

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MEMO: Agenda Item #6

DATE: July 29, 2026

SUBJECT: Acquisition of Parcel with Existing Protection

M.L. 2025, Chapter 36, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 2(c) – RIM Grasslands Reserve, Phase 6

PRESENTER: Sharon Doucette, Easement Section Manager, BWSR

Suggested Motion:

Motion by Member XX to approve the conservation easement acquisition of previously protected land as presented. (An affirmative vote of at least nine members of the Council is required.)

Suggested Procedure:

The Council must determine if the proposed conservation easement acquisition meets the statutory requirements of MS 97A.056, Subd. 9, and if so, whether the Council feels the acquisition provides sufficient additional habitat benefit to demand approval.

Background:

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWR) is seeking approval from the Council to allow the use of OHF funding to acquire a 19.6-acre RIM conservation easement that includes 3.1 acres of existing permanently protected lands through a USFWS “no drain/fill/burn” easement in Otter Tail County, MN. BWSR is requesting to permanently protect the entire parcel for wildlife benefits through the RIM conservation easement program. The Council must approve the proposed acquisition because 97A.056, subd. 9 states that any Outdoor Heritage Funds used to acquire existing permanently protected lands must be approved by at least 9 members. The attached memo from BWSR fully describes the proposed acquisition.

MS 97A.056, Subd. 9 states:

(a) Money appropriated from the outdoor heritage fund shall not be used to purchase any land in fee title or a permanent conservation easement if the state of Minnesota or a political subdivision of the state owns the land in fee or if the land is wholly or partially subject to a conservation easement.

(b) Paragraph (a) does not apply if:

(1) the purchase creates additional direct benefit to protect, restore, or enhance the state's wetlands, prairies, forests, or habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and the purchase is approved by an affirmative vote of at least nine members of the council; or

(2) the purchase is for land that is partially subject to a conservation easement and no money appropriated from the outdoor heritage fund is used to pay the purchase price for the portion of land that is subject to the easement. Nothing in this clause prohibits the use of money appropriated from the outdoor heritage fund to pay for costs and other expenses associated with the acquisition of the land as part of the larger acquisition.

(c) For purposes of this subdivision, "conservation easement" means a conservation easement as defined in section [84C.01](#).

Attachments:

- Memo from BWSR and Maps