

Lessard - Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Meeting Summary  
August 23, 2011

**Members Present:**

Les Bensch (phone)  
Ryan Bronson  
Jim Cox  
Chair David Hartwell

Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen  
Jane Kingston  
Rep. Leon Lillie  
Rep. Denny McNamara

Ron Schara  
Sen. Tom Saxhaug

**Members Absent:**

Wayne Enger  
Scott Rall

**Call to order:** Call to order at 8:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

**Review and approve agenda:** Motion by Sen. Saxhaug

**Review and Approve Minutes: June 21, 2011**

Motion by R. Schara to approve the June 21, 2011 minutes. Motion adopted.

**Members report any Conflict of Interest on Today's Agenda (00:01:20)**

Sen. Ingebrigtsen – H RE 06, Zequanox as a Control for Zebra Mussels – stated that the lake cited in the proposal is in his district, however he has no problem with the testing. Chair Hartwell asked member how they felt about it. Director Becker stated that according to procedures Senator Ingebrigtsen would not be conflicted in this case.

J. Cox – HA 02 – Metro Big Rivers Habitat, Phase III -- sits on the board on the National Wildlife Refuge Trust and will not be participating in the discussion of that project.

J. Kingston – PA 04, Minnesota Prairie Recovery Project, Phase III and PA07, Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Land Acquisition -- is a former The Nature Conservancy Trustee and might be a perception of conflict of interest. Mr. Becker stated she has agreed to a "quiet period" for 1 year after leaving the board.

**Executive Director's Report (00:07:34)**

- Reminded member of the schedule in the packet;
- Great River Greening Advance status letter, provided by the DNR, indicating the proper use of the advance funds;
- RFP for a custom built back-office systems to improve efficiency and effectiveness of application and reporting including submission of proposals, accomplishment plans, amendments to AP and target parcel lists;
- The Legislative Auditor Report on the OHF will be released in the fall, perhaps prior to the council's September 20<sup>th</sup> allocation meeting. The council will have time to make allocation recommendation changes in November if report recommends changes;
- Status reports are due September 1, for the period Jan. 1 through June 30, 2011; copies of status report are available upon request;
- Final reports from MN Laws 2009 and MN Laws 2010 have been received and will be posted on the LSOHC website;
- MN Laws 2009, 2e, Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Protection - Due to the inability of the US government to, without Congressional action, place restrictions on land bought with the OHF as required by required by state law, the appropriation of \$1.5 million will be turned back to the Outdoor Heritage Fund.
- Letter from The Trust for Public Land on Dead Lake detailing the terms of the acquisition. LSOHC staff is working on a standard format to collect consistent acquisition information from all managers.

- Per request from June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, staff has drafted a letter to the MN Department of Agriculture regarding the reauthorization of the US Federal Farm Bill. The letter was provided in the packet for Council adoption. Members discussed permanent verses long-term and perpetual conservation measures in regard to easements. Motion by J. Kingston to authorize Chair Hartwell to send the letter with the addition of the word “perpetual” in the second sentence. Motion adopted.

**Presentation: Communication/Information Plan Presentation - Matt Kucharski (00:20:43)**

Mr. Kucharski reviewed the sections of the plan and recommendations for additional public information and answered questions posed by members. Motion by Sen. Saxhaug to adopt the plan as presented. Motion adopted. Mr. Becker informed the Council of an opportunity to participate in an annual omnibus survey conducted by the University of Minnesota. This survey is a cost-effective alternative to a stand-alone survey and provides statistical accuracy and accesses to the entire state. The survey would provide excellent baseline information on the public’s understanding of the Outdoor Heritage Fund. The survey could be taken in 2-4 years after the implementation of some communication plan’s recommendations and would provide a measure of effectiveness.

Motion by J. Kingston to authorize staff to work with the University of Minnesota for questions to be placed in the annual omnibus survey and authorize a budget of up to \$15,000. Motion adopted.

**Presentation: Invasive Species Presentation (00:51:07)**

Members heard the following presentations and had an opportunity for questions and answers.

Luke Skinner, Tim Schlagenhaft, & Gary Montz	DNR
Dr. Vaughan Voller & Dr. Peter Sorenson	University of Minnesota
Paul Labovitz & Dr. John Anfinson	National Park Service (NPS) / Mississippi National River Recreational Area (MNRRA)
Katie Nyberg	Mississippi River Fund

**(03:10:09)** After the presentations, members discussed the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the Council’s role in funding programs to assist with aquatic invasive species.

