

DRAFT MINUTES

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)

July 30, 2025

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

Call to Order: Chair David Hartwell called the meeting to order at 08:30 a.m. [\(00:00:42\)](#)

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: [\(00:02:17\)](#)

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

2. Review and Approve Minutes: [\(00:02:33\)](#)

Councilmember Saxhaug made a motion to approve the minutes from June 25, 2025 – **Motion Prevailed**

3. Conflicts of Interest Reported: [\(00:02:55\)](#)

Chair Hartwell recommended that the Council discuss conflicts of interest reporting during agenda item number 6, Conflict of Interest Review of Policy and Procedures.

4. Chair's Comments: [\(00:03:13\)](#)

Chair Hartwell thanked the Council for their work in reading and evaluating proposals.

5. Executive Director's Report: [\(00:03:35\)](#)

Executive Director Mark Johnson had nothing to report at this time.

6. Information/Discussion: Conflict of interest (review of policy & procedures) [\(00:03:43\)](#)

Chair Hartwell noted that there were five conflicts disclosed that relate to the ML26 proposals and offered an opportunity for each member to describe the conflict.

Chair Hartwell reported a conflict in that he is the Chair of the Belwin Conservancy in Washington County, Minnesota, which was listed as a proposed work site in Audubon Minnesota's proposal (HRE 01).

Councilmember Palmer reported a potential conflict in that Audubon Minnesota is engaged in funding restoration activities on one of his properties outside of Audubon's OHF-funded work.

Councilmember Kucharski reported a perceived conflict received funding for two habitat diversification projects in western Minnesota. Funds were allocated from BWSR and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, administered by Pheasants Forever.

Rep. Burkel reported a perceived conflict related to a lawsuit in which his family members are plaintiffs in proceedings concerning the Roseau River Watershed District. The lawsuit relates to the Roseau River Restoration (Big Swamp North) plans of the Watershed Board. Executive Director Johnson reported that after discussion with non-partisan legal staff, this was determined not to be an actual conflict.

Councilmember Suss reported a potential conflict in that he serves as an officer of Friends of the Minnesota Valley. The organization intends to apply for CPL grant funding. Chair Hartwell and Executive Director Johnson noted that historical precedent determines that since the CPL program is not administered by the Council, this is not an actual conflict.

7. Discussion / Action: Review and approval of Accomplishment Plan - ML 2025, subd. 4(g), Big Swamp North - Peatland Restoration Project [\(00:12:27\)](#)

Executive Director Johnson provided background information on why this accomplishment plan was not initially approved in June: public concerns in the Roseau area related to the project and the involvement of Minnesota DNR. Mr. Johnson reported that tensions have eased after public meetings of the Watershed Board. Representative Burkel noted that communication has improved and would encourage the Council to approve the accomplishment plan at this time.

Action: Rep. Burkel made a motion for approval of the ML2025 accomplishment plan for subd. 4(g) Big Swamp North – Peatland Restoration Project.

A roll call vote was taken.

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

10 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed

8. Information/Discussion: Executive Director Hiring Process & Update to LSOHC Operating Procedures. [\(00:20:45\)](#)

Chair Hartwell introduced Michelle Yurich, Executive Director of the Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC), and Rosie Lackner, Human Resources Director of the LCC. Ms. Yurich presented updates to the Executive Director hiring process and timeline. Proposed changes to the process include that interviews are to be conducted with LSOHC members and nonpartisan staff as opposed to in public meetings. Any

selected finalist(s) would then come before the full Council which would advance their hiring by motion. The LCC will then make the final appointment.

Executive Director Johnson reported suggested changes to the LSOHC Operating Procedures to align with the updates made to the hiring process.

Action: Councilmember Kucharski made a motion for approval of the updated LSOHC Operating Procedures.

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

Chair Hartwell sought out Councilmember volunteers to participate in the collaborative candidate review process in conjunction with the LCC. Councilmembers Baird, Eggerling, Kucharski, Palmer, and Suss volunteered to participate. Chair Hartwell noted that the group of LSOHC volunteers would be finalized after discussion with LCC staff.

9. Discussion / Action: Prairie Recovery Program Phase III – TNC Request for approval of minor conveyance granting access easement to adjacent landowner.

(00:34:08)

Assistant Director Joe Pavelko provided background information on this request. TNC would grant him access and utility easements to allow use of a two-track path to access his property, which is surrounded by the Ordway Prairie Preserve.

Action: Councilmember Baird made a motion for approval of the request as presented for conveyance granting access easement to the adjacent landowner.

A roll call vote was taken.

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

10 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed

10. Discussion / Action: Retroactive Accomplishment Plan Amendment – MN Forests for the Future [\(00:38:18\)](#)

Executive Director Johnson provided background information on these amendment requests. In examining MN Forests for the Future reporting for ML 2019 and ML 2022, LSOHC staff discovered budget alignment issues as well as a parcel that was closed outside of the availability of funds. MN DNR is requesting retroactive amendments to align budget categories by shifting available funds to professional services, as well as adding the “Sherburne 1” parcel to align with the availability of funds.

Council discussion followed.

Action: Councilmember Suss made a motion for approval of a retroactive amendment request for ML 2019, Phase 7 back to 2-1-2023 for an increased budget shift in Professional Services from \$180,000 to \$464,600.

A roll call vote was taken.

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

9 AYES, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSENT – Motion Prevailed

Action: Councilmember Kucharski moved approval of a retroactive amendment request for ML 2022, Phase 9 back to 7-1-2023 to add the “Sherburne 1” parcel to the approved parcel list.

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

11. Discussion/Action: Receive update and release additional funds from ML 2024 Accomplishment Plan for ML2024, Ch. 106, Art. 1, Sec. 2., Subd. 5(aa): Protecting Upper Mississippi River from Invasive Carp [\(01:35:14\)](#)

Chair Hartwell provided background information for the Council on this project and the request to release additional funds for future activities.

MN DNR staff members Carli Wagner, Invasive Carp Deterrent (LD5) Project Coordinator, Kelly Pennington, Invasive Species Unit Supervisor, and Grace Loppnow, Invasive Fish Coordinator, presented on the project's background, scoping phase updates, and upcoming project activities. Council discussion followed.

Action: Councilmember Baird made a motion for approval of DNR's request to begin Activities 3 and 4 (design and permitting) as presented in the accomplishment plan and DNR Memo (dated July 23, 2025) for costs of up to \$3 million dollars.

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

12. Discussion/Action: ML2026 / FY2027 OHF Proposal Review [\(01:45:00\)](#)

Chair Hartwell and Executive Director Johnson thanked the Council for including comments in their proposal evaluations. Mr. Johnson encouraged the Council to share

any follow-up questions with staff so that responses can be collected from proposal managers prior to the August hearings. Mr. Johnson provided background information on selecting proposals to be heard as well as the format and schedule of those hearings.

Council discussion followed.

Action: Councilmember Baird made a motion to hear presentations from all proposals except for proposals O1, O2, and O3, which will provide presentations in October, and to have proposals WRE01 and WRE04 resubmit a combined proposal.

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

No public testimony was heard.

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.