crane meadows wildlife refuge can't get their prescribed burns in.

>> Dr. Hartwell: So you're requesting?

Wiley: We're requesting requesting a one-year extension to June 30th, 2022, that would give us two spring seasons to get these burns in and the seed down.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Are there questions?

If you -- let me ask you, if you get a burn done in 2022 because 2021 is a really wet year, can you get the seed down fast enough or do you need to extend beyond that to the fall to put the seed down effectively?

Wiley: There's a potential for that.

I think what I might do in that case is shift it to other projects and put more Crane money into a different phase.

But certainly fall, fall of 2022 would be a nice option as well.

>> Dr. Hartwell: So why did you ask for June 30th instead of October 30th?

I don't want you to do what you don't want to do.

I'm just trying to make sure the project gets done.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

Wiley: Sure, I appreciate that.

Well, the original plan was to give it two spring burn seasons in case one was a bad burn season and raise our chances to getting at least one good spring burn season in.

And I guess I'm comfortable with that.

I could go for more, but they don't do a heck of a lot of fall burns either.

Most of their burns happen in the spring.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Okay.

Members, is there a motion?

>> Mr. McNamara: McNamara moves to approve.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Is there discussion?

Amanda, will you do a roll call vote, please.

>> We'll be starting with number 10 on our list today, Saxhaug.

Oh, Tom, you're muted, I believe.

[no response heard]

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Yes.

>> Saxhaug votes aye.

Swenson.

>> Ms. Swenson: Yes.

>> Swenson votes aye.

Senator Tomassoni.

>> Sen Tomassoni: Yes.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Tomassoni votes aye.

Hartwell.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yes.

>> Hartwell votes aye.

Schara is absent.

Representative Becker-Finn.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Aye.

>> Becker-Finn votes aye.

Eggerling.

>> Ms. Eggerling: Aye.

>> Eggerling votes aye.

Representative Fabian.

>> Rep Fabian: Aye.

>> Fabian votes aye.

Holsten.

>> Mr. Holsten: Aye.

>> Holsten votes aye.

Senator Lang.

>> Sen Lang: Aye.

>> Lang votes aye.

McNamara.

>> Mr. McNamara: Aye.

>> McNamara votes aye.

Peters.

>> Ms. Peters: Yes.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Peters votes aye.

11 ayes, one absent.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right, motion carries, thank you very much.

Wiley, good luck in getting the burns done on time.

Wiley: Thank you, chair.

Thank you, members.

Appreciate it.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Sandy, do you want to introduce item number 9?

>> Ms. Smith: This is another legislative extension of time from Minnesota laws of 2016.

And, again, they were not affected by the COVID extension that was put in last year's bill.

And we've got two project managers here to explain.

Just kudos to them, they were able to get -- their bids came in lower so they were able to get some more work done so we did approve an amendment a while back to let them extend their work down into the flood plain so they're asking for an extension of time to finish up that work.

So the Council will be getting a lot more acres on the ground done because of this.

You can ask whatever other questions you have of the project managers.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

April and Nicholas, go ahead.

April: Well, hi, thank you for having me.

We're just here, like Sandy said, I had some background noise so I couldn't quite hear everything that she said.

So if I repeat myself, I'm sorry.

We're here to ask for an extension for a project that we call the Poissant Bridge removal.

And I believe you got some of the background information in your packet.

It would be a one-year extension, extended past June 30th.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Are there questions?

Is there a motion?

>> Mr. Saxhaug: So moved.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Any discussion?

Sandy -- not Sandy, Amanda, will you call the roll?

>> Amanda: Beginning with number 11, Swenson.

>> Ms. Swenson: Yes.

>> Amanda: Swenson votes aye.

Hartwell.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Aye.

>> Amanda: Hartwell votes aye.

I apologize, we missed Senator Tomassoni.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Sen Tomassoni: Yes.

>> Amanda: Tomassoni votes aye.

Schara is absent.

Representative Becker-Finn.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Aye.

>> Amanda: Becker-Finn votes aye.

Eggerling.

>> Ms. Eggerling: Aye.

>> Amanda: Eggerling votes aye.

Representative Fabian.

>> Rep Fabian: Aye.

>> Amanda: Fabian votes aye.

Holsten.

>> Mr. Holsten: Aye.

>> Amanda: Holsten votes aye.

Senator Lang.

>> Sen Lang: Aye.

>> Amanda: Lang votes aye.

McNamara.

>> Mr. McNamara: Aye.

>> Amanda: McNamara votes aye.

Peters.

>> Ms. Peters: Yes.

>> Amanda: Peters votes aye.

Saxhaug.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Yes.

>> Amanda: Saxhaug votes aye.

11 ayes, one absent.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Ron is on the line.

So you might want to ask him if he wants to vote.

>> Amanda: Oh, I do apologize, Ron.

I did not notice.

Schara.

>> Mr. Schara: What are we voting on?

I just joined.

>> Dr. Hartwell: The extension of the Sand Hill River fish passage restoration and habitat enhancement for one year.

>> Mr. Schara: Of course aye.

>> Amanda: Schara votes aye.

12 ayes, 0 nays.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Thank you.

>> Amanda: Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: April, good luck.

April: Thank you very much.

Have a good day.

>> Mr. Johnson: Mr. Chair?

Before we lose April, April, are you still there?

April: I sure am.

>> Mr. Johnson: All right.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

Could you please just give us -- I've heard some really

good reports about, you know, northern pike,

large-mouth bass moving upstream in probably, geez, at

least 15 to 20 miles upstream on the Sand Hill, also

heard some reports of catfish but not as much and some

walleyes but not as much.

Can you give us a little more just insight on what you're hearing over there from how the fish passage is working?

April: I can give you a personal experience.

We live like a mile east of Fertile.

And we went about five miles upstream where there's never been fish before and we took my son fishing just right off of the highway.

And he would drop his line in and he was catching them left and right and he couldn't stop, he was so excited.

And it was so fun.

And they were northerns.

And that has never happened before that I have ever heard of before.

I know that the DNR has been sampling and been finding many different species and maybe Nicholas would be a better person to speak to that, if he's still on.

I don't know if he is still on or if he took off.

>> Dr. Hartwell: I do see him.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

April: Okay.

So he'd probably be a better person to talk about exactly the specifics, as far as what the DNR's been sampling so I'll maybe defer to him.

But personally I think it's been a great experience.

It's been great for our small communities and great for outdoor enthusiasts here who have never had opportunities like that in our area.

So Nick, what have they been sampling?

Nick: Hey, everybody.

My name's Nick, just kind of by way of introduction.

I'm the new Red River fisheries specialist.

Some of you may have interacted with Jamieson Wendell,
my predecessor.

On the Sand Hill, it's been really interesting.

We've had quite a few new species move upstream.

And these are all kind of your sport fish that would
undertake movements within the river system so that
would be walleye, northern pike, bass, channel cats and
maybe some of the reason we haven't seen the channel
cats is simply because we sampled it with
electrofishing, and when we electrofish, it's really
hard to sample those organisms that live more on the
bottom of the river.

But we've seen quite a suite of species move upstream

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
and, I, unfortunately, don't have the data in front of

me right now but it's been very successful on the Sand
Hill.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

Well, thank you.

We're glad to hear of the success.

What it's all about, after all.

Nick: Yeah, thank you guys.

April: Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Any other questions for April or Nicholas?

All right.

Thank you.

Next is a November forecast review.

Mark, do you want to lead this off?

>> Mr. Johnson: Sure, I can do, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much.

Members, we have with us Sean Fahnhorst, who is the executive budget officer with MMB, he'll be giving us a presentation.

As you know, the November forecast was released last week and due to -- well, confidentiality constraints is one big thing with it, when those figures are actually allowed to be released to the public, kind of delays how soon we can get them as well as how soon they can

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
be sent out.

But in your outline, this chart was sent and was posted for your -- I also emailed it to you for your reference.

So we'll do that first and then after that we can do any questions you have for Sean with regards to the forecast results and then also we'll walk into the chair's proposal and actually go right into item number 11, which is action on the bill language or other considerations.

So these 10 and 11 will both kind of morph one into the

other.

So, Sean, if you would take it from here, please.

Sean: Okay, great, well, good morning, my name is Sean

Fahnhorst, I'm an executive budget officer with

Minnesota Management and Budget.

I'm here to provide an update on the Outdoor Heritage

Fund.

Overall the MMB forecast the fund will have about

\$127.2 million available to appropriate in fiscal year

2020 and that's assuming a 10% end-of-year reserve

balance.

On the handout I provided, the table on the right

includes the most recent MMB estimates for

carryforwards, sales tax receipts, and investment

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
income.

I've also included 5% and a 7% reserve scenario for

your reference.

The \$18.3 million increase in the budgetary balance

compared to end of session is caused by a combination

of two things.

Expectations for higher sales tax revenues and money

returned from previous appropriations.

This November forecast revises fiscal years 2020, 2021,

and 2022, which is why the estimates can be quite

volatile.

For example, since May, MMB's forecast for sales tax

revenue in 2022 has increased from about \$117.7 million to about \$120.2 million.