- Concern that proposals may not be grounded in good conservation science
- The council’s strength is in its flexibility and should entertain future proposals prior to session
- Council should be a player, others to participate, including monetary contributions to a solution/proposal
- Proposals that are not 100% effective should be examined
- Carp have been an issue for some time; the issue is one of scale
- Federal earmarks are important to this effort; however it might be some time before those funds are available. Questions remain about funds from neighboring states, especially Wisconsin
- Possible sources of funding include state bonding as was used to fund the improvements to the Coon Rapids Dam
- There is, at this time, no “silver bullet” solution
- Council to keep the options open and look at this issue for possible funding – stay flexible – may know more later this year or even into session

Members agreed to continue the discussion at end of the day’s agenda.

**Review: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Application Process - Pete Skwira, DNR (03:28:44)**

Mr. Skwira reported that the FY2013 RFP was just released that included an application process for projects under \$25,000. The DNR has expanded outreach efforts to small groups announcing the RFP; and are working on whether a services-rendered reimbursement basis is feasible. He answered questions posed by members.

**Session Report – Heather Koop (03:38:14)**

Ms. Koop updated members on relevant environment and conservation legislation during special session.

**Decision Item: Review member ranking and select requests for hearing (03:46:38)**

Members discussed the difficulty in determining which requests are the best. There were mixed opinions on the number of proposals to hear. J. Cox expressed concern about hearing all requests as some do not have broad support.

Motion by J. Cox to hear the 27 requests with an average score of 35 or greater.

Members discussed the addition of other programs on the hearing list. In the past, members have heard approximately 16 requests per day. Members asked if there were any once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that occur below the 27 mark. Mr. Becker stated the opportunity to purchase prairie is often urgent and a one chance per generation. Members discussed the cut line being arbitrary and the necessity of hearing all requests. Members discussed hearing a few additional to the 27 or hearing them all. Chair asked members if there were any in the top 27 members did NOT want to hear.

Motion adopted (10-0).

**(04:21:05)** Motion by R. Bronson to hear an additional 5 requests for a total of 32 proposals.

J. Kingston requested to amend the R. Bronson motion from 32 to 39. Motion on the amendment adopted (8-2). Motion to hear up to 39 requests. Motion adopted (7-2).

Motion by R. Bronson to eliminate from the hearing list of # 39 (F A 08) Lower Mississippi River Habitat Partnership, #41 (H RE 06) Zequanox Control for Zebra Mussels, and #42 (X 03) Restoration Evaluation. Members discussed the elimination of these three requests.

J. Kingston offered an amendment to include #39 (F A 08) Lower Mississippi River Habitat Partnership, and eliminate 40 (X 02) Contract Management. Amendment accepted by R. Bronson. Motion to eliminate #40 (X 02) Contract Management, #41 (H RE 06) Zequanox Control for Zebra Mussels, #42 (X 03) Restoration Evaluation.

Rep. McNamara clarified hearing Contract Management and Restoration Evaluation Program, assuming that they automatically would receive a hearing and/or would be funded at some level. Mr. Becker suggested that staff could work with Contract Management (X 02) and Restoration Evaluation Program (X 03) to negotiate an accomplishment plan for those two programs.

Motion to hear all requests #28 through #39, with the exception of Contract Management and Restoration Evaluation. Motion adopted (8-2).

Motion by J. Cox for staff to negotiate accomplishment plans for Contract Management and Restoration Evaluation Program. Motion adopted (10-0).

Members discussed the hearing schedule; whether to hold the hearings over two or three days; with the option of working into the evening; and the dates of September 7 & 8 verses September 12 & 13.

Motion by R. Bronson to hear proposals in one longer day and one shorter day. Motion adopted (10-0).

Members agreed to September 7 & 8 dates.

**(04:49:16)** Members revisited the Aquatic Invasive Species agenda item. Members discussed several options. It was decided to hear an update from the Aquatic Invasive Species task force at the September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting and continue discussion of options at that time.

#### **Opportunity for Public to Address the Council**

none

#### **Adjournment (05:12:11)**

The meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Wayne Enger, Secretary

Date