

Diana Griffith

From: Schulte, Judy (DNR) <judy.schulte@state.mn.us>
Sent: Monday, June 05, 2017 4:39 PM
To: Diana Griffith
Subject: ML17 Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Dear LCCMR,

I was able to reduce the ML17 Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition dollar amount to \$2,675,000 while leaving the acquisition and enhancement outcomes intact. It was not easy by any means and it may be hard for us to reach these new goals but we are willing to give it a try if that is the best solution.

A few things made this possible:

1. The Native Prairie Bank payment rates were recently reviewed and lowered. This occurred after I put the ML17 proposal together. We were able to lower the cost per acre to acquire an easement. This was a large part of the savings. The ML18 proposal already accounts for this reduction so if this same scenario were to happen again, it would be impossible to achieve this same goal. I figure without the proposal reduction we actually would have been able to acquire more like 450 acres, exceeding goals by 115 acres.
2. I moved the 10 acres of restoration to prescribed burning. The cost of restoration per acre is significantly higher than burning so it allowed us to hit the same “restore and enhance” outcomes for less. As for the restorations that would have been conducted with these funds, we will try to apply for funding through the ML18 ENRTF or OHF requests to get the work done.
3. I eliminated the Prairie Landowner network which will decrease our capacity to work with landowners to help insure prairie health (will be included in ML18 proposal). This includes eliminating a full time CCM individual placement person for 2 years.
4. We will no longer be increasing Prairie Tax Exemption enrollment, the only funds remaining tied to that activity will be used to initiate the creation of a database to help improve the tracking and communication with assessors and landowners.

Beyond the larger cuts noted above, I had to make smaller cuts everywhere, including some additional reductions in deliverables not specifically referenced in the appropriation language. I squeezed every last dollar I felt we could to get the Commission the best outcomes possible given the circumstances. It’s not an exact 24% cut to every activity but it’s the closest I could get and still have a chance at meeting the deliverables placed into law. Landowner Assistance did end up taking the largest % cut since those outcomes were not noted in law.

Thanks again,

Judy Schulte

Prairie Biologist | Division of Ecological & Water Resources

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Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2017 LCCMR Work Plan

Date of Submission: May 30, 2017

Date of Next Status Update Report: November 1, 2017

Date of Work Plan Approval:

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2020

Does this submission include an amendment request?

PROJECT TITLE: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Project Manager: Judy Schulte

Organization: MN DNR – SNA Program

Mailing Address: 1241 East Bridge Street

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Web Address: www.dnr.state.mn.us

Location: Statewide

Total ENRTF Project Budget:

ENRTF Appropriation: \$2,675,000

Amount Spent: \$0

Balance: \$2,675,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09e

Appropriation Language:

\$2,675,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire native prairie bank easements in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, on approximately 335 acres, prepare baseline property assessments, restore and enhance at least 570 acres of native prairie sites, and provide technical assistance to landowners. Of this amount, up to \$132,000 may be deposited in a conservation easement stewardship account. Deposits into the conservation easement stewardship account must be made upon closing on conservation easements or at a time otherwise approved in the work plan. A list of proposed easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required work plan. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2020, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Native prairie will be permanently protected and conservation actions by prairie landowners will be increased through a suite of tools offered by the DNR Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program. Of Minnesota’s 235,000 acres of remaining native prairie, about 100,000 acres have no form of protection. Threats to native prairie are widespread including cropland conversion, mining, development, invasive species, woody encroachment and non-prairie focused land use/management. Since native prairie is a fragile, unique natural resource that provides exceptional water quality, wildlife and pollinator benefits, these threats are extremely disheartening. The MN Prairie Conservation Plan provides a road map for all partners to pursue the protection of all remaining native prairie over the next 20 years – this project is one of those efforts. About 230 acres of native prairie will be permanently protected through acquisition of Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements with priority given to high quality prairie identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS). The current landowner “waiting list” for NPB includes over 85 projects for over 5200 acres with an estimated easement value of over 14 million dollars. Native prairie restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on about 570 acres of NPBs threatened by invasive species and lack of natural disturbance regimes. Enrollment will be accelerated in Native Prairie Tax Exemption through outreach and the creation of a web-based online application process. Prairie technical assistance will be provided to landowners and practitioners including a new “Prairie Landowner Network” created to increase cooperation among prairie landowners.