The result is that we now forecast Outdoor Heritage Fund will have about \$139.1 million in total resources in 2022 before setting aside a reserve.

So, if anyone has any questions, feel free to let me know and I will do my best to talk you through it.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Questions?

Mark.

>> Mr. Johnson: Yeah.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Sean, you and I had discussed about in the unobligated carry-forward there's quite a dramatic increase in that

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
and we discussed -- you had mentioned that part of that

is previous sales tax, in other words, the sales taxes that are being collected currently, are higher than had been projected previously.

So there's extra dollars that have come in that way or that are coming in.

Could you explain that a little bit?

Or address that?

Sean: Sure.

So when our economic analysts, back in May, when they attempted to project the sales tax receipts for the next few years, they were also projecting for the previous few months.

So it generally takes a while for all the money to kind

of come into the state treasury and be counted and accounted for.

And, so, they're making estimates probably back to, like, receipts from last February all the way up until now.

And, so, essentially the way the MMB tables show sales tax receipts is that that carry-forward number in the table is actually -- includes the change in our sales tax estimates from sort of the end of fiscal year 2020, which just finished, and then all the way through 2021 and that's why that number is often quite different

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
between each release of the fund balance.

>> Mr. Johnson: Mr. Chair, if I could follow that up with one more question.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Absolutely.

>> Mr. Johnson: Sean, is another -- to what degree are you seeing -- I'm wondering if maybe -- not the fly in the ointment but the reason for some of this additional -- these additional funds also might be because of the receipt, you're now capturing sales tax receipts from online purchases at a higher degree than maybe we did in past years, could that be part of it too?

Sean: I think that's part of it.

I think when I listened to in to the presentation by our economic analysts last Monday, when they were

talking about the fund -- the general fund balance, but it applies to this too because it's so heavy on sales tax, they talked about sort of changing consumer behaviors, so with a lot more people at home, maybe less people are going out for entertainment at restaurants or movies, but maybe people are spending more on activities at home or on other purchases and that can include online and sort of people adapting.

And I think there was a lot of uncertainty about that last May and we've seen now a few months of sort of how

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
the pandemic has changed spending behavior, and that's really offered a lot of insights on how sales tax would be affected.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Questions?

I'm seeing no questions.

Thank you for helping us understand why we have more than we ever expected.

Sean: Thanks for having me.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Quite a surprise in these times.

Sean: Yeah.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

So next is approval of the 2021 bill language.

Mark, do you want to sort of tee this up?

>> Mr. Johnson: Sure.

And, Mr. Chair, members, before we really get into -- of course the bill is put together with respect to the appropriation recommendations of the Council.

As was emailed to you and also posted, there's a spreadsheet, two-page spreadsheet, I believe it is, that has -- it's the proposal of the chair and the vice chair.

And that actually goes back, it shows the different appropriations -- or different projects that have previously been recommended for appropriation by the Council as of the -- I think it was the October meeting

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT and then verified at the November meeting.

The original request is columned there and then the council recommendation follows that.

And that's the recommendation from 10/1 and then also the roving crews I think were finalized after that as well.

And the percent amount of the original request is exhibited there.

And then there's the chair and vice chair in their discussions of the original appropriation difference compared to what the moneys available now are, put together the chair's proposal.

The difference, of course, we had \$109.875 million --

[video/audio frozen]

The previous appropriation plus the operations budget and also one more thing, a high priority pretransaction account, 109.875 million --

>> Dr. Hartwell: Mark, we lost a little bit of what you

were saying.

It got completely garbled.

>> Mr. Johnson: Oh, I'm sorry.

>> Dr. Hartwell: If you could back up.

>> Mr. Johnson: I'll try to slow down, too, just in case -- I'll watch in case I get lost here.

[video/audio frozen]

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

I'm at the State Office Building.

So it's the State Internet system, I guess, or something going on here.

It's been slow lately, I know.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Maybe you can turn off your video.

John so our original appropriation from --

There, maybe that will help.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yeah.

>> Mr. Johnson: The original appropriation of the Council was 109.875 million.

And that includes the operations budget for this first fiscal year as well as the website costs, and then there's another thing at the bottom of the spreadsheet called a high priority pretransaction account.

That's an account that the Council has seen fit to approve twice in the past, and it's for those extraordinary times when DNR might be -- when the Council may have to call on DNR to do an additional appraisal or review of an appraisal for land that might be acquired.

It has not been necessary in the past for use, but the necessity for having it in the language is that because of separations of arms of government here, if the Council is going to ask the DNR, have that ability to seek those -- ability of the DNR in the future as we

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
had thought may be necessary in the past, we have to

have those funds available in a pretransactions account.

We evidently cannot just take those funds out of our operations [video/audio frozen] budget.

So that's the reason for this account.

It's \$25,000.

In the past it's been 50.

Thought that 50 was too much.

Let's look at 25.

So that has been added to the spreadsheet here.

And it is in the language at the bottom.

And then, Mr. Chair, unless there's questions for me, may want to move right into the Chair's proposal and then we can get into other [video/audio frozen] things if you'd like.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Okay.

Are there questions for Mark?

All right.

So, let me just recap sort of what happened last week.

We saw -- probably everyone saw the revenue forecast at

the beginning of the week.

And we initially thought there was about \$9 million

that was going to come to us as extra revenue.

By Wednesday that had been cut in half because it was

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
supposed to be for just one year instead of two.

And Friday afternoon we got the news that there was a

little over \$17 million, both because the existing

collection of sales tax had gone up and the projected

sales tax receipts in next year were forecast higher

than they had been in May.

And Ron and I had talked midweek and sort of said

for -- [video/audio frozen]

We think we can come up with -- that our thoughts were

not sort of positioned on Friday --

>> Mr. Chair?

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yes.

>> Mr. Johnson: You had the same problem with me.

You were breaking up.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Lovely.

We'll try that.

Where did I lose everyone?

>> Mr. Johnson: Pretty much at the beginning.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Great!

All right.

I'll start over.

Early in the week, last week, we were presented with a

situation where we thought there was going to be about

\$9 million added to our available funds.

By midweek that had been pared back to half of that

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

because it was thought that that was a two-year target,

not a one-year target.

Friday afternoon we got the -- better than \$17 million

news because both the revenues had been increasing

during this year, giving us a surplus this year and the

projections for next year were also higher than they

had been in May.

So Ron and I spent numerous phone calls, along with

staff, to talk about how we think this through.

And we really came to three options.

One was to do nothing and just let it ride forward and

we didn't think based on conversations that the Council

has had in the past leaving money and not be utilized

for another year was probably something the Council

would be excited about.

So we've not recommended that.

The thing we wanted to avoid was sort of the free for

all of whoever gets their hand raised first gets their

pet project funded, which especially in a Zoom

environment is likely to be a challenge.

So we came up with two thoughts.

Having heard feedback that there's some discomfort with

everyone allocating a certain -- or recommending a

certain portion of the funds, we used that as a backup

and, instead, our recommendation to you is that we

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

allocate a small amount to CPL to sort of give us a

figure that -- I'm sorry -- that's the second part 2.

Our recommendation is that everyone gets 16.6%

additional funds except for the roving crews and the

administrative budget, which have been fully funded.

And the backup would be 500 some thousand to CPL and

the balance a million four would be recommended by each

member for up to three projects.

And we do what we did last year.

So Ron and I are in complete agreement on this.

We think just the 16.6% increase makes more sense.

And we open it up to your comments and questions.

Ron, do you want to say anything before we get started?

>> Mr. Schara: No.

I think you were a little confusing there.

The 16%, that would eliminate each Council member

picking out three of their favorites, right?

>> Dr. Hartwell: That's right.

>> Mr. Schara: Yeah.

It sounded like we still would do that as well.

>> Dr. Hartwell: No, I'm sorry.

>> Mr. Schara: Yeah.

>> Dr. Hartwell: And the other thing, and, Denny, to

address your concern, our other thought was, put this

money directly into projects and not fund

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

administrative and DSS.

And our rationale, which may be bad, but our rationale was, we saw a lot of the accomplishment plans where people had not gotten everything they asked for.

The percentage that went into the administrative budget in a reduced allocation from the request seemed to increase pretty consistently.

And our thought was with an extra 16%, let's have everyone put that directly into the projects instead of administrative budgets, either for contracts to do restoration enhancement or outright acquisition dollars, which don't get DSS anyhow.

So that was our rationale.

You may not like it.

And that's fine.

But we thought it was a way to get more money into the ground doing projects with that extra 16%.

So...

We open it up to discussion and comments and thoughts.

Dan.

>> Rep Fabian: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Appreciate your efforts on this.

I do have some of the same concerns that Member McNamara has with regards to the administrative costs and so forth.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
And I am concerned that the agency and maybe Member

Holsten can talk to this, if there are expenses

involved in the additional funds that they're going to get, I'm concerned that it may be possible for the agencies to, say, dip into the game and fish fund or something like that to cover those expenses, I think and that that would be a bad thing, obviously.

