

DRAFT MINUTES

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)

July 29, 2026

Hybrid Meeting – MN State Capitol 120 & Zoom, pursuant to MS 13D

Call to Order: Chair David Hartwell called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. [\(0:00:00\)](#)

Members Present	Members Absent
David Hartwell (Chair)	Ron Schara (Vice Chair)
Suzanne Baird	
Rep. John Burkel	
Kristin Eggerling	
Sen. FOUNG Hawj	
Matt Kucharski	
Sen. Andrew Lang	
Darrel Palmer	
Tom Saxhaug	
Ted Suss	
Rep. Samantha Vang	

A quorum was present.

1. Review and Approve Agenda: [\(0:00:54\)](#)

Councilmember Suss made a motion to approve the agenda – **Motion Prevailed**

2. Review and Approve Minutes: [\(0:01:25\)](#)

Councilmember Eggerling made a motion to approve the minutes from June 17, 2026 – **Motion Prevailed**

3. Conflicts of Interest Reported:

(0:01:58)

Councilmember Suss reported two possible perceived conflicts of interest with the ML 2027 funding requests HA03 and HRE10, relating to a possible conflict with Clean Rivers as the managing organization, as well as a possible conflict related to affiliated organizational involvement with funding request HRE11.

4. Chair's Comments:

(0:02:37)

Chair Hartwell thanked Council members for their time in reviewing funding requests and noted that the upcoming proposal review process will be discussed at the meeting.

5. Report from the Executive Director:

(0:03:16)

Executive Director Kristina Smitten noted a revision to the 2026 Council Meetings Calendar to list the August proposal hearings on August 25th and 26th. Director Smitten described a recent private landowner access easement conveyance which was administratively approved. Director Smitten shared an updated document on the status and spending of ML 2022 programs with acquisition dollars budgeted. Director Smitten reported that Council members should expect an invitation to an upcoming 75th anniversary celebration for the Wildlife Management Area program. Director Smitten thanked Council members for their efforts in proposal review and scoring.

6. Discussion/Action: Acquisition of Easement Parcel with Existing Protection

(0:05:34)

Chair Hartwell introduced Sharon Doucette, Easement Section Manager, MN BWSR, who provided an overview of the request to acquire a RIM easement on a property with existing USFWS “no drain/fill/burn” easement protection.

Council discussion followed.

Action:

(0:23:53)

Councilmember Kucharski made a motion to approve the easement acquisition request as presented.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Baird	Hartwell	Schara
Kucharski	Rep. Burkel	
	Eggerling	
	Sen. Hawj	
	Sen. Lang	
	Palmer	
	Saxhaug	
	Suss	
	Rep. Vang	

2 AYES, 9 NAYS, 1 ABSENT – Motion did not prevail.

7. Presentation/Discussion: DNR Roving Crew Proposal Classification [\(0:25:07\)](#)

Chair Hartwell provided an overview of the Council's past practices and historical precedent relating to the classification and funding of the DNR Roving Crew program. In the attached memo, Chair Hartwell and Vice Chair Schara proposed to members the adoption of a procedure to categorize present and future DNR Roving Crew proposals with a proposal ID of "Other" alongside DNR administrative programs. The proposed procedure would allow the Council to allocate funding to Roving Crew proposals at the base level of funding requested to maintain a cohort of 5 crews of up to 8 staff, as opposed to calculating an average allocation based on individual member evaluations. Chair Hartwell noted that this would not require the Council to provide funding or to provide funding at the amount requested.

Action: [\(0:28:53\)](#)

Councilmember Baird made a motion to approve the reclassification of DNR Roving Crews and modifications to Council procedure as presented.

Council discussion followed.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Hartwell		Schara
Baird		
Rep. Burkel		
Eggerling		
Sen. Hawj		
Kucharski		
Sen. Lang		
Palmer		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

11 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed

8. Discussion/Action: ML2027/FY2028 OHF Proposal Review

(0:35:43)

Executive Director Kristina Smitten provided an overview of the documents provided listing individual and cumulative member scoring. Director Smitten stated that the Council should act on the selection of proposals for the August 25th and 26th hearings and adopt by consensus a format and schedule for those hearings.

Council discussion followed related to individual evaluations of funding requests and consideration of a scoring threshold under which those funding requests would not be granted hearings.

Action:

(0:47:20)

Councilmember Eggerling made a motion to grant hearings to all funding requests which were scored above an average of 70, and to exclude three funding requests which scored under 70: PA02, FA01, and HRE11.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYE:	NAY:	ABSENT:
Hartwell		Schara
Baird		
Rep. Burkel		
Eggerling		
Sen. Hawj		
Kucharski		
Sen. Lang		
Palmer		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

11 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed

9. Presentation/Discussion: CPL Program Modifications for ML 2026 Program

(0:50:09)

David Stein, CPL Program Coordinator, MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR), provided an overview presentation on modifications made to the ML 2026 CPL program in response to legislative changes in the CPL appropriation law in M.L. 2026, Regular Session, Chapter 126, Article 1, Section 2, subd. 5(aa). Legislation required the CPL program fund competitive matching grants to organizations within the seven-county metropolitan area and cities with a population of 50,000 or more.

Mr. Stein noted the CPL program will complete two rounds of grant applications, and described allowable activities and expenses, as well as eligible applicants. Mr. Stein described enhanced partner coordination and outreach efforts undertaken by DNR CPL staff to identify eligible partner organizations and encourage the submission of project proposals.

Council discussion followed.

10. Presentation/Discussion: 2025 Legacy Fund Restoration Evaluations Report

(1:36:12)

Wade Johnson, Restoration Evaluations Program Coordinator, and Kyla Tripp, Restoration Evaluations Specialist, MN DNR, presented relevant data, findings, and recommendations as included in the 2025 Legacy Fund Restoration Evaluation Report.

Council discussion followed.

11. Presentation/Discussion: LSOHC OHF Funded Partners Page

(2:04:46)

Tom Rebman, Commission Assistant, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, presented an overview and demonstration of a recently completed webpage undertaken to provide an informational resource listing OHF partner organizations and program achievements. Mr. Rebman explained that this webpage includes images and videos alongside links to articles and informational webpages from partner organizations. OHF partner organizations are encouraged to publicize their program work and accomplishments, and to distribute links to LSOHC staff.

Council discussion followed.

12. Presentation/Discussion: Grassland Monitoring for More Cost-Effective and Ecologically Sustainable Restorations

(2:17:39)

Greg Hoch, Prairie Habitat Supervisor, MN DNR, presented to the Council an overview of recent trends and observations in prairie habitat restoration. Mr. Hoch provided metrics used to evaluate the success of prairie restorations, seeded plant diversity, and related trends in invertebrate and animal populations.

Council discussion followed.

13. Public Testimony

(2:54:14)

Mike Linnemann, Development Director, Minnesota Marine Art Museum, spoke to the Council on their ML 2027 funding request, HRE11, which had not been selected for a hearing. Mr. Linnemann provided an overview of the work planned for the proposed project site, invited any additional feedback, and thanked the Council for their consideration.

Meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.