III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of November 1, 2017:

Project Status as of March 1, 2018:

Project Status as of September 1, 2018:

Project Status as of March 1, 2019:

Project Status as of September 1, 2019:

Project Status as of March 1, 2020:

Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: NPB Acquisition of Prairie of Biodiversity Significance

Description: DNR-administered NPB conservation easements will be acquired on about 230 acres of high quality native prairie, which will include no more than 15% non-prairie necessary to improve prairie management. Payment rates are determined by authorizing law, M.S. 84.96, as applied according to policies of the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Water and Soils Resources. Conservation easement baseline reports will be completed on 20 NPBs, including all of those acquired with this funding. Monitoring will be done on 20 NPB easements. Priority sites for acquisition are identified by MBS which target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, and key habitats for Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). If needed, restoration will be completed on newly acquired lands using a combination of funds from Activity 2 below and/or other state appropriations. Only about 10 of the 335 acres acquired are expected to need restoration.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 1,075,779
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 1,075,779

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. acquisition of about 230 acres NPB conservation easements | 6/30/2020 |
| 2. ~20 baseline property reports for NPB easements | 6/30/2020 |
| 3. monitoring and stewardship of ~20 NPB easements | 6/30/2020 |

Activity 1 Status as of November 1, 2017:

Activity 1 Status as of March 1, 2018:

Activity 1 Status as of September 1, 2018:

Activity 1 Status as of March 1, 2019:

Activity 1 Status as of September 1, 2019:

Activity 1 Status as of March 1, 2020:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 2: Long-Term Easement Stewardship

Description: The policy of the DNR is to protect both the conservation values of the property protected by these easements and the investment of the state in those interests. Elements of this stewardship include the creation of baseline property reports, enforcement protocols, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and reporting, and maintaining effective working relationships with the owners of these easement properties. Native Prairie Bank implements this policy by following DNR Operational Order #128 "Conservation Easement Stewardship" in addition to the "Ecological and Water Resources Division Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines". This operational order and supporting division guidance calls for annual landowner contacts as well as on-the-ground site evaluations once every three years if no violations are found. If a violation is found, monitoring would occur annually until the violation is corrected.

Budgeted into this work plan is funding to be deposited into the DNR's Conservation Easement Stewardship Account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements. The dedicated stewardship funds will provide the support needed for long-term, ongoing monitoring and minor enforcement activities of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal. For Native Prairie Bank easements, the DNR has estimated that annual expenses for each project and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 110,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 110,000

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. dollars deposited into conservation easement stewardship account (~6 easements) | 6/30/2020 |

Activity 2 Status as of November 1, 2017:

Activity 2 Status as of March 1, 2018:

Activity 2 Status as of September 1, 2018:

Activity 2 Status as of March 1, 2019:

Activity 2 Status as of September 1, 2019:

Activity 2 Status as of March 1, 2020:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 3: Native Prairie Restoration & Enhancement

Description: Restoration and enhancement activities, based on the best scientific and technical knowledge, will be completed on about 570 acres. Activities include seed collection, site preparation, planting, invasive species treatment, woody species removal, boundary signing, site cleanup, prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance, such as haying, mowing or grazing, where appropriate) and monitoring. All restorations will use seeds/plants of local ecotypes, collected from onsite or within 30 miles. Adaptive Management Monitoring will occur at 13 NPB sites to evaluate whether the objectives of management were met and to contribute to future management decisions. Restoration and enhancement activities would be carried out via landowner agreements, DNR staff, Conservation Corps MN (CCM), volunteers, and/or contractors.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 3:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 808,539
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 808,539

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. ~10 acres of prairie reconstruction (restoration) | 6/30/2020 |
| 2. ~200 acres of woody removal & invasive species treatment | 6/30/2020 |
| 3. ~360 acres of prescribed burns | 6/30/2020 |
| 4. NPB easement boundary signs & development work on ~8 NPB sites | 6/30/2020 |
| 5. adaptive management monitoring on ~13 NPB sites | 6/30/2020 |

Activity 3 Status as of November 1, 2017:

Activity 3 Status as of March 1, 2018:

Activity 3 Status as of September 1, 2018:

Activity 3 Status as of March 1, 2019:

Activity 3 Status as of September 1, 2019:

Activity 3 Status as of March 1, 2020:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 4: Native Prairie Landowner Assistance & Incentives