I also -- and, again, I applaud your desire to want to keep down administrative costs.

I think that's terrific.

I really do.

But I think in a blanket statement like this, there certainly are some projects in here that maybe those costs can be and will be absorbed with the additional funding that they're getting.

But in other cases, it may not be possible, I'll say.

So then what happens in those cases where the agency or the NGOs or whatever say, you know, we can't do this, are they going to then be required to turn the money back?

What's the plan if it doesn't work that way?

That's I guess what I'm asking.

>> Dr. Hartwell: I can speak from what we talked about, which is, you know, we're in a situation where we have to make a decision pretty quickly to get our language

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
to the reviser's office, to get them to put the bill

together, to meet our January 15th deadline.

They actually would like any changes done by the end of

this week.

That's their schedule.

And our thought was to go out to all of the project managers and say, do you want the 16% or not?

And if they don't, we just roll it forward.

But if you don't like that, we can certainly just do 16% and let them submit revised accomplishment plans, which will have some increases from time to time in the administrative and DSS.

This was just our thought for how to get more money into the ground.

And Mark, you know, from the DNR's perspective, you might have something to add as to whether or not we are creating a nightmare or it makes any sense at all because we don't want to create a nightmare.

We're just looking for money in the ground.

And, Jamie, I'll get to you next, if that's all right.

>> Mr. Holsten: Mr. Chair, members, you know, I don't want to speak out of turn for the DNR.

It's been a little while since I've been there.

So I don't know all of the mechanisms that they have available or still have available to them.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
But those time sheets would be billed to something.

And, so, if it's in the area of professional services, my guess is they have what's called a professional services account.

I think they could probably tap into that.

The question is what dollars do they have available and what would be appropriate funds?

More than likely most of this would come from the game and fish fund.

One category or subcategory of the game and fish fund, but more than likely it would be coming out of the game and fish fund.

To the specifics of, you know, looking at some of the projects, stream habitat restoration, a lot of that's just physical labor.

Where's that going to come from?

And I don't know if they could tap into the professional services account for physical labor.

I don't know if they could do that.

[Overlapping conversation]

>> Dr. Hartwell: Our idea was not a good idea.

We will take -- I will take it for us off the table.

As part of our recommendation.

Thank you for the input.

We couldn't do this without creating some dissent

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT somewhere.

So thank you for correcting us.

Jamie, go ahead.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

You know, I had asked this question to you yesterday, and my concern here is the lack of notice to the

public, and I understand there are deadlines and I truly do appreciate the staff work and the work put in over the weekend.

But if you look at our, you know, the statute that governs this Council, you know, we're required to have a process that ensures that citizens and potential recipients are included throughout the process, including the development and finalization of the Council's recommendations.

And, you know, I know the email we got from Amanda last night, I know there were some software issues as well, but to have sort of this new proposal, you know, over \$16 million being spent not in any way available to the public until 9:00 p.m. the night before the meeting, I think is, you know, not what we think of when we think of having the public truly involved with what we're doing here.

I was going to suggest, too, you know, if we took some time for there to be notice, you know, I'm sure the DNR

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
could speak to your questions, you know, if we had questions about that.

And, yeah, that's just my only concern, I mean, I know that it's coming from a good place of wanting to make sure we're moving as quickly as we can with what the reviser's office needs.

However, we typically do have at least one amendment to the bill anyway, as there are updates and things

change.

So, you know, it's not like the reviser's office can't draft the rest of it and you change the dollar amounts later on.

So I just wanted to voice my concern about that.

Like I said, I really appreciate the work that went in to bringing this proposal forward.

I just want to make sure that the public is fully engaged, you know, not just the stakeholder groups but, you know, everybody that's paying the sales tax here.

So just wanted to voice that.

I don't know if that means, you know, I'm not saying we wait and make this decision two months from now, but at least giving folks a couple of days to digest and give Council feedback if they want to.

So those are my comments.

You know, I'm not -- the heart of what you're proposing

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
I think is good.

It's just the notice piece is lacking, I think.

>> Dr. Hartwell: You know, I'm not trying to avoid -- neither Ron or I or the staff, the ability for the public to comment.

But the recommendations that we made on October 1st have been out there and we have not had one public comment or desire for public comment either at our November meeting or today.

We've had no one sign up to make any comments about the projects.

And, so, I'm not sure that giving the public extra time to talk about an extra 16% given there's been absolutely no comments about our proposals at all will yield a different result.

And if we were to back things up, we have to give notice of another meeting which is going to put us into a really tough place with the reviser's office.

So if we had had a lot of debate from the public about what we were doing, or even comments, I would be more inclined to look for how we wait.

But in that we've had nothing, it doesn't seem like the public is going to weigh in strongly on everybody getting an extra 16% to do more work.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

And, I mean, maybe that speaks to a larger problem of the public not being engaged with the work that we're doing.

And, you know, I'm not -- you know, like I said, it's not to say that our staff are not working hard and not doing good work.

I certainly do appreciate the dedication of the folks we have on staff.

But I just have concerns with millions of dollars being spent and very little, you know, feedback and engagement.

You know, at the end of the day, I'm just -- you know, I'm looking at the statute, I want to make sure that nobody questions this because we didn't do it properly too, you know, my brain's trying to avoid future problems as well.

That's how my legal brain works, looking at this.

So, you know, it's -- obviously it's the will of the Council but I at least did want to bring that up because I think it is important and I think especially now, you know, as we're looking at budgets and trying to figure out how we're going to pay for things, just making sure we have that transparency and ability for the public to weigh in.

If they're not paying attention to what we're doing,

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
then I think that's a problem too.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Dave, you have a comment?

Let Dave go and then I'll get you, Tom.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Okay.

>> Sen Tomassoni: Well, thanks, Mr. Chairman.

As I think about your proposal, it's probably really close to being what we should do.

Because if we had had this 16% amount of money on the day that we actually did our project proposal, it would have been included in the funding that we recommended for each one of the projects.

And, so, maybe what we just do is just increase each

project by the 16% that we have there and we take out the part that funding cannot be used by recipients for administrative or DSS expense and must go to increase project outcomes.

And just let the proposers use the money as they need to use it.

And become part of the general amount of money that we give to each project.

And I think that's a possibility.

I don't know what everybody thinks about that.

But going back to the fact that when we did allocate the money, we allocated it in such a way that we used all the money.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

This would have been part of all the money if we had known about it.

And it would already be part of the projects' proposals all the way through the project.

So I think if we just increase all the projects by the amount of money that we have, in an equal percentage, that we might have something there.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

Tom, you're next.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Yeah, I would concur with Senator Tomassoni, and I would move, as he stated, that we do 16% across the board.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

Jamie.

>> Ms. Swenson: I was wondering if we could get a legal interpretation to Representative Becker-Finn's point in regards to the public notice requirements and if the Council recommendation is within that stipulation.

Ben: Is that a question for staff, no nonpartisan staff, or who's that a question for?

>> Dr. Hartwell: You can handle it.

We'd love to have you handle it.

Ben: Well, I mean, as far as I know, Mr. Chair, the public notice requirements apply to when you're going to have a meeting, right?

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
I don't think there's anything in 97A.056 that says

that prior to rolling out or approving recommendations there's a separate public notice requirement.

And I would want Mrs. Taylor to weigh in on that as well.

But I'm not aware of any separate requirements.

So assuming you met the open meeting requirements for this meeting, I think you're probably okay from that standpoint.

But that's having not researched it, that's sort of just an off-the-cuff opinion.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Janelle, do you have a thought?

Janelle: I don't really have anything else to add.

I would agree with Mr. Stanley.

I can take a quick look at it.

I haven't looked at the statute.

There may be something extra but not necessarily with the meeting notice.

Yeah, I would concur.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Jamie.

>> Ms. Swenson: Nothing further, thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: The other Jamie.

I'm sorry.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: And just to clarify, I wasn't saying -- I wasn't implying that we were under -- that

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
there would be any issues under the open meeting or public notice of the meeting.

It's more of, you know, sometimes we do things because it's the right thing to do, not because we're absolutely required to do it.

And, so, that's more of what I was suggesting and, you know, if somebody were to question whether the public citizens, potential recipients, were included in the finalization of these recommendations, it's more of making sure we're doing things in a good way and not just the bare minimum of what legally we're absolutely required to do.

So --

>> Dr. Hartwell: Mark.

>> Mr. Johnson: Yeah, Mr. Chair, I'll get rid of my video here so hopefully my audio will be fine.

Thank you.

Just as a little more background information for this, I do think Representative Becker-Finn's question is well taken.

And toward that regard, I went ahead and did some reviewing of statute, of course, I'm not an attorney, but I also came up with pretty much the same consideration that Ben and Janelle had mentioned.

I think we're in compliance with the public meeting

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT regulations and so on.

But then I further went back and started thinking about, you know, how do we involve the public.

And, of course, the major portion of the public involvement is the steps that we go through for these last six months, basically.

And all of the accomplishment plans, the proposals, the vetting of those proposals is done very much in the public eye, and I think that can be a good, you know, consoling factor for us that we are definitely -- the Council definitely attempts to keep everything in the public eye and everything with an open lens here for everybody to see.

