

March 1, 2021

TO: Mark Johnson, Executive Director
LSOHC Members

FROM: Sandy Smith, Project Analyst Manager

RE: **Information on Status Updates due on February 1, 2021**

Status Updates were due for all programs on February 1, 2021. This list is a *snapshot in time* with reporting thru December 2020. Attached are two lists that may be helpful: 1) by approp year with percentages spent to date, 2) by phased program showing final report data and status update figures.

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

As a reminder, acquisition programs have 2 years to commit parcels, one additional year to close, and up to 5 years after closing to restore and enhance that acquired parcel. Restoration/enhancement programs have 5 years to complete work.

As always, let me know if you have questions about a specific program's spending or if you want a copy of a status update.

DNR Initial Development Plan (IDP) Money

It was anticipated the final spending of the ML 14 and ML 15 program IDP monies. An update was provided from DNR and are noted on the spreadsheet.

Extensions of Time and Back Log of OHF Dollars

To address a comment at the January meeting concerning any potential backlog of OHF dollars with the increase in the number of extension requests, to date:

- 6 open appropriations have received previous extensions of time,
- 18 appropriations requested and were granted a [1-year COVID extension](#) as allowed in ML 2020 by the legislature, and
- 19 appropriations have requested extensions in the ML 21 bill that were considered at the last Council meeting or are on this meeting agenda. Of those 19 appropriations, 14 are related to COVID and 5 (covering 2 programs) are unrelated to COVID.

Attached to this memo is a spreadsheet that shows OHF spending and program completion by appropriation year. The extensions are helping programs that just need a "little extra time" be able to close out with successful accomplishments. For example, programs are needing 3-6 more months to resume R/E activities to finish up on a project site that was "shut down," or time to allow vendors to

catch up on the back log of surveying, appraisals, and title work will allow for the closing on committed land deals.

COVID-19 Extensions

As mentioned in the August status update, additional blanket COVID extension language could be helpful for those approp years that were not covered by the ML 2020 legislative COVID extension.

ML 16 – Restoration / Enhancement activities under this appropriation could use an additional year. Of the 14 extensions, 6 fall under this approp year.

ML 17 – Restoration / Enhancement activities under this appropriation could use an additional year. Acquisition programs could benefit from an additional year to close as they were given an additional year to find properties in ML 2020. Of the 14 extensions, 1 falls under this approp year.

ML 18 – All program activities may benefit from a blanket extension of 1 year. Of the 14 extensions, 7 fall under this approp year.

ML 19 – Spending for these programs started July 2019 which was 8 months prior to the C-19 shut down. It is uncertain right now as to whether extensions would be needed for these programs. With many programs receiving annual phased appropriations, it might be a consideration to allow programs with multiple years of appropriations to turn back unspent funds or skip a year between phased requests to get caught up on work.

Programs of Concern

Wild Rice Watershed Program

As mentioned in the [August Status Update Memo](#) this program has been slow to spend and has previously been granted a legislative extension. At this Council meeting, they are on the agenda to ask for a second extension for ML 15 and legislative extension on all of their appropriations.

2015	2(j)	Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration	\$ 2,270,000
2017	5(c)	Goose Prairie	\$ 600,000
2019	2(e)	Lower Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration - Phase II	\$ 2,975,000
2020	2(e)	Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Habitat Restoration - Phase III	\$ 1,888,000
-	-	TOTAL	\$ 7,733,000