Description: Private landowners and other practitioners will increase their stewardship of native prairie through workshops, field days, one-on-one consultations, and other strategies. Federal funds will be leveraged in the creation and distribution of Landowner Handbooks, which will provide guidance and expertise to landowners of prairie and forest lands in the prairie subsections of Minnesota. A Prairie Landowner Network will be established in cooperation with Conservation Corps of Minnesota as a new innovative way to connect prairie landowners through U.S. mail, social media, email, newsletters, training opportunities, etc. This network is aimed at improving prairie quality on private lands by keeping landowners up-to-date on the best science-based management strategies. At least 20 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan that will provide specific prairie condition, protection and management expertise for their property. Landowner enrollment in Native Prairie Tax Exemption will be increased to conserve and improve management on native prairie acres which may not yet be protected permanently through other means. An online Prairie Tax Exemption application system will be created to allow private landowners to apply online in addition to providing online access to county assessors and DNR staff to improve the certification process.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 4:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 680,682
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 680,682

| Outcome | Completion Date |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. ~8 workshops/field days for prairie landowners & practitioners (~600 people) | 6/30/2020 |
| 2. consultations, guidance, mgmt. asst., etc. to ~80 landowners | 6/30/2020 |
| 3. 3 Prairie Subsection Landowner Handbooks (~10,000 copies plus web access) | 6/30/2020 |
| 4. Establish Prairie Landowner Network (reach out to 1,000 landowners) | 6/30/2020 |
| 5. ~20 prairie stewardship plans provided to prairie landowners (~1500 acres) | 6/30/2020 |
| 6. ~25 new enrollees in Native Prairie Tax Exemption via new web-app. | 6/30/2020 |

Activity 4 Status as of November 1, 2017:

Activity 4 Status as of March 1, 2018:

Activity 4 Status as of September 1, 2018:

Activity 4 Status as of March 1, 2019:

Activity 4 Status as of September 1, 2019:

Activity 4 Status as of March 1, 2020:

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: Copies of Stewardship Plans are provided to local DNR managers and used by the landowner with other agencies and programs. Workshops and field days will be listed on the [SNA Website](#), and advertised locally via mailings and flyer postings. U.S. mailings, social media, email, and newsletters will be created and distributed

to prairie landowners as part of the creation of the Prairie Landowner Network. Landowner Handbooks will be made available to landowners online and at multiple outreach events.

Status as of November 1, 2017:

Status as of March 1, 2018:

Status as of September 1, 2018:

Status as of March 1, 2019:

Status as of September 1, 2019:

Status as of March 1, 2020:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:

***This section represents an overview of the preliminary budget at the start of the project. It will be reconciled with actual expenditures at the time of the final report.**

| Budget Category | \$ Amount | Overview Explanation |
|---|------------|--|
| Personnel: | \$ 847,768 | Acquisition and Management Coordinators & Prairie Biologist (0.5 FTE spread across 4 people for 2-yrs)=~\$81,000 Specialist and Technician (4.6 FTE spread across 6 people for 2-yrs)=~\$658,968 Laborer and seasonal crews (1.5 FTE spread across 3-5 people for 2-yrs)=~\$107,800 |
| Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: | \$ 534,000 | Professional/technical Contractors: the state bid process will be used for adaptive management monitoring, landowner handbook writing services and the development of Prairie Stewardship Plans (~\$205,000). CCM Individual Placement will occur to aid in the creation of the Prairie Tax Exemption Online System and the Prairie Landowner Network (~\$76,000) Service contracts: will use CCM or the state bid process for completing prairie restoration/reconstruction, woody encroachment removal & exotics control, and prescribed burning/mowing projects (\$253,000). |
| Equipment/Tools/Supplies: | \$ 46,750 | Supplies, parts, tools, & repair costs, including safety items, hand tools, etc.; signs & posts; workshop & event supplies |
| Easement Acquisition: | \$ 700,000 | Estimate securing about 5 easements for 230 acres that will be held by the MN DNR - SNA Program |

| | | |
|--|------------|--|
| Long-Term Easement Stewardship | \$ 110,000 | Funds will be deposited into conservation easement account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements |
| Professional Services for Acquisition: | \$ 104,000 | Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition; anticipate about 5 transactions; cost/transaction vary between projects. |
| Printing: | \$16,600 | Printing and mailing of baseline property reports (~\$600), Printing of ~10,000 Landowner Handbooks (~\$16,000) |
| Travel Expenses in MN: | \$ 175,700 | Fleet charges for trucks, cars, & equipment, e.g. mowers, seeders; mileage, lodging & meals as per state contracts |
| Other: CCM Individual Placement Office Costs | \$2,247 | Computer monthly charges for CCM individual placement position |
| Other: Landowner Handbook | \$15,000 | DNR Creative Services Graphic Design for creation of Landowner Handbooks (Activity 3 Outcome 3) |
| Other: Prairie Tax Exemption Online System | \$30,000 | MNIT Services assistance in the creation of an online application system (Activity 3 Outcome 6) |
| Other: Direct & Necessary Costs: | \$92,935 | *DNR costs for the appropriation, see below |
| TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET: \$2,675,000 | | |