We did have one member who -- one public member who came to us previously and did testimony asking that the Council provide more for trunk stream easements.

And, of course, one thing you don't hear is the calls that staff gets from project members or members of

NGOs, you know, thanking the Council for their work and just saying they're glad to see the Council's consideration of things.

I think just from my own perspective, the lack of public -- the lack of more public input from a written standpoint coming before the Council may not be due to the public not being aware so much as also -- or it

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT could be just as much due to the public being accepting of the -- accepting and approving of the procedures that are already going on.

Those are just my thoughts.

Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Great.

Thanks for the background.

Kristin.

>> Ms. Eggerling: I wanted to go back to Member Saxhaug's motion to do the 16% and just to clarify, wouldn't it be 16.63%?

Isn't that what your proposal was?

>> Dr. Hartwell: Our proposal was 16.663.

Tom, did you make a formal motion or did you just have a comment?

I must have missed the motion if you made that.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: It was a motion, and I would take a friendly amendment that I said 16, but 16.63 would be the proper motion.

[video/audio frozen]

>> Dr. Hartwell: 16.63 I think is the right number.

16.663.

And then I heard you say without the DSS and

administrative not being part of that.

So just the motion would be to directly increase

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
funding for each project recommended to receive funding

at its 10/1/20 accept roving crew and administrative

items that were fully funded by 16.663% over original
recommendation.

That's your motion, correct?

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Yes, correct, Mr. Chair.

>> Dr. Hartwell: And I would just point out, just full
disclosure, it overspends us by \$4,000, if we do that.

Which would mean that we would be just a scant bit
under our 10%, but I think we can afford that.

The other thing, and I didn't put this in our
recommendation, but it should be added that we would
allow staff to round to the nearest thousand because
that's been our practice anyhow.

Mark.

>> Mr. Johnson: Yeah, Mr. Chair.

By my calculations, it should be actually 16.63 and not
16.663.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Good.

And, Tom, that's acceptable to you?

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Right.

I think that's what I said.

And then I had to correct --

>> Dr. Hartwell: I read it wrong and wrote it wrong.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Yeah.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Dr. Hartwell: Dan --

>> Mr. Saxhaug: I think we got it.

>> Dr. Hartwell: -- a question?

>> Rep Fabian: Not a question, just a comment.

And I think that we're going in the right direction
here.

So thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just do want to remind everybody that the February
forecast is going to be the real number that's going to
be used, and this is going to probably more than likely
be amended by the legislature.

So we need to go into this with fairly open eyes,
recognizing what the future may or may not hold for us.

So just wanted to raise that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Nothing's done until it's done.

Especially in these strange times.

But I will say, our recommendation to you, what you're,

I think, suggesting makes some sense, is to keep the
10% reserve instead of our normal 5% to give us some
flexibility in the event that things turn the other way
a little bit.

If we were in a more stable environment, I think, you

know, going down to 5 and putting more money in the ground would make sense, but right now, I don't know

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
about you, but I don't have much confidence in anything.

Other than, you know, maybe by the third quarter of next year we're all going to be vaccinated and out doing the things we love to do with the people we love to do them with.

So, any other comments?

So, just to clarify, Tom is allowing the rounding of the numbers to the nearest thousand as part of his motion to increase the budget -- the allocated amount to each project by 16.63%.

Other than roving crews and administrative items that are fully funded.

Amanda, will you call the roll?

>> Amanda: Beginning with number 12, Senator Tomassoni.

>> Sen Tomassoni: Yes.

>> Amanda: Tomassoni votes aye.

Hartwell.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yes.

>> Amanda: Hartwell votes aye.

Schara.

>> Mr. Schara: Aye.

>> Amanda: Schara votes aye.

Representative Becker-Finn.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Aye.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Amanda: Becker-Finn votes aye.

Eggerling.

>> Ms. Eggerling: Aye.

>> Amanda: Eggerling votes aye.

Representative Fabian.

>> Rep Fabian: Aye.

>> Amanda: Fabian votes aye.

Holsten.

>> Mr. Holsten: Aye.

>> Amanda: Holsten votes aye.

Senator Lang.

Senator Lang.

>> Frozen.

>> Sen Lang: Aye.

>> Amanda: Senator Lang votes aye.

McNamara.

>> Mr. McNamara: Aye.

>> Amanda: McNamara votes aye.

Peters.

>> Ms. Peters: Yes.

>> Amanda: Peters votes aye.

Saxhaug.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Aye.

>> Amanda: Saxhaug votes aye.

Swenson.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Ms. Swenson: Yes.

>> Amanda: Swenson votes aye.

12 ayes, 0 nays.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Great.

We have a recommendation.

This will require accomplishment plan amendments, which

I suspect we won't really ask our partners to do until

we get to the spring because if Dan is right and things

change in February, we don't want them to do that work

twice.

Mark.

>> Mr. Johnson: Yes, Mr. Chair, we will actually ask

the project managers to get back to us as quickly as

possible on this.

And the reason is we will need especially the amounts

for the breakdown for those partnerships where there's

more than one budget and also will need the stewardship

and enhancement figures because that is codified in law

as well.

>> Dr. Hartwell: So once again I am being corrected

today.

Thank you very much, Mark.

It's good to have people keeping me honest.

With that, thank you, members, for that.

This recommendation obviously had to have nine votes to

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
go to the legislature.

We have 12.

We have a package.

Thank you for your hard work in reading everything and deliberating and taking this as seriously as I know everyone did.

We have one other thing on the agenda today, which is accelerating the WMA program by Eran Sandquist from PF.

Mark.

>> Mr. Johnson: Yes, Mr. Chair.

There was one more thing, if we could go back, before we get to Mr. Sandquist.

>> Dr. Hartwell: I'm sorry.

I completely screwed up.

>> Mr. Johnson: No, no, that's fine.

It's been a busy morning.

>> Dr. Hartwell: This is so much fun.

>> Mr. Johnson: It's been a busy morning with lots of different angles here.

Earlier I had mentioned that we have the pretransaction account for addition into the bill.

Before we go forward today, I would request that we get approval of the Council to add that into the language, and then also Joe can give us a background, there was some considerations of 97A.056, subdivision 9, with

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
regards to acquiring land that we were notified by the

DNR of here since the last meeting by DNR legal and their lands and minerals department.

And then we have been working with nonpartisan legal staff to look at that as well.

So if it's okay with you, Mr. Chair, perhaps Joe could give us an overview of that and then we can also turn to nonpartisan staff, if necessary.

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

Joe, it's all yours.

Joe: Good morning, Mr. Chair and members.

I apologize if you hear chainsaws running in the background.

The tree trimmers who I hired two months ago decided to show up yesterday.

So if you hear a large Cottonwood branch falling through my roof, that's what it is.

Something that happened recently is a partner, Pheasants Forever, they were going to acquire a parcel in Scott County.

And oftentimes within that larger parcel there's a portion of that land there's an easement on it and for this instance it's a flowage easements.

Sometimes it's R.I.M. easements.

Could be a wetland reserve program easement, any type

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT of conservation easement.

But oftentimes that happens.

So someone could be buying a quarter section and there might be ten acres within that quarter section that the landowner previously protected along the stream, that's

in a reinvest in Minnesota easement program.

And, so, traditionally what's happened before trying to follow subdivision 9, lands and public domain within our 97A.056, is that if the partner appraises that easement and does not use OHF money to pay for it that then go ahead and move forward with the acquisition of the entire parcel or if that partner wants to acquire the parcel and the easement using OHF, they would have to get nine votes from the Council.

I think recently that happened, I think it was last year, where TNC had a property in southeast and there was a DNR trout stream easement and they had to come in and get your approval to use OHF money to buy it.

So that does happen.

But most often partners acquire these parcels and use other funds, so they raise, you know, private funds to pay for that portion or they even get the landowner to donate that value of that easement so that OHF money is not being used to buy it.

And the reason we have this language in front of you is

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
because recently there's been a different

interpretation of subdivision 9 and, so, this is actually changing how we've been doing business for the last 12 years so we're trying to get the language to coincide with how things have been happening in the past and how we think they should happen in the future.

And, so, Ben Stanley, he's been working with Janelle and the DNR folks to work on this technical language and he can talk more about it.

But we're kind of in a hard spot right now because we've got -- we have DNR saying that they're probably not going to want to follow how we have been doing it in the past and, so, we have partners in limbo with these acquisitions that happen quite often and we need them to have clear direction so they can move forward doing good work.

So, Ben, if you want to take it way -- take it away with your technical expertise.

Ben: Thanks, Joe.

Mr. Chair, members, good morning.

As Joe said, the reason that this has arisen now is because essentially what's been happening for the last ten years, the way that everyone has understood the statute, there's somewhat of a conflict between what the statute actually says and how everyone has been

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
interpreting it.

So the lion's share of what I'm going to go over with you right now is just an attempt by staff to make the statute read the way that everybody thinks it's read for the last ten years.

