

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MEMO: Agenda Item #11 A

DATE: May 26, 2021

SUBJECT: ML 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(b) - \$2,998,000 (\$2,000,000 TPL)
ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(g) - \$3,695,000 (\$2,108,000 TPL)
ML 2021, Ch. XX, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 5(e) - \$2,901,000 (\$1,420,000 TPL)
Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project, Phase 4 & 5

PRESENTER: Bob McGillivray, Trust for Public Land
Tim Terrill - Mississippi Headwaters Board

Suggested Motion:

Motion by Member XX to approve/deny the fee title parcel addition request as outlined in the accomplishment plan for both ML 18 and ML 20 appropriations for Mississippi Headwaters Board and Trust for Public Land to purchase in fee a 2,500 acre parcel known as Laden Lake in Hubbard County for an estimated cost of \$5.0 million from [The Conservation Fund which are part of the former Potlatch properties](#).

Acquisition for the ML 2018 appropriation will expire June 2021, however this appropriation is in the current appropriations bill under consideration with a carryforward extension to June 2022.

Since 2007, the Laden Lake parcel has been leased from Potlach as a [private hunting club](#). The link is provided to give more details about the property.

Background:

The Laden Lake, or Sheep Ranch, parcel exceeds 2500 acres making it one of the largest remaining blocks of private forest in the state. The Trust for Public Land and DNR Forestry (who would be the permanent steward) have been working on the protection of this land for a number of years. It is a high priority for TPL and township and county board approval have already been obtained. Large complexes of public managed forest border this property on all four sides making its acquisition critical for additional access and landscape scale management of the public forest.

If acquired, the property will provide:

- exceptional public recreational opportunities due to its topography, excellent habitat and access
- a high scenic value due to its unique topography of rolling and steep terrain dotted by lakes, ponds and bogs; these factors combined with external pressures also put the property under threat of parcelization and conversion
- a high percentage of productive timberlands well stocked with merchantable species, and if acquired and sustainably managed, will contribute to the region's resource-based economy

- high ecological and habitat value containing habitat for various species identified as endangered, threatened or of special concern
- provide excellent hunting opportunities for game species such as deer and grouse. Protecting forests from conversion to non-forests further protects water quality in lakes and streams and ensures that water quality for fish is protected into the future.

The acquisition of the Sheep Ranch property aligns well with goals found in the state's Forest Action Plan and Assessment of Need. Its size, adjacency to existing public land, timber resource value and threat of conversion make it an ideal property for state forest ownership and management.

TPL / MHB are requesting to add this to the parcel list on their Mississippi Headwaters ML18, 20 and 21 grants to begin the due diligence process (appraisal etc.). TPL intends to seek primary acquisition capital for this parcel in the Mississippi Headwaters LSOHC proposal to be submitted this spring. However, depending on the outcome of several other projects TPL is currently working on, there is a possibility to use some of the acquisition funds from these earlier grants on this project as well.

Attachments:

Potlatch Potentials Addition to MN DNR Division of Forestry Map