*Direct and Necessary expenses include Department Support Services (Human Resources, IT Support, Safety, Financial Support, Communications Support, Planning Support, and Procurement Support). Department Support Services are described in the agency Service Level Agreement, and billed internally to divisions based on rates that have been developed for each area of service. These services are directly related to and necessary for the appropriation. Department leadership services (Commissioner's Office and Regional Directors) are not assessed. Those elements of individual projects that put little or no demand on support services such as large single-source contracts, land acquisitions (landowner payments & transaction costs), and funds that are passed-thru to other entities are not assessed Direct and Necessary costs for those activities. For this work plan, CCM contracts (~\$137,000), MNIT service level agreement (~\$30,000) and DNR Creative Services (~\$15,000), Long-Term Easement Stewardship (~110,000), Easement Acquisition (~\$700,000) and Professional Services for Acquisition (~\$104,000) have not been assessed Direct and Necessary costs. In addition to itemized costs captured in our proposal budget, direct and necessary costs cover HR Support (~\$19,211), Safety Support (~\$5,381), Financial Support (~\$20,805), Communication Support (~\$5,264), IT Support (~\$437,838), Planning Support (~\$3,648), and Procurement Support (~\$788) that are necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects.

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the SNA program, this funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. These positions would not exist, but for special project funding received through the ENRTF and other funds. Each year these positions are assigned work based on the particular combination of soft funding available to address priority SNA Program activities.

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: NA

Total Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: A total of 13.2 FTE's spread across 13-15 different people.

Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF

Appropriation: How many employees a future contractor will use, the hours they will work, or what salary they may pay their employees is not known. What is known is that \$534,000 in contracts will be executed.

B. Other Funds:

| Source of Funds | \$ Amount Proposed | \$ Amount Spent | Use of Other Funds |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|
| Non-state | \$30,000 | \$0 | Federal forestry match of \$30,000 will be used in the creation of the 3 Prairie Section Landowner Handbooks. Additionally, landowners often contribute towards management activities, these costs will not tracked. |
| State | \$3,000 | \$0 | CCM Individual Placement office space rent, desk, chair |
| State | \$0** | \$0** | Some NPB acquisitions are funded with a combination of state appropriations (e.g. OHF and Critical Habitat Match). If any other funds are used for landowner payments for acquisitions funded in part with this appropriation, accomplishments will be pro-rated by the actual expenditures per funding source. |
| TOTAL OTHER FUNDS: | \$33,000 | \$0 | |

** As indicated below, Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations for acquisition and prairie restoration and enhancement occur concurrently with this ENRTF appropriation. These OHF funds are used for similar but separate projects as the ENRTF funding. As of May 30, 2017, the Outdoor Heritage Council and H.F. 707 (passed by both House & Senate) has recommended \$2,481,000 to Native Prairie Bank for acquisition and \$130,160 for prairie restoration and enhancement for ML 2017.

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding

To accelerate efforts, the Native Prairie Bank Program is coordinating with Minnesota Prairie Plan partners and using the network of established Local Technical Teams (LTT's) to reach out to landowners and increase program enrollment. The LTT's are local staff from SWCD's, NRCS, DNR, USFWS, The Nature Conservancy and Pheasants Forever - to name a few. The LTT's have already begun cultivating relationships with prairie landowners and eagerly await funding to deliver this program to willing landowners. Funds from this appropriation will not be used to fund these partner activities.

Federal forestry match of \$30,000 will be used in the creation of the 3 Prairie Section Landowner Handbooks. This funding will be used to aid in the creation and review of the handbooks. Approximately 10,000 handbooks will be printed with this appropriation for distribution to landowners. Additional handbooks will likely be printed with Federal Forestry dollars as well.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: Currently, DNR holds 11,600 acres of NPB easements, which accounts for 40% of the MBS mapped native prairie protected through conservation easements statewide. If NPB aimed to protect 40% of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan native prairie easement protection goals, NPB would need to acquire an additional 44,000 acres. At the same time, without on-going active natural resource management prairie values will be lost.