And, so, that portion of the changes that we're going to discuss are technical or technical-ish, they sort of just make it read how everyone thinks it has read.

There's also an additional, more substantive change

that I'll highlight for you that I believe Chair

Hartwell wanted to put before the Council.

I'll make sure when I go over this to distinguish which

parts are which.

And I'm going share my screen with you now so we can

talk about the draft.

So the statute in question, as Joe mentioned, is

subdivision 9 of section 97A.056, and what this statute

is designed to do is to prevent frivolous spending of

OHF money on land that's already protected.

And, so, what it says currently is that OHF money can't

be used to acquire land in fee or a conservation

easement if the land is already owned by the state or a

political subdivision of the state.

So, essentially the idea and what everyone understood

this to be designed to do is to say if the land's

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

already protected, you don't want to spend OHF money to

acquire it for the purpose of protection.

It's already protected.

The issue that DNR -- the DNR folks noticed was, if you

look on line 1.4, what it says is you're prohibited

from using OHF money to acquire such interests if the

land in question is fully or partially owned by the

state or a political subdivision.

Now, partially owned is the phrase that's causing the

trouble because ownership is a bundle of legal rights and if the State owns even one of those rights or if a political subdivision owns even one of those rights, technically they partially own the land.

And, so, what that means is, is if you've got a 10,000-acre parcel that somebody wants to acquire with OHF money, if you have, say, a little tiny road easement on part of that land, technically this statute would prohibit you from acquiring it with OHF money unless you went through the process that I'll talk about in a minute.

But everyone's understanding has been that what we probably meant to say or what the legislature or the Council meant to say back when this was enacted was, actually to limit it to situations where the land is protected by a conservation easement.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

In other words, the Council and public policy and the legislature probably aren't concerned if there's some interest owned by the State or political subdivision unrelated to conservation.

So the way that this came up at DNR, as Assistant Director Pavelko mentioned, was there was an acquisition that was going to be made with OHF money but there was a flowage easement on part of it.

That's not really a conservation easement.

So the question came up, well, can this be acquired with OHF money, and the DNR attorneys looked at this

and said, no, because of that language on line 1.4,
it's partially owned by the State because they have a
flowage easement.

So the first change that would be made on line 1.4 to
1.6 is a technical change to align the statute with
this understanding of what the purpose of the statute
initially was.

And, so, it would say, instead of "partially owned"
being the key phrase, it would prohibit acquisition
with OHF money if the land was owned in fee -- well, if
the land was owned in fee or if it was wholly or
partially subject to a conservation easement.

So, in other words, if land is covered by a flowage
easement or a road access easement or some other form

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
of easement unrelated to conservation, this statute, if

this language was enacted, would no longer prohibit its
acquisition with OHF money.

I'll stop there for a second.

See if there's any questions about that change.

Okay.

So the next change is the -- is on the same lines, and
it is the more substantive change that I think Chair
Hartwell wanted to put before you.

You'll notice on lines 1.4 through 1.5, that the
prohibition currently only applies if the state of
Minnesota or a political subdivision of the state owns

the land or has a partial ownership of it.

What Chair Hartwell wants to do is to extend this prohibition so that it applies where any party has a conservation easement on the land.

And, so, this would expand the prohibition so that it would apply if, say, the federal government had a conservation easement, held a conservation easement on the land or a private party.

So that is related to the technical change I just went over, but it is a separate substantive change.

So we just wanted to draw your attention to that.

Moving on, on lines 1.8 through 1.10, this is a part of existing law that would remain in place.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

And what it says is if there is an acquisition that somebody wants to make that would violate the prohibition in this statute, notwithstanding the prohibition, if the Council agrees that it's worth doing, then they can approve the acquisition with an affirmative vote of nine members.

Like I said, this is in current law, we're leaving it in place, so I just wanted to draw your attention to that.

So regardless of how you reshape the prohibition up here, there will be a what you could call a safety valve still in place on lines 1.8 through 1.10.

The next five lines, 1.11 through 1.15, this is another one of the technical sort of changes that DNR and your

nonpartisan staff put in here because this is how a lot of folks on the ground understand this language is currently working.

And, so, what it says is, if somebody wants to acquire with OHF money land that's partially protected by a conservation easement, they can do so without having to come to the Council so long as they will not use OHF money to pay for the part that's protected by the easement.

So you heard assistant director Pavelko say that this is sort of the understanding, this is how this language

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
has been read for the last ten or so years.

This would just essentially bless that approach and in that sense, it's in the nature of a technical fix.

And then, finally, on lines 16 through 17, because this new language references conservation easement, this is just a reference to an already existing statutory definition of conservation easement just to help everybody understand what that means.

And, so, Mr. Chair, that sort of concludes our initial runthrough.

The only thing I'll end with is, the technical changes that I went over, DNR legal staff and your House and Senate nonpartisan staff agree that those are things you probably want to consider.

And that concludes my remarks.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Great.

Thank you, Ben.

And I would just add that the piece that I picked up was that there was a prohibition against using our dollars to protect land that the State already had protected but not that others had protected.

And it didn't seem to me that our intent was ever to not have a prohibition against using our dollars to protect any property that was already protected.

And that was the clarification.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Jamie?

Whichever Jamie wants to go.

>> Ms. Swenson: Go ahead.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: So as the person -- one of the people who's going to have to explain this to committees, my questions about -- so in the bundle of [indiscernible] analogy, would this stop us from buying something in fee, like let's say right now the state holds a conservation easement or some kind of easement but now the offer is for that land to be held in fee.

My reading of this right now means we would not be able to do that.

So I'm just wondering if staff can clarify if that situation were to arise.

Ben: Mr. Chair, Representative Becker-Finn, I agree with what you just said.

Essentially, if you're trying to acquire land that there's already a conservation easement on, that's held by the State, then the State partially owns that land within the meaning of the law.

And, so, if you look at the letter of line 1.4, it says that OHF money may not be used to acquire land that's partially owned by the State.

So the only way you'd able to do that under the current

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
law would be to use the process outlined on lines 8

through 10, which is part of existing law.

You could come to the Council and say, we know that statute prohibits us from doing this, we think it provides additional value because of XYZ, and then if the Council agreed through a vote of nine members, they could bless it.

>> Dr. Hartwell: If there's some extenuating circumstance that we can't anticipate, there's a way to manage through it, is essentially what that gives us.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Stanley.

I just wanted to make sure we were clear on that.

You know, this -- I just also want to mention, too, that I do think we need to be careful when -- if we've been interpreting it wrong, you know, any part of the statute, if we've been interpreting -- if folks have been interpreting it wrong, I don't want us to be

setting up precedent that we just change the law to meet people's false interpretation of the statute.

But I think in this case, this does make sense and as far as what I know from when this was drafted initially is that this does sound like this meets what the goal was of the original drafters and passage of the language.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
So thank you for bringing this forward.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Jamie.

>> Ms. Swenson: Thank you, chair.

Just a clarification question for myself and possibly the partners as well.

Everything kind of comes down to definitions.

And I was looking for a clarification on what's the definition of "land"?

So, for example, is it if a conservation easement is over a portion of a parcel, is it just what the acres that that conservation easement is over, does it go to the -- or does it go to the parcel level or does it go to the -- all of the parcels within one transaction, so maybe a purchase agreement has multiple parcels associated with that transaction, what defines "land"?

Just trying to understand, I know it's very complicated to put together some of these purchase agreements and transactions.

At what point is that defined?

>> Dr. Hartwell: Joe, you've got your hand up.

Joe: Sorry, Mr. Chair.

I had to answer the door.

I did not hear Jamie's question.

But mine was to clarify what Representative Becker-Finn was talking about.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

So if somebody else can answer Ms. Swenson's

question, that would be helpful.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Mark or Ben.

>> Mr. Johnson: I'll defer to Ben, Mr. Chair.

Ben: Mr. Chair and Representative Swenson -- or

Member Swenson, I don't know the answer to that off the top of my head.

I suspect it probably differs from transaction to transaction.

If you told me I had to provide an answer, I would say it probably is at the parcel level.

But, you know, I guess I'd have to talk to DNR to see how they apply that.

There are statutory definitions of land, but I'm not sure that they would answer the particular question you asked.

And I think if you were somebody who was trying to avoid the application of this statute, you could probably -- acquisition in a way that might minimize its impact depending on what exactly you're trying to do.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Would it make any sense to substitute "parcel" for "land" to clarify it?

Ben: I don't know that it would because in the rest of the statute, I think we talk about "land" rather than

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
"parcels."

I'd have to check real quick, which I can do,

Mr. Chair, if you'd like.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Sure.

Denny, you have your hand up.

>> Mr. McNamara: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I didn't know if you wanted to go to Joe first to clear up outstanding questions or do you want me to go ahead?

>> Dr. Hartwell: Go ahead.

>> Mr. McNamara: Okay.

[Overlapping conversation]

>> Dr. Hartwell: See if we can clarify.

>> Mr. McNamara: Mr. Chair, if I could ask

Ms. Taylor or Mr. Stanley, is all this language statutory or is there some constitutional language that's directing our thoughts of not double paying for something?

