

Lessard - Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Meeting Summary
June 21, 2011

Members Present:

Les Bensch	Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen	Scott Rall
Jim Cox	Jane Kingston	Ron Schara
Wayne Enger	Rep. Leon Lillie	
Chair David Hartwell	Rep. Denny McNamara	

Members Absent:

Ryan Bronson	Sen. Tom Saxhaug
--------------	------------------

Call to order: Call to order at 8:11 a.m. A quorum was present.

Review and approve agenda: Motion by W. Enger to approve the agenda. Motion adopted.

Review and Approve Minutes: June 7, 2011

Motion by S. Rall to approve the minutes. Motion adopted.

Executive Director's Report

1) System analysis for the back office system, which will include a web site that project managers can enter data for proposals and interim and final reporting; staff can generate reports and analysis. The analysis to write an RFP is under \$5,000 and the actual system is estimated at \$50,000 because they are writing original code; members can expect future discussion about proposals received.

2) Call for Request schedule is to close on July 15. Mr. Becker discussed the challenges that state agencies might face in meeting the deadline, if the state goes into special session after June 30. D. Hartwell expressed concerns about work ceasing during this period and recommended that we wait to make a decision based upon the length of a potential shut-down. Members concurred with the "wait and see" and to make adjustments if necessary.

3) Project openings and travel policy. The LSOHC receives many invitations for ribbon cuttings and openings, but cannot afford to attend each and every one. Members are encouraged try and attend events in their areas. Members concurred to pay mileage, not overnight lodging to on a first come, first request basis. We anticipate several requests coming forward.

Treasurer's Report (10:20)

Les Bensch reviewed the Treasurers Report and the February 2011 Fund Statement. Members agreed to consider appropriating the \$96 million in the FY13 Call for Funding Request and adjust as necessary, based on the November Forecast.

Members report any Conflict of Interest on Today's Agenda

No conflict of interest was reported by members for agenda items at this meeting.

Operating Procedures Amendment

Motion by J. Kingston to approve the amendment to the operating procedures as presented, which abolishes the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grants subcommittee and appoints a CPL liaison.

Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Process (15:59)

Pete Skwira, DNR, highlighted the changes to the application process, reviewed the two different CPL applications, and discussed changes that were made based upon feedback received from a survey that was sent out CPL applicants. Mr. Skwira answered questions posed by members.

S. Rall asked about the review committees and how the selection of those members has changed from cycle to cycle. J. Cox asked Mr. Skwira to explain the how the process timeline, including the billing and reimbursement process. S. Rall also asked about future marketing of this program.

Rep. McNamara questioned why the CPL program/DNR pass through process cannot reimburse the contractors directly like the federal government programs do. He requested that Mr. Skwira look at reimbursing the contractors directly through an assignment payment and report back to Council. He also requested that the payment bill forms being used by the DNR be forwarded to members.

Mr. Becker clarified with Mr. Skwira about the funding for CPL staff into FY12. Mr. Skwira stated that they have carry-forward money from FY11 that will roll into FY12 for the staffing of this program.

Legislative Audit and Program Evaluation of Legacy Funds (54:51)

Jim Nobles, Legislative Auditor and Judy Randall, Evaluation Coordinator, updated members on the evaluation and audits occurring for all legacy funds. Mr. Nobles stated that they will be reporting on processes that are working well and those that need improvement. The organizational structure that oversees the funds will be examined to determine if there are clear standards of accountability. The OLA will be evaluating programs on their administrative costs and what it takes to accomplish the goals of the programs. Mr. Nobles stated that a major challenge to programs is the compliance with the constitutionality of the funds and establishing standards. Mr. Nobles stated he welcomes calls from members regarding this audit.

Accomplishment Plan Approvals (1:25:01)

Ms. Koop reviewed the list of accomplishment plans and highlighted the recent changes that have taken place since project managers submitted accomplishment plan drafts in October.

Greg Knopff expressed concern that since the law has not passed yet and the authority for approval of accomplishment plans has not been given yet to the Council, members should consider delegating approval to the executive director, upon passage of the bill. Council accepted the amendment to the motion.

Motion by Sen. Ingebrigtsen to delegate to the Executive Director approval of FY12 accomplishment plans listed on the consent agenda, upon final enactment of the funding recommendations bill. Motion passed.

Members discussed the following accomplishment plans not on the consent agenda.

2(b) Accelerated Prairie Restoration and Enhancement on DNR Lands

Bill Penning, DNR, clarified language that the roving crews described in the accomplishment plan by explaining that the crews might not be working on prairie full time, as there are small forested areas along the Minnesota river and may be spending time doing work in those areas as well. He confirmed that crews will be working within the landscape indicated in the accomplishment plan. Mr. Penning answered questions by members.

Motion by W. Enger to delegate to the Executive Director approval of the *2(b) Accelerated Prairie Restoration and Enhancement on DNR Lands* accomplishment plan, upon final enactment of the funding recommendations bill. Motion passed.

Ms. Koop stated that 6(a) Pass-through contract management will be on the August 23rd Agenda for consideration.

Conservation Easement Roundtable (1:46:54)

The Council heard presentations from the following people and answered question posed by members.

Presenter	Agency
Al Singer	Dakota County
Tom Kroll	St. Johns University Arboretum
Sarah Strommen and Kris Larson	MN Land Trust
Susan Damon and Dick Peterson	DNR
Jim Nobles	Office of the Legislative Auditor
Kevin Lines	Board of Water and Soil Resources

US Farm Bill Roundtable (3:55:25)

The Council heard presentations from the following people and answered question posed by members.

Presenter	Agency
Tim Koehler	US Department of Agriculture/NRCS
Bill Penning	DNR
Barb Weisman	MN Department of Agriculture
Tabor Hoek	Board of Water and Soil Resources
Dave Nomsen	Pheasants Forever
John Beckwith	USDA/MN Farm Service Agency

Chair Hartwell asked if the Council wanted to try and influence congressional leaders regarding the farm bill legislation. Several members said they would be in favor of writing a letter emphasizing more permanence or longer term protection programs. Legislative members seemed cautioned on their involvement in Federal issues. Members concurred that staff would draft a letter for members to review and consider signing at the August 23rd meeting.

Minnesota River Report Roundtable

Glenn Skuta, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, presented a power point summarizing “Revisiting the Minnesota River Assessment Project: An Evaluation of Fish and Invertebrate Community Progress” and answered questions posed by members.

Adjournment (5:21:55)

The meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

APPROVED:

Wayne Enger, Secretary

Date