

## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

**MEMO:** Agenda Item #11 (B, C, D, & E)

**DATE:** March 12, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Extension of Availability of Appropriation  
Wild Rice Watershed District Program Appropriations

**PRESENTER:** Kevin Ruud, Wild Rice Watershed District

### Extensions requested for the following:

Appropriation Citation and Language	Availability of the Appropriation expired/expires on:	Notes
M.L. 2015, 1 <sup>st</sup> Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd <a href="#">2(j)</a> <a href="#">Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration</a> - \$2,270,000	June 30, <del>2018</del> 2021  This appropriation received an extension in ML 18 until June 30, 2021.	Requesting second extension to finish up AQ until June 30, 2024. 50% spent to date.  <b>Link for the 9/28/2017 Council <a href="#">agenda memo</a> from regarding the ML 2018 extension.</b>
M.L. 2017, Chapter 91, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd <a href="#">5(c)</a> <a href="#">Goose Prairie</a> - \$600,000	June 30, 2022 for R/E	Requesting extension for R/E until June 30, 2024  Nothing spent to date
M.L. 2019, 1 <sup>st</sup> Sp. Session, Chapter 2, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd <a href="#">2(e)</a> <a href="#">Lower Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration - Phase II</a> - \$2,975,000  \$225,000 Wild Rice Watershed District \$2,750,000 Board of Water and Soil Resources	AQ June 30, 2022  R/E 2024	Requesting extension on AQ until June 30, 2024  Nothing spent to date
M.L. 2020, Regular Session, Chapter 104, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd <a href="#">2(e)</a> <a href="#">Lower Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration - Phase III</a> - \$1,888,000  \$148,000 Wild Rice Watershed District \$1,740,000 Board of Water and Soil Resources.	AQ June 30, 2023  R/E 2025	Requesting extension on AQ until June 30, 2024  Nothing spent to date

### Information Provided by the project Manager:

In 2014, the Wild Rice Watershed District (WRWD) began efforts on the Lower Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration Program (LWRCHRP) as a voluntary effort with the long-term goal to restore a natural corridor area along the Lower Reach of the Wild Rice River.

Due to the overall size of the initiative, it is planned that the project will be conducted in multiple phases over the next decades. The phases were established to allow both for orderly implementation of the project and to ensure that wildlife and habitat benefits would be gained from the onset of implementation.

When M.L. 2015 LSOHC funding was approved in 2015, the WRWD was intending to partner with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to cost share in securing the required land acquisition within the corridor. Subsequently, it was determined that NRCS Program Restrictions could hinder the future channel restoration phase of the project.

As a result, the WRWD proactively sought out other partners, and in August 2018 entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) to assist in implementation.

Since that time, the WRWD has received and is processing 21 voluntary acquisitions for participation in the program throughout the corridor (see attached map). Following closing on each acquisition easement, the parcels will be established to permanent vegetative cover.

The delay in switching from the NRCS to BWSR partnership was an unanticipated delay in the implementation of this important project. However, now the WRWD is actively progressing and requesting addition time to achieve the desired results.

**Staff Notes:**

- This is not considered a COVID related extension.
- Chart below shows open appropriations and spending to date.

ML	Subd	Approp Amount	Spent to Date	Balance	% spent
2015	2(j)	\$2,270,000	\$1,025,800	\$1,244,200	45%
2017	5(c )	\$600,000	\$0	\$600,000	0%
2019	2(e )	\$2,975,000	\$0	\$2,975,000	0%
2020	2(e )	\$1,888,000	\$0	\$1,888,000	0%

**Chairs’ Notes & Suggestions:**

The Chair and Vice Chair have reviewed this request with staff. While they understand these projects sometimes take more time than expected, a request to extend the project as long as the proposer suggests indicates no urgency to get this accomplished. There are many other projects that have requested funds and completed projects on time getting the funds to work quickly and on schedule. The Chair and Vice Chair recommend the 2015 appropriation only be extended to June 30, 2023 (providing 2 field seasons for restoration work), the 2017 appropriation be extended one year to June 30, 2023, the 2019 appropriation be extended to June 30, 2023 and there be no extension granted for the 2020 appropriation.

**Suggested Motion:**

Motion by Councilmember X to approve the legislative extension of appropriation availability for the following 4 appropriations as part of the Wild Rice Watershed District program:

- 2015 appropriation be extended to June 30, 2023
- 2017 appropriation be extended to June 30, 2023
- 2019 appropriation be extended to June 30, 2023

There be no extension granted for the 2020 appropriation.

**Attachments:**

Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration Project (LWRRCHRP) Applicant Map 1/12/2021