That's my first question.

Ben: Mr. Chair, Representative McNamara, this is all statutory.

This statute was designed -- I wasn't here when it was designed -- but just by looking at it, it appears to have been designed to prevent frivolous spending.

There's no allegation or suggestion that spending money

on land that's already protected, you know, is a

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
constitutional problem so long as you're spending it

the second time on protection.

It would just be wasteful is the thought.

>> Mr. McNamara: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As someone who was there when we first did that, that
was my recollection.

I think what we need here is, one, I think we should be
careful as members of this Council that we're really
getting into the legislative discussions, and I would
strongly recommend that Representative Becker-Finn,
Senator Tomassoni, Senator Lang carry on a lot of this
at the legislative level and the committee discussion.

It was always my understanding that we didn't want to
double pay, that's what it would be.

But I think we should clarify.

I'm not sure why we would want to say that we can't buy
land that has a constitutional easement -- has an
easement on it that protects the land from development
but it's not open to the public.

That being open to the public is value to the public
and that clearly enhance protect would be better for
fish, game and wildlife, I believe because it would
allow for the public to access it.

But I think, Mr. Chair, I'm not comfortable as a

citizen saying what that language should be.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

I just think the intent always we didn't want to double

pay for something.

You know, it's not unusual for somebody to take a real narrow and want to be more careful, like the DNR now wants to do.

I think we could clarify that we think they should be able to go ahead with this.

But in the long term, I think they should have a bigger discussion at the legislature, do they not want to allow for the purchase of land that may have some constitutional protection in it but not pay for that?

We should never double pay, that that should clarify.

Easiest thing would be just to isolate that parcel and have them use some different money to buy that part.

But if they can't do that for some reason, just to be sure that we clarify they're not double paying.

That's in the big picture, that's where I'm coming from and wonder if it wouldn't be better taken up at a legislative committee level than, be included in our bill.

We could draft some suggestions about -- I think a bigger-picture discussion for the 12 of us, isn't it we just don't want to double pay for something but we would love to have more public access to land, that's where I'm coming from.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Mark, you've got your hand up.

>> Mr. Johnson: Yeah, Mr. Chair, thank you to the members for all this discussion.

I think it's great.

The consideration of staff as we come before you with this is that for the last 12 years, basically, the process that's been used or the procedure that's been used by project managers and by the Council has been what you heard, basically if there's a parcel with an easement -- if there's a parcel and a portion of that parcel has an easement on it, if other funds are used to purchase that other than OHF funds or if it's donated, then it was allowed to be received.

Of course, as you hear, that's in question now, whether that's legal or not.

So from a procedurally safe standpoint, staff at this point is notifying the project managers that moving forward unless or until this type of amendment is made, we're going to have each one of the members bring any such parcels before the Council so the Council can weigh in with a vote of nine or a lack thereof.

Because we want to make sure that we aren't accidentally or otherwise subverting legal direction.

So with regards to this recommendation, it could go

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
forward if the Council thinks that it's a good

amendment -- or good proposed amendment, then it could

go forward in the outdoor heritage bill or it could go forward separately to the legislature.

But in my opinion, it should go forward as a recommendation of the Council to the legislature for this legislative session.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Dan.

>> Rep Fabian: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Appreciate the conversation.

I had on my notes here much of what Member McNamara brought up about this being a legislative matter.

And if as a Council we feel strongly about it, we're kind of getting in the weeds here legislatively.

And I think that Members Becker-Finn and Tomassoni and Lang are the ones that really need to help vet this in the legislative process and if members of the Council want to testify at a committee hearing -- [video/audio frozen]

At some point in the future.

I'm not sure that I'm -- well, question I would have, Mark used the term a legal direction.

Are there parcels involved here that have been -- where you could make the interpretation that it's not been done to the letter of the law and somehow there could

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
be some sort of a legal action undoing those projects

that have been done that may be in violation of the legal direction?

That's a question for staff, maybe Mark, maybe

Mr. Stanley.

>> Mr. Johnson: Mr. Chair and Representative Fabian, there have been parcels that have been purchased with easements, be it R.I.M. easement or other conservation easement portions or a flowage easement upon them.

In each of those cases, as we mentioned, the purchase of that property and of the value of that easement was not done with OHF funds, but, rather, with other funds or it was donated.

So under the current interpretation, that would not be correct.

Past interpretation has been that it was okay.

Whether that could come forward as an argument that those lands should now -- where there's some fault in the acquisition of those properties is debatable, I think, and I'm not an attorney.

I'm sure it could be debated either way.

Hence, another reason for asking that this amendment be considered by the powers that be.

>> Rep Fabian: Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Senator Lang.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Sen Lang: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yeah, I was just going to jump in here and kind of agree with the other Representatives and Senators, just, when it comes to the Council, realistically I think this all plays out in a committee hearing, like

Representative Finn had said prior.

If you want to, as a Council, provide language for the upcoming session, I think that's well within your purview as a Council.

And I think it's a good idea.

I think you have staff that's capable of doing so.

But, realistically when it comes to the committee hearing, that's something where we'll have Mark and myself sitting in the hearing and realistically what we should do is just pass out, here's the problem that the DNR has been encountering over the last 12 years.

Here is how we fix that and here's the proposed language.

When it comes to nonpartisan staff, they've already looked at it, they'll look at it again.

Some of the Representatives or Senators that take a peek at it might have a good idea when it comes to that stuff.

And then it plays out that way.

So I think we are kind of getting in the weeds.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

You know, it's -- the process will play out over the

course of time the way it's supposed to.

Yeah, that's just the thing I would say, as long as we have a good recommendation and an explanation of what the problem is and what we've been encountering, we'll be in good shape.

>> Dr. Hartwell: So let me try to -- I mean, we don't want to cross some invisible line here.

Would the Council be comfortable with staff working with the House and the Senate committees to get this type of language to resolve this issue included in our bill but not put it in our bill at this point?

I'm not hearing problems with the concept.

It's whether or not we should be the ones doing it.

And if we simply say, it makes sense to us to resolve this issue and here is something we're comfortable with, but please resolve it --

>> Sen Lang: That would be -- I would jump in again and say, if staff wants to jump in on this one, but I would say have the bill, have a clean bill without the amendment in it, then have the amendment at committee and adopt it at that time.

Explain it.

You know, the issues we're having.

Here's the amendment.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Here's why it is in front of you today.

It is a Council recommendation.

This is why we're doing it.

And at that point in time amend it on the bill, as a whole, at the committee hearing.

I don't think we need to work that hard to get it in the bill right now.

I think we have enough time still that we could do

that.

>> Dr. Hartwell: So would you prefer that we take an official vote or just a nod of heads?

>> Sen Lang: I think -- I would just -- I'd be happy either way, actually.

I think we could -- we could take an official vote, but at the end of the day when it comes to the committee hearing, I don't know if we -- I mean, we have a stance, I don't think I've heard anybody in opposition to the fact that we're going to through and help the DNR make good decisions and spend our dollars wisely.

I think that's what they're trying to accomplish here.

So I don't have an issue doing it either way.

If we want to come to some sort of consensus.

If anybody wants to speak up or just take an up/down vote on continuing to look after this amendment and trying to adopt some of the concerns that the Council

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
members have as we go, I think we're in an okay position for that.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Dan?

>> Rep Fabian: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yeah, I agree with Senator Lang.

I think, number one, that we should separate these two issues and keep the bill a clean bill and then have an amendment or have a bill drafted and have it vetted that way through the committee process.

Because when we're dealing with statutes, I think that we might be getting a little bit too far over the front of our skis and some people could interpret it that we're telling the legislature what to do and I think that they have to just go through their process.

It will be fine in the end.

I don't have any trouble with that.

But I do want to keep these two issues separate in the bill that we bring forward.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Denny.

>> Mr. McNamara: Mr. Chair, I think it would be good for the record that you're able to say either we gave it a thumbs up or there was a positive vote, that we'd like the legislature to look at this issue and reach a consensus on how to address this problem.

I think something along those lines would be good.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

Then the general public has had real strong feelings

with weighing in with the legislature, the legislature

changing something that we haven't been a part of, and

I think it would be good if we gave a thumbs up that we

would like the legislature to look at this issue, we

think there's a common-sense solution to be able to

find it for them to buy these parcels and continue the

way it's been done for years.

>> Dr. Hartwell: So I'm going to recommend that we have

a motion and take a vote to recommend to the

legislature they consider something that addresses the

issue much in the way that we have heard it be addressed but not be part of our formal bill but that we would go on record saying we would like the legislature to resolve this issue.

Does that make sense to everyone?

Any more comments?

Amanda, take the roll.

Oh, Denny, sorry.

>> Mr. McNamara: Mr. Chair, resolve the issue, you need to weigh in on which way you want it resolved because it could be interpreted, you want it resolved, you probably want to weigh in on what you're actually saying.

>> Dr. Hartwell: I would like to see it resolved in

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
alignment with the draft that Ben presented to us.

Ron?

>> Mr. Schara: I was just going to make the motion, but I'll pass at the moment until we settle on what's going to be said.

