

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MEMO: **Agenda Item #10**
DATE: May 24, 2023
SUBJECT: Accomplishment Plan Amendment:
 ML 2020, Ch. 104, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(b) - Metro Big Rivers, Phase 10
PRESENTERS: Deborah Loon, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust
 Vicki Sherry, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS

Suggested Motion:

Motion by Member XX to approve/deny the MN Valley Trust portion of the accomplishment plan amendment shifting remaining fee title acquisition funds to contracts to allow the use of \$801,000 to be used for restoration and enhancement (R/E) activities on existing protected parcels.

Background:

As has been past practice, accomplishment plans with substantive changes come before the Council for approval. We are bringing this proposed change to the Council as the amendment will entirely remove fee title without PILT as a grant-funded activity within the MN Valley Trust portion of the accomplishment plan and move those funds and activities to restoration and enhancement. MN Valley Trust was unable to utilize any the fee acquisition funding by the end of the appropriation availability period and would like to utilize these funds for restoration and enhancement projects instead of sending the funds back to the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

This is the second request by MN Valley Trust to remove fee title acquisition without PILT activities and move funding into restoration and enhancement. The Council reviewed and approved the prior request on July 28, 2022, which amended Metro Big Rivers, Phase 9 (ML 2019, 1st Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Subd. 5(b)). That amendment totaled \$820,000 shift from Fee title to Restoration/Enhancement. ([https://www.lsohc.mn.gov/materials/22_Mtg/07_28_2022/\(R\)MBR_Amend_Memo.pdf](https://www.lsohc.mn.gov/materials/22_Mtg/07_28_2022/(R)MBR_Amend_Memo.pdf))

Amendment Details:

MN Valley NWR Trust States:

“With this amendment, MVT anticipates completing restoration and enhancement work on at least 300 acres. All work will be completed on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and Wetland Management District within the LSOHC's Metro Urbanizing Area.

One significant project will be habitat restoration activities along Ike’s Creek, the only known trout stream in Hennepin County and one of very few in the metro area. Since 2006, Ike’s Creek has been studied by the MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, Minnesota Trout Unlimited and numerous other partners. It was stocked in 2007 with Minnesota Wild brook trout and has continued supporting the fish since then.

The grant will fund the creek restoration design and the actual restoration activities. Anticipated restoration work will solve known challenges facing the creek, including erosion in the upper

section and constriction points in the lower section, thereby improving habitat throughout the stream and ensuring it can continue supporting brook trout.

Other prospective projects are being identified by MVT and USFWS, at which point we will submit a subsequent amendment request to add projects to the parcel list and, if needed, refine the budget and outputs.”

The amendment request:

- Reduces the Fee Title Acquisition without PILT by 300 acres from 337 to 37 acres (Fee Acquisition with PILT remains at 198 acres).
- Increases Restoration and Enhancement by 300 acres from 418 to 718 acres.

Project Manager confirms that the R/E activities will be completed by June 30, 2025 within the availability of the appropriation.

Attachments:

- Accomplishment Plan