

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MEMO: Agenda Item #9

DATE: December 8, 2020

SUBJECT: Extension of Availability of Appropriation

ML 2016 5(h), Sand Hill River Fish Passage Restoration and Habitat Enhancement -- Phase II (\$828,000 appropriation)

PRESENTER: April Swenby, Sand Hill River Watershed District Administrator
Nicholas Kludt, Ph.D., Red River Fisheries Specialist, MN DNR

Suggested Motion:

Motion by Councilmember X to approve/deny the legislative extension of appropriation availability for ML 2016 5(h), Sand Hill River Fish Passage Restoration and Habitat Enhancement -- Phase II until June 30, 2022, to be included in the ML 2021 OHF recommendations bill.

Background Information (provided by Project Manager)

We would like to request a 1-year extension to our current LSOHC grant that is set to expire in June of 2021. As you may be aware, our grant accomplishments were finished significantly under budget, and we have been working collaboratively with the MN DNR to complete additional work that furthers the objectives of the grant. We have one additional milestone that we would like to accomplish, and that is restoration of floodplain habitat along the Sand Hill River (referred to as the Poissant Bridge Project). The grant has already been modified to include this work, but in order to complete the work we need additional time. Our rationale for the extension request is summarized in the points below:

- The Poissant Bridge project is an additional project that will be completed with remaining grant funds. The ability to fund the project through the grant wasn't certain until October of 2020, when other grant funded projects were completed. This resulted in an unrealistic timeline for planning, landowner coordination, design, construction, and closeout before the current June 2021 deadline.
- The timeline would result in construction through the winter months in Polk County, MN. Weather is unpredictable, and could result in a partially finished project being left over the winter and spring flood months. This would result in additional construction costs and a prolonged construction impact for the adjacent landowner.
- If unforeseeable circumstances (such as weather) do not allow for completion before the June 2021 deadline, there wouldn't be sufficient funding left locally to complete the project. This would leave the adjacent landowner with a mess, and would reflect badly on both the local sponsor and the state of MN.
- The project is currently under development, and COVID has certainly resulted in impacts to the schedule. Additional measures for a safe working environment have all resulted in a lengthened timeline.

After speaking with the manager, there will be about \$250,000 left of the appropriation to spend during the extension of time.

The C-19 Extension language did not affect the ML 16 programs except to grant an extra 1 year to close on acquisitions.

Language for the appropriation bill:

Subd X. Carryforwards

- (a) The availability of the appropriation in Laws 2016, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 5, paragraph (h) for Sand Hill River Fish Passage Restoration and Habitat Enhancement -- Phase II is extended to June 30, 2022.