>> Dr. Hartwell: I think I made a motion.

>> Mr. Schara: Okay.

I'll second it.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Are you comfortable with it?

>> Mr. Schara: Yes.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Okay.

Any other comments?

Amanda, are you clear of what I recommended?

>> Amanda: Mr. Chair, members, from an outside perspective, maybe it would help to just restate the motion before we take the roll call, but I'll defer to Mark and Joe and Sandy on that one.

>> Mr. Johnson: Mr. Chair, what I have is that the -- your motion is that the Council be on record asking the legislature to review and resolve the issue of subdivision 9 in 97A.056 in alignment with the draft provided by staff.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Okay.

Amanda, call the roll, please.

>> Amanda: All right.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Beginning with number 1 this time, Hartwell.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yes.

>> Amanda: Hartwell votes aye.

Schara.

>> Mr. Schara: Aye.

>> Amanda: Schara votes aye.

Representative Becker-Finn.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Aye.

>> Amanda: Becker-Finn votes aye.

Eggerling.

>> Ms. Eggerling: Aye.

>> Amanda: Eggerling votes aye.

Representative Fabian.

>> Rep Fabian: Aye.

>> Amanda: Fabian votes aye.

Holsten.

>> Mr. Holsten: Aye.

>> Amanda: Holsten votes aye.

Senator Lang.

>> Sen Lang: Aye.

>> Amanda: Senator Lang votes aye.

McNamara.

>> Mr. McNamara: Aye.

>> Amanda: McNamara votes aye.

Peters.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Ms. Peters: Yes.

>> Amanda: Peters votes aye.

Saxhaug.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Aye.

>> Amanda: Saxhaug votes aye.

Swenson.

>> Ms. Swenson: Aye.

>> Amanda: Swenson votes aye.

>> Amanda: Senator Tomassoni.

>> Sen Tomassoni: Aye.

>> Amanda: Tomassoni votes aye.

12 ayes, 0 nos.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Motion carries.

Thank you, all, for your attention to a strange but
important issue.

Mark, I just want a clarification.

Was our vote on the 16.63% adequate to make the final recommendation to the legislature or do we need to take any other action?

>> Mr. Johnson: Mr. Chair, thanks for that question.

I think we probably need one more motion by the Council or one more approval by the Council for the bill language -- for the bill as drafted and allow staff to make the additions -- edits and corrections as necessary.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Dr. Hartwell: All right.

Can I get that motion, please?

>> Ms. Eggerling: I'll make the motion.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Any discussion?

Amanda.

I turn it over to you again.

>> Amanda: Beginning with number 2, Schara.

>> Mr. Schara: Aye.

>> Amanda: Schara votes aye.

Representative Becker-Finn.

>> Rep Becker-Finn: Aye.

>> Amanda: Becker-Finn votes aye.

Eggerling.

>> Ms. Eggerling: Aye.

>> Amanda: Eggerling votes aye.

Fabian.

>> Rep Fabian: Aye.

>> Amanda: Representative Fabian votes aye.

Holsten.

>> Mr. Holsten: Aye.

>> Amanda: Holsten votes aye.

Senator Lang.

>> Sen Lang: Aye.

>> Amanda: Lang votes aye.

McNamara.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Mr. McNamara: Aye.

>> Amanda: McNamara votes aye.

Peters.

>> Ms. Peters: Yes.

>> Amanda: Peters votes aye.

Saxhaug.

>> Mr. Saxhaug: Aye.

>> Amanda: Saxhaug votes aye.

Swenson.

>> Ms. Swenson: Aye.

>> Amanda: Swenson votes aye.

Senator Tomassoni.

>> Sen Tomassoni: Yes.

>> Amanda: Tomassoni votes aye.

Hartwell.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Aye.

>> Amanda: Hartwell votes aye.

12 ayes, 0 nos.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Great.

Now we have a package to give to the legislature.

Thank you, all, for that.

Mark, have I missed anything else?

>> Mr. Johnson: Mr. Chair, I don't believe so.

I will defer to staff.

Staff, anything we have missed so far?

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Other than Mr. Sandquist.

>> Dr. Hartwell: We're good.

All right.

So, last on our agenda is a presentation on
accelerating the WMA program with Eran Sandquist from
PF.

And, Eran, I'm sorry, I gave you the go ahead early
before I should have.

Eran: Good morning.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Now you're on.

Eran: Am I on?

>> Dr. Hartwell: You're on.

Eran: Very good.

Good morning Mr. Chair and Council members.

I want to apologize a little bit in advance here.

I've been fighting a scratchy throat and a cough all
week and, so, apologize if that's disruptive at all.

The other thing, I'll leave my video off here while I
go through this presentation just because I do not live
in the land of strong Internet connection.

So I'll turn it on here after the presentation.

Can everybody see the screen okay?

>> Dr. Hartwell: We don't see anything, Eran.

Eran: Okay.

>> Dr. Hartwell: I suspect you have to turn your video

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
on before you can share your screen.

Eran: Okay.

>> Dr. Hartwell: But that's technical stuff.

And I could be very wrong.

Eran: How about now?

>> Dr. Hartwell: No.

We can see you but we can't see any presentation.

Eran: Okay.

Amanda, do I have the share screen option enabled?

>> Amanda: Yes, you do.

You should.

So, are you clicking the share screen on the bottom?

What's happening when you click that?

Eran: It gives me the option for screen 2, just like
yesterday.

>> Amanda: Yup.

Eran: And --

>> Amanda: And then when you click on screen 2 -- oh,
here we go.

Eran: It worked?

>> Dr. Hartwell: Close enough.

Yup.

>> Amanda: Yup.

Eran: We're good to go, you guys can see the Minnesota state outline?

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

>> Dr. Hartwell: Yup, we can.

Eran: Okay.

One second here.

Okay.

Apologize, I'm having a little bit of formatting issues.

I apologize, folks.

Just bear with me one minute here.

Amanda, is there a way to remove the pictures of the Council members from the right side of my screen?

>> Dr. Hartwell: No.

>> Amanda: Mr. Chair, members, Eran, you're actually okay, you can see that on your screen, but they can remove it on their end -- everyone has individual control over that, if it's in their way.

Eran: Okay, very good.

I think I got it figured out on my end here.

All right.

For the record, my name is Eran Sandquist and I'm the PF state coordinator for Minnesota, and we appreciate the opportunity to be here today to update you on a longstanding partnership with the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

I'm going to be showing you our progress by

highlighting a sample of the 92 project we've

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
protected.

But, first, just want to share a few overall program

accomplishments that we're mighty proud of.

Our accelerating the wildlife management area program

has now protected parcels in 38 different counties

across southern Minnesota.

Those total almost 13,000 acres and are now providing

wildlife habitat and public access.

We've also generated over \$10 million in nonstate

funding to further stretch the goals of the Outdoor

Heritage Fund.

And almost \$2 million in land value has been donated by

willing sellers through this program.

So just think about that for a little minute here.

Landowners themselves have donated almost \$2 million

towards these projects.

To equate that to acres, we've protected about 400

additional acres as a result of their generosity.

That's pretty cool if you ask me.

All right.

Moving on to some projects here.

What you're looking at here is Tiger Lake in Carver

County.

This is a DNR-designated wildlife lake.

And the best part, it's only about 50 miles west of the

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Minnesota Capitol building.

Going back to some of the questions from the DNR
partner presentation this morning, the current pheasant
action plan does increase priority for protection
opportunities that are located within 30 miles of
population centers with more than 15,000 people.

And this complex is certainly a great example of that.

Over time and largely because of this partnership, over
17,000 feet of shoreline on Tiger Lake is now
protected.

So today's discussion will be focused on WMA
acceleration efforts, but I want to point out those
areas outlined in blue on the east side of the lake,
those are PF projects, PF-led projects, but they are
federally owned waterfowl production areas.

And that's common as you look at habitat complexes
across the state.

It takes a variety of partners, funding, and interest
to achieve a common vision.

I also want to touch on the time it takes to build an
area like this, not only for each individual project
but you can see how many different year OHF funding
appropriations were part of this effort.

If we had only protected that first piece in 2013 and
stopped, you know, there wouldn't be much to talk about

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

here.

So meaningful conservation work is a marathon, and it's not a sprint, it takes a lot of time to do it right.

Okay.

So this tract, this is a tract that had 2013 on the prior slide and what we refer to as the Tonky parcel.

You can see Highway U.S. 212 there on the right side.

If you look really close in the distance, you can see a water tower, that's Norwood Young America to kind of give you an idea of where this is.

This is a drone picture taken post-restoration.

A couple of things to touch on here, on most of our grassland restorations we hire private contractors to do the site prep and seeding with a particular subscription that they must follow.

We've seen great results from this approach and found it a great way to utilize the private sector in these projects.

You can see the uplands that were seeded have been recently mowed as well.

This is a common practice for a year or two following seeding that helps suppress weed competition and nurturing the natives that are planted.

