

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

MEMO: **Agenda Item #11**

DATE: November 12, 2025

SUBJECT: Amendment Request to allow Fee-Acquisition Activity

Suggested Motion:

Motion by Member XX to approve/deny recommendation that the following appropriations be amended to include fee-title acquisition to the listed activities in their Accomplishment Plans:

- A. ML 2023, Ch. 40, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(c) Accelerating Habitat Conservation in Southwest Minnesota
- B. ML 2024, Ch. 106, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(m) Accelerating Habitat Conservation in Southwest Minnesota

A separate motion will be taken for each request. Approved extension will be included in the ML 2026 Appropriation Recommendation Bill recommending the addition of fee-title activity to the appropriation language.

Considerations:

Both ML 23 and 24 Status Updates answered “yes” to the question: “Will you be able to achieve the stated goals within the Availability of the Appropriation as stated in the bill?” The status updates provided no indication of this type of activity shift.

This program is a relatively new program focusing on easements in SW MN, but program managers report in previous updates that it has been difficult to obtain interest in easements in that part of the state.

Should the money be reallocated to a WMA program in which these parcels can be acquired as per the WMA program’s intent?

If approved, can the ML 2023 program complete the anticipated WMA fee-title acquisitions between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026?

Background:

This program was funded in ML 20, ML 23 and ML 24. ML 2020 was the first year in which this program had requested funding.

ML 2020

- ML 2020 Final Report was completed October 23, 2025.
- They accomplished 4 easements totaling 476 acres of the 550 anticipated – total cost of \$2.1 million.
- The 4 easements were all optioned by the availability deadline of June 30, 2023 and all closed in the additional year allowed by law (June 30, 2024).

- One of the parcels was split and paid for a portion out of ML 23.

ML 2023

- This program has spent \$167,000 out of \$2.386m on easements with the availability expiring on June 2027.
- They have submitted 3 amendments adding 11 parcels to the list for easement.
- The most recent Status Update did not indicate that they could not complete what was proposed: “The Minnesota Land Trust has closed on the Little Rock River (Johnson) conservation easement and is currently pursuing three active conservation easement projects under this grant.”

ML 2024

- ML 24 has spent \$0 out of \$1.420m on easements and expires in June 2028.
- Most recent Status Update indicated: “Minnesota Land Trust continued protection outreach activities during this reporting period. Activities included the purchase of parcel data for counties without publicly available data, the alignment of parcels to priority areas, creation of content about the program for a mailing, and compilation of the mailing list. A targeted, direct mailing is planned for late summer 2025.”

Attachments

- Email from Minnesota Land Trust
- Accomplishment Plans:
 - ML 2023, Ch. 40, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 5(c) Accelerating Habitat Conservation in Southwest Minnesota
 - ML 2024, Ch. 106, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(m) Accelerating Habitat Conservation in Southwest Minnesota