



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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August 27, 2009

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Natural Resources: Section 13.10 Request for the Use of Federal Economic Stimulus Funding for a Fish Habitat Restoration Project -- Agenda Item II

REQUEST

The Governor submitted a request dated August 14, 2009 for allocation and expenditure of \$16,800 received under fish and wildlife habitat restoration provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Of this amount, \$16,600 would be used for a large woody habitat rehabilitation project in the shoreline areas of the Eau Claire Chain of Lakes in Bayfield and Douglas Counties and \$200 would be used for the costs of administering the federal grant.

BACKGROUND

Of the \$3 billion appropriated to the Department of the Interior under the ARRA, the act provides \$280 million for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including \$165 million for wildlife habitat restoration, deferred maintenance, and capital improvement projects. The act provided \$24,000 in fish habitat restoration funding to the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership (MGLP) and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Of this, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service retained \$7,200 for federal grant administration, leaving \$16,800 available for woody habitat restoration in northwest Wisconsin.

The Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership (MGLP) is one of eight federally-recognized partnerships under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP). Under NFHAP, federal, state, tribal, and privately-raised funds are leveraged through regional partnerships to address fish habitat challenges. MGLP works to restore and protect fish habitat in glacial lakes and involves conservation and homeowner groups and natural resource agencies across the Midwest including Illinois DNR, Indiana DNR, Iowa DNR, Michigan DNR, Minnesota DNR, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Wisconsin DNR, the

Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

ANALYSIS

The Governor's request would utilize \$16,600 in 2009-10 made available under a federal continuing appropriation for water program operations [s. 20.370(4)(mz)] for a fish habitat restoration project in the Eau Claire Chain of Lakes in Bayfield and Douglas Counties. The Eau Claire Chain of Lakes is made up of three larger lakes- Upper Eau Claire, Middle Eau Claire, and Lower Eau Claire - and eight smaller spring-fed lakes. In addition, \$200 in 2009-10 would be used for the costs of administering the federal grant made available under a federal continuing appropriation for indirect cost reimbursements [s. 20.370(8)(mz)].

The project would involve placement of large logs along the Eau Claire Chain of Lakes shoreline to provide critical fish habitat. Many species utilize woody habitat for at least part of their life cycle, such as spawning. Past land use practices, specifically logging, have reduced large woody habitat along many lake shorelines. The project would take place in the winter when sufficient ice has formed on the lakes. DNR would contract with a heavy equipment contractor to transport and place logs on the ice along the shore of willing riparian landowner properties. The trees would then fall into place along the shoreline during the spring thaw. Of the \$16,600, \$14,600 would be utilized for contract expenses.

In addition, the Department plans to allocate 80 hours of LTE time to the project to assist in cutting and moving trees from upland sources onto the ice, as well as placing and securing the logs in the ideal positions. DNR LTE staff would also assist in coordinating with local landowners along the shoreline. LTE costs of \$2,000 would include salary, fringe, travel, and supplies. Finally, DNR would use \$200 for administration of the grant available from federal indirect cost reimbursements.

If the Committee does not approve the request, DNR indicates the Department would defer the project indefinitely until alternate funding sources could be found.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve \$16,800 FED in 2009-10 of federal economic stimulus funds for a fish habitat restoration project in the Eau Claire Chain of Lakes, including \$16,600 in appropriation 20.370(4)(mz) and \$200 in appropriation 20.370(8)(mz).

2. Deny the request.

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