Also you can see multiple wetlands that have been restored on this parcel.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
I just want to take the opportunity to give a quick shout-out to the fish and wildlife service partners,

fish and wildlife program, not only did they do much of the heavy lifting on these wetland restorations but they're also a significant partner on many of our wetland restorations across the state.

There's a lot that goes into building complexes like these and they often take a variety of professionals and partners.

I thought you might enjoy seeing just how many it took over the past decade in helping to build this Tiger Lake complex.

For the seven projects, 560 acres were protected in fee and 458 acres of those needed some restoration.

To achieve that work, 57 private contractors, and that's everything, you know, from appraisers to upland prairie installers, were utilized.

And then, you know, finally, 35 different partners.

Whether that be an agency partner, a volunteer effort, or a financial contributor, there are a lot of groups that had a hand in building this complex.

Lastly, if you look towards the bottom of the slide, you'll see a U.S. fish and wildlife habitat population evaluation team analysis that has been completed for all the projects we are highlighting today.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

These are the predicted wildlife responses of the

listed species based on protection and restorations of

the projects that we're highlighting today.

I'm not going to go through these responses on each slide.

I just did want to mention what they represented.

All right.

Now we're going to head west a short distance to McLeod County.

There is a lot of history in this area for Pheasants Forever.

In fact, you know, McLeod County was the seventh chapter ever formed way back in 1984 when I was only 6 years old.

So the chapter also has a great local partner in the McLeod wildlife habitat society.

And these two groups have been doing -- and some others -- have been doing great work together for decades.

And we thought it would be good to kind of show you some of the accelerated work happening because of our partnership with OHF at the county level.

So you can see all these green stars, those are OHF-funded protection projects through PF.

Those hashed areas are grassland burn habitat

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
complexes, those are identified by the DNR and many

plans prioritize increasing permanent protection of --

permanent wildlife habitat within these areas as a

highly efficient way to benefit grassland nesting

birds.

So, one of those green stars is a parcel south of Hutchinson, formerly owned by Sherman and Rhonda Lindeman.

This is 107-acre acquisition project, pretty typical of our acceleration parcels in that it builds onto an existing WMA, adds much-needed upland within a grassland burn complex.

You can see it also squares up to WMA boundary and increases management efficiency for the DNR.

Like many of these projects, you know, PF was able to bring in cash leverage, \$110,000 in this case to reduce the State's investment on this project.

And while we're on this slide, I just want to take note of that little tree grove that you see there on the east side of the parcel.

In this grove, there was an old home site, the house was rundown, uninhabitable and didn't have any value, but it still needed to be removed prior to conveyance to the State.

So this is an area where we were really fortunate, I'm

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
going to do just a little bit of bragging here about

our chapter network of which there's 73 chapters across the state.

These folks volunteered their time to not only raise a lot of the match that we offer towards these projects but they also provide a lot in sweat equity to get

these parcels into the shape required to become a WMA.

And, so, with this project, that meant removing the junk from the old house and the grove site and then working with a local fire department to do a controlled burn of the house.

This is a win-win, you know, the fire department, they appreciate the opportunity and gain valuable training along with taxpayers realize a tremendous savings.

And, so, just here are some pictures of our chapter volunteers in action and the fire department training burn.

This project was unique in that we're able to work with the sellers to honor the memory of a relative of theirs who had passed away tragically in a car accident.

I wanted to share this picture of the memorial stone the family had made on the right and on the left a picture of the land dedication ceremony/Brandon

Lindeman memorial, which was held on September 14th, 2019, which would have been Brandon's

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
30th birthday.

As you can tell, it was well attended, support of the local community and it's not obvious, it was pre-COVID.

So...

Okay.

Now we're going to move clear down to near the Iowa border in Nobles County.

Earlier I mentioned the time it takes and how it can be

decades or even careers to build meaningful complexes.

Even when you look at an individual project, it commonly takes several years to take a project from start to finish.

And this project is like many from that perspective.

And I just want to run through kind of the timeline of this parcel to give you an idea of the time that it did take.

So we started working on the fee acquisition of this tract in April of 2018.

Approximately 76 acquisitions process steps later, on February 12th, 2020, PF took deed of this parcel.

And since February we've been working on restoration and development activities and conveyance to the state which we expect to be completed soon.

So by the time it's all and he had done, we'll be talking about three-year process on this tract.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT

I've already mentioned a little bit about one of our

key partners in this whole effort, you know, the landowners.

You know, they are often way more than just willing sellers.

Often these folks have century farms, significant connections to the land and family roots that run pretty deep.

And this project is a testament of that.

I just wanted to share how this parcel came to

Pheasants Forever from the Elsing family.

Willie had been referred to some as the first
conservationist in Nobles County.

He loved his land and the natural beauty and was often
found sitting on the hill overlooking the Little Rock
Creek that you can see there on the left side of the
picture.

Upon his death in 2003, an article was published in the
Worthington Daily Globe, it was written by Scott Raul,
about Willie and his conservation ethic.

Shortly after that article, Henrietta, Willie's wife,
came to visit Raul.

And I guess I should also mention that Raul is the
Nobles County PF chapter president and some of you may
remember he's a former Lessard-Sams Council member as

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
well.

So it was told to me Henrietta had tears of joy over
the article while reflecting on Willie's life and went
on to tell Raul and her children that she wanted
Pheasants Forever to help protect their parcel upon her
death.

And that quote you see is what the Elsing children are
putting up on a monument near the parking lot of this
tract in honor of their parents.

So, you know, landowner legacy, that's a very powerful
thing in our opinion.

But there are many reasons to be excited about this tract.

Not only did we protect almost 300 acres of grasslands, but also over two miles of the Little Rock Creek known to harbor the endangered Topeka shiner, along with 14 acres of remnant native prairie.

PF also brought over \$367,000 in cash leverage to this project.

Perhaps one of the most intensive PF chapter volunteer efforts on a single project, led by Scott Raul, Nobles County chapter, 1,046 volunteer hours were documented helping to develop this addition to Ransom Ridge WMA.

This included a prescribed burn to reinvigorate the existing grasslands, pulling old fences, removing junk

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
piles and removing over 600 trees.

We spent a lot of time talking about PF and our chapters today, but I definitely don't want to give the impression that we're doing this work alone and we want to recognize some of our larger and frequent partners on protection project in general.

This is certainly not an exhaustive display and many additional local groups that also partner with us to make great projects happen on a local level.

And certainly as a WMA acceleration program, the Minnesota DNR is a critical partner on every project as well.

I just want to give a big shout-out to the DNR field and regional offices all the way to the central office.

There are a lot of folks in the agency that are really unsung heroes and are critical cogs in the collective effort to accelerate the WMA projects in the state and we really thank them all for their work.

So kind of to wrap up here, I just want to share another reason why we view this work as so meaningful and worthy.

This is a fee acquisition project in the north metro, an addition to Carlos Avery WMA in Anoka County.

It was memorable to me in that it gave us an opportunity to work with a city, which doesn't happen

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT very often.

But this parcel was entirely within the city of Columbus.

Shortly after protecting this tract as a WMA, we received an email from Lee Yang.

He was a relatively novice archery hunter who had harvested his first white-tail on this property.

He emailed to share his appreciation for the work in creating opportunities to enjoy the outdoors.

We frequently hear from folks like Lee and it just continues to reinforce how important it is having places for people to recreate.

You know, especially in a challenging year like this one where it seems there's been a large increase in

public land use.

So, with that, on behalf of PF, our chapters, our partners, we want to sincerely thank you for your partnership and allowing us to help achieve the Council's vision for the benefit of all Minnesotans.

Thank you.

>> Dr. Hartwell: Great, Eran, thank you, for your hard work.

These are not projects that get done without significant vision and perseverance.

And we thank you for that.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
Are there any questions for Eran?

No questions.

Eran, thank you very much.

Appreciate it.

Members, we had no one sign up for public comments or submit any comments in advance so there is nothing on that item to do.

Unless there are any issues anyone wishes to bring up, I'm going to end the meeting, let you have some of your day back.

I'm seeing no one, so I'm going to adjourn the meeting.

Have a great holiday season, everyone.

Thanks for your attention and hard work, we appreciate it.

Thanks.

Thanks to the staff for getting us here.

>> Mr. Johnson: Merry Christmas, everybody.

>> Dr. Hartwell: So we are adjourned.

>> Sen Tomassoni: Merry Christmas, happy new year,
everybody.

>> Mr. Schara: Senator Tomassoni, it looks like he's
ready for Santa Claus.

>> Merry Christmas.

>> Sen Tomassoni: I've been called that before, don't
worry.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT
[Laughter]

DISCLAIMER

This file is being provided in a lightly edited
format and is the work product of the CART captioner.
Any reproduction, publication, or other use of this
CART file without the express written consent of the
captioner is strictly prohibited. Communication Access
Realtime Translation (CART) is provided in order to
facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a
totally verbatim record of the proceedings, nor should
it be considered in any way a certified document. Due
to the live nature of the event, some names and/or
terms may be misspelled. This file may also contain
phonetic attempts at sounds and words that were spoken
and environmental sounds that occurred during the
event.

CART CAPTIONING FILE - NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT