

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MEMO: Agenda Item #6
DATE: November 5, 2015
SUBJECT: Discussion of Potential Rider Language for ML 2016 Bill
PRESENTER: LSOHC Staff

Today's Suggested Activity: Discussion

Staff is aware of potential rider language for the ML 2016 OHF bill to address two items:

a. **Protecting Pinelands Sands Aquifer Forestlands Phase II, ML 2015, First Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Sub d. 3(c)**

The appropriation language restricts expenditure of funds under this allocation "...to acquire forest lands in Cass and Wadena Counties for wildlife management purposes..." DNR has requested the addition of Hubbard County to the appropriation language. This is largely due to immediate availability of biologically sensitive priority parcels in neighboring Hubbard County. DNR already has a positive County Resolution from Hubbard County regarding acquisition of State Forests and SNAs.

M.L 2015, First Special Session, Chapter 2, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 3(c) Protecting Pinelands Sands Aquifer Forestlands - Phase II

\$2,180,000 in the first year is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire forest lands in **Cass and Wadena Counties** for wildlife management purposes under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 8, and to acquire land in fee for state forests under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 7. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan.

b. **MN Buffers for Wildlife**

While early RIM appropriation language states "...to acquire permanent easements and restore..." Early MN Buffers appropriation language reads differently stating "...to acquire permanent conservation easements to protect and enhance habitat..." LSOHC Staff has reviewed the audio records of appropriate past Council meetings and it is abundantly clear that the intent of the Buffers program and of the Council was for appropriated funds to be used for acquisition and restoration of easements. After consultation with House Research and MMB staff it is apparent that an appropriation language amendment is advisable to properly clarify intent and provide clear support for the restoration activity. This would be a retroactive amendment.

M.L 2011, First Special Session, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 2(c) Minnesota Buffers for Wildlife and Water

\$2,249,000 the first year is to the Board of Water and Soil Resources in cooperation with Pheasants Forever to **acquire permanent conservation easements to enhance habitat** by expanding riparian wildlife buffers on private land. A list of proposed easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan. The accomplishment plan must include an easement monitoring and enforcement plan. Up to \$200,000 is for establishing a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to subdivision 15. An annual financial report is required for any monitoring and enforcement fund established, including expenditures from the fund.

M.L 2011, First Special Session, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 4(a) Reinvest in Minnesota Wetlands Reserve Acquisition and Restoration Program Partnership - Phase III

\$13,000,000 the first year is to the Board of Water and Soil Resources to **acquire permanent conservation easements and restore wetlands and associated upland habitat** in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture Wetlands Reserve Program. A list of proposed land acquisitions must be provided as part of the required accomplishment plan. The accomplishment plan must include an easement monitoring and enforcement plan. Up to \$112,000 is for establishing a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to subdivision 15. An annual financial report is required for any monitoring and enforcement fund established, including expenditures from the fund and a description of monitoring and enforcement activities.