C. Funding History:

| Funding Source and Use of Funds | Funding Timeframe | \$ Amount |
|--|--------------------------|------------------|
| ENRTF ML13, Ch52, Sec. 2, Subd4c: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Acquisition | July 2013-June 2016 | \$750,000 |
| ENRTF ML15, Ch76, Sec2, Subd9d: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Acquisition | July 2015-June 2018 | \$3,325,000 |
| OHF ML13, Ch137, Art1, Sec2, Subd4g: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only) | July 2013-June 2018 | \$ 96,110 |
| OHF ML13, Ch137, Art1, Sec2, Subd4c: SNA & NPB acquisition (estimated NPB portion only) | July 2013-June 2018+ | \$ 753,500 |
| OHF ML14, Ch256, Art1, Sec2, Subd4h: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only) | July 2014-June 2019 | \$ 285,650 |
| OHF ML14, Ch256, Art1, Sec2, Subd2e: NPB acquisition | July 2014-June 2019+ | \$ 3,000,000 |
| OHF ML15, First Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd2e: Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection | July 2015-June 2018 | \$3,740,000 |
| OHF ML15, First Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd2k: Accelerated Prairie Restoration & Enhancement (estimated NPB portion only) | July 2015-June 2020 | \$125,000 |
| OHF ML16, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd2f: Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection | July 2016-June 2019 | \$2,541,000 |
| OHF ML16, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd2j: Accelerated Prairie Restoration & Enhancement (estimated NPB portion only) | July 2016-June 2021 | \$215,000 |

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- The project is for 3 years, will begin on 07/01/2017, and end 06/30/2020.
- Periodic project status update reports will be submitted March 1 and September 1 of each year, with the first status report being submitted by November 1, 2017.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and September 1, 2020.

IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S): See attached priority area map. A final map will be created once parcels are acquired and specific locations are known.

X. FEE TITLE ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION EASEMENT/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS:

A. Parcel List: See attached Parcel List

B. Acquisition/Restoration Information:

Conservation Easement Acquisition

- 1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.**

Eligibility for Native Prairie Bank is established in both M.S. 84.96 and MN Rule 6136.09. To qualify, land must be covered by native prairie vegetation and have never been plowed. Eligible lands are prioritized based on factors including: size, quality and diversity of the native prairie habitat; occurrence of, or suitable habitat for rare species; location relative to other native prairie and/or public land; and potential for long-term habitat management and enhancement. MBS data is the foundation for many of these evaluation factors. Native Prairie Bank uses the "Native Prairie Bank Evaluation Form" to evaluate and score individual projects.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.

- [Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan](#)
- [Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025](#)
- [Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda](#)
- [Minnesota's Statewide Conservation Plan](#)

3. For any conservation easement acquired, a restoration and management must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

Each parcel acquired as a new NPB will have a Prairie Stewardship Plan. Prairie Stewardship Plans include, 1) a resource inventory and assessment of all the lands be native plant communities or restored to plant communities that would have been native to the site, 2) landowner and DNR's goals, and 3) prairie management alternatives/recommendations. The goals for the NPB's management are based upon soils, topography, geology, and other factors necessary to sustain the plant community. Each plan includes an implementation timetable which summarizes ongoing management needs and a statement on funding. Long-term management costs (e.g. invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and ecological monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including, but not limited to, the landowner, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated. Each Prairie Stewardship Plan is kept in a DNR internal shared electronic filing system accessible to all SNA staff.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

DNR policy is to notify the county assessor prior to easement closing, however county board approval is not requested.

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction. A copy of the written approval should be provided to LCCMR.

As part of the DNR acquisition process, all NPB acquisitions are required to have approval of the Ecological and Water Resources Division Director and land conveyances are accepted by the Director or Deputy Director of the Division of Lands and Minerals who have delegated authority to approve this for the Commissioner.

6. Provide a statement addressing how conservation easements will address specific water quality protection activities, such as keeping water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, protecting groundwater, and not permitting artificial hydrological modifications.

Native Prairie Bank’s goal is to protect existing high quality, high functioning native prairie that currently is providing multiple water quality benefits. In addition, the easement terms and the Prairie Stewardship Plan they are required to follow assures that the prairie health is sustained, thus they inherently do an excellent job of keeping the water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, and protecting groundwater. In addition, use of pesticides on the easement is prohibited without approval of the DNR. The easement terms also prohibit artificial hydrological modifications by prohibiting excavation, cultivations, drainage, filling, and irrigation.

7. Describe the long-term monitoring and enforcement program for conservation easements acquired on parcels by your organization, including explanations of the process used for calculating conservation easement monitoring and enforcements costs, the process used for annual inspection and reporting on monitoring and enforcement activities, and the process used to ensure perpetual funding and implementation of monitoring and enforcement activities.

The policy of the DNR is to protect both the conservation values of the property protected by these easements and the investment of the state in those interests. Elements of this stewardship include the creation of baseline property reports, enforcement protocols, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and reporting, and maintaining effective working relationships with the owners of these easement properties. Native Prairie Bank implements this policy by following DNR Operational Order #128 “Conservation Easement Stewardship” in addition to the “Ecological and Water Resources Division Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines”. This operational order and supporting division guidance calls for annual landowner contacts as well as on-the-ground site evaluations once every three years if no violations are found. If a violation is found, monitoring would occur annually until the violation is corrected.

