

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MEMO: Agenda Item #8

DATE: January, 2021

SUBJECT: **Extension of Availability of Appropriation**
ML 2018 2(j) - Protect and Restore MN Impt Bird Areas within the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands, Phase 2 (\$829,000 appropriation)

PRESENTER: Wayne Ostlie, Minnesota Land Trust

Suggested Motion:

Motion by Councilmember X to approve/deny the legislative extension of appropriation availability for ML 2018 2(j) - Protect and Restore MN Impt Bird Areas within the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands, Phase 2 until June 30, 2022, to be included in an amendment to the ML 2021 OHF recommendations bill.

Background Information (provided by Project Manager)

Audubon Minnesota and Minnesota Land Trust request an extension to the above grant due to the impacts on the program stemming from COVID-19. On the land protection side of the equation, landowner outreach and engagement has slowed, and the average timeline for completing a conservation easement has lengthened significantly. Travel restrictions have also played a major role in delaying projects. On the restoration/enhancement front, delays associated with contracting have also occurred due to COVID-19. In addition, Audubon Minnesota's program manager is on maternity leave for three months.

After speaking with the manager, there will be about \$150,000 left of the appropriation to spend during the extension of time.

The C-19 Extension language had no effect on the ML 18 appropriations.

Language for the appropriation bill:

Subd X. Carryforwards

- (a) The availability of the appropriation in Laws 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2, paragraph (j) for Protect and Restore MN Impt Bird Areas within the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands, Phase 2 is extended to June 30, 2022.