Budgeted into this work plan is funding to be deposited into the DNR’s Conservation Easement Stewardship Account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements. The dedicated stewardship funds will provide the support needed for long-term, ongoing monitoring and minor enforcement activities of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal. For each specific Native Prairie Bank easement, initial investment dollars are determined by using a DNR approved Conservation Easement Stewardship Calculator, which estimates the annual expenses and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity.

Funds for this activity will be deposited into the established conservation easement stewardship account and Minnesota Management & Budget protocols will be adhered to. After the closing of each Native Prairie Bank easement acquired with this appropriation, the calculated easement stewardship funds will be deposited into this account. Once funds are deposited and interest begins to accrue, this accrued interest will be applied towards actual expenses tied to annual landowner contact, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and minor enforcement protocols.

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

All restoration activities done with this appropriation are on DNR-owned perpetual Native Prairie Bank lands administered by the SNA Program.

2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.

Each restoration project will be based upon a Native Prairie Stewardship Plan (ecological restoration and management plan) and/or project plan with goals for reconstructing plant communities that are native to the site that are based upon soils, topography, geology, and other factors necessary to sustain the plant community. Each plan includes an implementation timetable which summarizes ongoing management needs. Each restoration and management plan and project plan is kept in a DNR internal shared electronic filing system accessible to all SNA staff.

3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.

The SNA Program follows or exceeds the recommendations found in the BWSR “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines”. NPB restorations typically follow the current BWSR Guidelines, including Project Guidance, Plant Community Restoration, and Temporary Cover. The SNA Program follows the general direction of the BWSR Guidelines for “Recommended Steps for Obtaining Plant Materials”, and has additional and more restrictive requirements for restoration material sources. Specifically, restoration and management of DNR lands are governed by DNR Operational Order #124 on “Plant Material Standards for Native Plant Community Restoration” and DNR Operational Order #130 on “Pollinator Habitat” (which include BMPs).

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

Long-term management costs (e.g. invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to, the landowner, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

DNR has a standing general contract with CCM under which the SNA Program often does project or activity specific agreements. For restoration projects, CCM has been and will continue to be used when appropriate for hand seed harvest. CCM also does some invasive species control on NPBs and will be considered on restoration projects for post-planting weed control.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

Restoration projects will be evaluated and a report submitted to the LCCMR to ascertain how well the native plants have been established and non-natives controlled. The evaluation reports include a summary of management plan outcomes, activities completed through the project, map of the project area, a statement of ongoing management needs and funding, and a summary of the evaluation.

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2017 Project Budget**

Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09e

Project Manager: Judy Schulte

Organization: MN DNR – SNA Program

M.L. 2017 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 3,500,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 Years, June 30, 2020

Date of Report: October 19, 2016



| ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET | Activity 1 Budget | Amount Spent | Activity 1 Balance | Activity 2 Budget | Amount Spent | Activity 2 Balance | Activity 3 Budget | Amount Spent | Activity 3 Balance | Activity 4 Budget | Amount Spent | Activity 4 Balance | TOTAL BUDGET | TOTAL BALANCE |
|--|--|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|--|--------------|--------------------|--|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| BUDGET ITEM | <i>Native Prairie Bank Acquisition</i> | | | <i>Long-Term Easement Stewardship</i> | | | <i>Prairie Restoration & Enhancement</i> | | | <i>Native Prairie Landowner Assistance</i> | | | | |
| Personnel (Wages and Benefits) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| This funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. These positions would not exist, but for special project funding received through the ENRTF and other funds. | \$281,600 | | \$281,600 | | | | \$358,168 | | \$358,168 | \$278,500 | | \$278,500 | \$918,268 | \$918,268 |
| Acquisition and Management Coordinators & Prairie Biologist (0.6 FTE for 2-yr) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist and Technician (5.0 FTE spread across 6 people for 2 yrs) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Laborer and seasonal crews (1.5 FTE spread across 3-5 people for 2 yrs) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Professional/Technical/Service Contracts | \$0 | | \$0 | | | | \$288,000 | | \$288,000 | \$246,000 | | \$246,000 | \$534,000 | \$534,000 |
| Professional/Technical Contracts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activity 3-Outcome 5 (~\$35,000) Adaptive Management Monitoring (~14 NPBs). | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activity 4-Outcome 3 (~\$15,000) Prairie Subsection Landowner Handbooks (3 handbooks/10,000 copies) contractors to be selected for writing services following state procurement & bidding processes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activity 4-Outcome 4 (~\$38,000) Landowner Network & Outcome 6 (~\$38,000) Prairie Tax Exemption Online System (30 new Enrollees) CCM Individual Placement | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activity 4-Outcome 5 (~\$155,000) Prairie Stewardship Plans (~20 plans) Contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding processes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Service Contracts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Direct & Necessary Costs DNR's direct and necessary costs pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. This includes HR Support (~\$20,888), Safety Support (~\$5,850), Financial Support (~\$21,933), Communication Support (~\$5,264), IT Support (~\$40,986), Planning Support (~\$3,648), and Procurement Support (~\$788) | \$19,936 | | \$19,936 | | | | \$44,280 | | \$44,280 | \$35,142 | | \$35,142 | \$99,356 | \$99,356 |
| COLUMN TOTAL | \$1,852,160 | \$0 | \$1,852,160 | \$132,000 | \$0 | \$132,000 | \$821,898 | \$0 | \$821,898 | \$693,942 | \$0 | \$693,942 | \$3,500,000 | \$3,500,000 |

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 17 Parcel List

Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09e

Project Manager Name: Judy Schulte

Organization: MN DNR-SNA

M.L. 17 ENRTF Appropriation: \$2,675,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 Years, June 30, 2020

Date of Report: May 30, 2017

| # | Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name | Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.] | | Estimated Cost | County | Ecological Significance | Activity Description | # of Acres | # of Shoreline Miles | Type of Landowner | Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable) | Status |
|---|--|--|---------------|----------------|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--------|
| | | Latitude | Longitude | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Chanarambie Creek Prairies | 43° 55' 12.9" | 96° 1' 8.0" | \$2800/ac | Murray, Pipestone | Dry gravel, mesic & wet prairies in biggest grassland complex with the highest quality prairie parcels in SW MN | Conservation easement acquisition | 80 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 2 | Lac Qui Parle Prairies | 43° 12' 10.4" | 96° 10' 32.1" | \$2300/ac | Big Stone, Lac qui Parle | Next to existing DNR and TNC protected native prairies, part of a large macro site with many native prairie tracts; expands habitat for many rare butterfly and bird species, as well as prairie chickens | Conservation easement acquisition | 200 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 3 | Antelope Hills Prairie | 44° 56' 0.5" | 96° 20' 29.8" | \$2300/ac | Lac qui Parle | Mixture of dry hill, sand-gravel, mesic and wet prairies. Expands habitat for many rare plant and bird species | Conservation easement acquisition | 160 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 4 | Glacial Lakes & Moraine Prairie | 45° 25' 20.0" | 95° 14' 34.5" | \$2800/ac | Pope, Kandiyohi, Swift, Stearns | Dry sand-gravel prairies of the Alexandria Moraine, provides habitat for the threatened Dakota skipper as well as the Poweshiek skipper and regal fritillary | Conservation easement acquisition | 150 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|--|---|-----------------------------------|-----|--|---------|---------|--|
| 5 | Prairie Coteau/Rock River Prairies | 44° 4' 59.4" | 96° 10' 23.8" | \$2600/ac | Pipestone | Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat around the Prairie Coteau SNA | Conservation easement acquisition | 150 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 6 | Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairies | 44° 11' 36.9" | 96° 19' 1.8" | \$2600/ac | Pipestone, Lincoln | Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat around existing TNC and DNR lands | Conservation easement acquisition | 150 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 7 | Shakotan Prairies | 44° 23' 1.9" | 96° 25' 25.4" | \$2600/ac | Lincoln | Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite | Conservation easement acquisition | 150 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 8 | Upper MN River Prairies | 44° 40' 21.2" | 95° 19' 2.0" | \$2900/ac | Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville, Redwood | MN River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds | Conservation easement acquisition | 200 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 9 | Yellow Medicine Coteau Prairie | 44° 43' 42.7" | 96° 25' 47.0" | \$2500/ac | Yellow Medicine | Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for western white prairie clover and upland sandpiper | Conservation easement acquisition | 160 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 10 | Des Moines River Valley | 43° 50' 31.2" | 95° 7' 7.6" | \$3000/ac | Cottonwood, Jackson | Des Moines River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, dry hill prairie; expands habitat for many, butterflies, birds and rare plants - including prairie bush clover. | Conservation easement acquisition | 100 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 11 | Blue Mounds/Touch-The-Sky Prairies | 43° 43' 16.2" | 96° 12' 43.3" | \$4000/Ac | Rock | Mesic to wet prairie with rock outcrops; provides habitat for many rare rock outcrop plants | Conservation easement acquisition | 80 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |

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|----|--|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-----|--|---------|---------|--|
| 12 | Big Stone Moraines | 45° 19' 7.5" | 96° 20' 2.4" | \$1800/ac | Big Stone | Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as prairie chickens | Conservation easement acquisition | 200 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 13 | Big Stone Lake Prairie (north & south) | 45° 25' 33.7" | 96° 40' 41.0" | \$1800/Ac | Big Stone | Dry Hill, mesic and wet prairies along Big Stone Lake next to DNR state park and SNA parcels | Conservation easement acquisition | 80 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 14 | Rothsay Prairies | 46° 29' 27.0" | 96° 21' 23.4" | \$1600/ac | Wilkin | Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as prairie chickens | Conservation easement acquisition | 160 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 15 | Glacial Ridge Prairies | 47° 41' 46.9" | 96° 18' 43.9" | \$1600/ac | Polk | Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as prairie chickens | Conservation easement acquisition | 160 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 16 | Felton Prairies | 47° 3' 48.0" | 96° 24' 53.7" | \$1800/ac | Clay | Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens | Conservation easement acquisition | 100 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 17 | Lake Christina Hills Prairies | 46° 6' 33.3" | 95° 41' 33.8" | \$1800/ac | Ottertail, Douglas, Grant | Dry hill to wet prairies; part of the rolling topography of the Alexandria moraine | Conservation easement acquisition | 80 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 18 | Sherburne Sands Prairies | 45° 23' 40.7" | 93° 39' 49.8" | \$1600/ac | Sherburne | A mosaic of prairie, wetlands and oak savanna set in an important transition zone | Conservation easement acquisition | 80 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 19 | Frontenac Hay Creek Bluffs | 44° 30' 20.5" | 92° 25' 6.1" | \$2600/ac | Goodhue | Southern dry bedrock bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams | Conservation easement acquisition | 40 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 20 | Kellogg-Weaver Dunes Prairies | 44° 16' 10.6" | 91° 56' 2.8" | \$2500/ac | Wabasha, Winona | Rolling sand dune topography, mature dunes with dry, mesic, or wet prairie as well as oak savanna | Conservation easement acquisition | 40 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |

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|---|--|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-----|--|---------|---------|--|
| 21 | Root River Valley Prairies | 43° 46' 14.6" | 91° 39' 51.8" | \$2400/ac | Houston, Filmore, Winona | Southern dry bedrock bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams; habitat for timber rattlesnakes | Conservation easement acquisition | 40 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 22 | Lake Bronson and Aspen Parkland Prairies | 48° 50' 39.1" | 96° 30' 53.5" | \$1000/ac | Kittson, Roseau, Marshall | Aspen parkland complex-many prairie dominated aspen complexes are succeeding to woodland in absence of fire | Conservation easement acquisition | 200 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 23 | Agassiz Dunes | 47° 29' 8.3" | 96° 20' 14.3" | \$1,800/ac | Polk, Norman | Dry barrens oak savanna-rare prairie plant community in northern MN | Conservation easement acquisition | 150 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 24 | Wambach Santee Prairie | 47° 24' 55.7" | 95° 56' 36.3" | \$1,000/ac | Mahnomen | Prairie meadow complexes, prairie rich fens and other rare northern plant communities | Conservation easement acquisition | 150 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 25 | Blanket Flower Prairies | 46° 42' 5.4" | 96° 11' 37.1" | \$1500/ac | Clay, Becker, Otter Tail | Dry sand-gravel prairie in Alexandria Moraine and Hardwood Hills subsection | Conservation easement acquisition | 200 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 26 | Blue Stem Prairie | 46° 49' 50.0" | 96° 26' 56.0" | \$1800/ac | Clay | Mesic, wet meadow/carr, & wet prairie parcels intermixed with DNR SNA and Audobon preserves | Conservation easement acquisition | 80 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| 27 | Lake Traverse Prairies | 45° 42' 2.0" | 96° 40' 48.2" | \$2000/ac | Traverse | Dry prairie and prairie-woodland complex | Conservation easement acquisition | 150 | | Private | DNR-SNA | |
| <p>NOTES: NPB acquisition will be targeted at high quality native prairie parcels in the areas listed above. These are named Prairie Core Areas identified in the 2010 MN Prairie Conservation Plan, plus priority areas in SE MN. Restoration will occur on NPB sites acquired with these funds or previously acquired NPB sites. When identified, specific restoration parcels will be added to the work plan parcel list.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |

2017 Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition Proposed Acquisition & Restoration Sites

