

2003 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2006

TITLE: Forest and Prairie Stewardship of Public and Private Lands**PROJECT MANAGER:** Peter Buessler**ORGANIZATION:** DNR Ecological Services, Scientific and Natural Areas Program**ADDRESS:** 1509 1st Ave N, Fergus Falls, MN 56537**WEB SITE ADDRESS:** <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us>**FUND:** Trust Fund**LEGAL CITATION:** ML 2003, Ch. 128, Art. 1, Sec. 9, Subd. 5(e)

Total Biennial LCMR Project Budget	LCMR Appropriation:	\$ 392,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$ 389,687
	Equals Balance:	\$ 2,313

Overall Project Outcome and Results

This project targeted two key natural resources: private forestland and native prairie. Private (non industrial) landowners own 40% (5,000,000+ acres) of the forestland in Minnesota. These acres have been identified as critical to the overall sustainability of our forest resources. Less than one percent of the state's native prairie remains. Seventy-five percent of these remnant acres are on private land.

The purpose of this project was to 1) provide stewardship advice to private landowners to improve the sustainability of native prairie and forest habitat on their property; 2) cost-share stewardship practices on private forest land; and 3) accelerate prairie management on priority public and private native prairie sites.

Result #1: Landowner Motivation Through Stewardship Plans: Qualified private sector professionals were used to develop sustainable, ecosystem-based land stewardship plans. Each plan requires a field inventory of the resources and adds to the landscape information base. Plans offer alternatives to meet both landowner and landscape objectives. Accomplishments: Woodland Stewardship Plans: 127 plans were written on 11835 acres statewide; Prairie Stewardship Plans: 20 plans were written on 1950 acres

Result #2: Cost Sharing To Convert Forest Stewardship Plans To Action: Private land improvements were cost-shared 50% by the landowner, and 50% by state and/or federal funds. Practices ranged from planting seedlings, invasive species control, and timber stand improvement. Accomplishments: 132 landowners implemented forest stewardship practices on 385 acres

Result #3: Accelerate And Enhance Management On Public And Private Prairie Lands: Accelerated prairie management crews and private contractors were used to begin tackling a long-standing "back-log" of prairie stewardship projects on public and private land in priority prairie areas. Projects included tree and brush removal, prescribed burning, restorations and prescribed grazing. Accomplishments: Accelerated management was carried out on 128 sites improving the condition of 11,171 acres of native prairie

Project Results Use and Dissemination

The stewardship planning and accelerated management initiated in this project is being continued through several 2005 LCMR projects: (5a) - Restoring Minnesota's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Corridors/Phase III - Prairie Management, (5d) Prairie Stewardship of Private Lands, and (9c) - Sustainable Management of Private Forest Lands. In addition, the prairie projects (5a & 5d) are being complemented by a new federal program; the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP). LIP provides states funding to work with private landowners to benefit "at-risk species".

LCMR 2003 Work Program**Date of Report:** June 30, 2006**Date of Next Program Update:** LCMR Final Work Program Report**Date of Work Program Approval:** June 2003**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2006**I. PROJECT TITLE: Forest and Prairie Stewardship of Public and Private Lands****Project Manager:** Peter Buessler**Affiliation:** DNR Ecological Services, Scientific and Natural Areas Program**Mailing Address:** 1509 1st Ave N**City / State / Zip :** Fergus Falls, MN**Phone Number:** 218-739-7576 x240**E-mail Address:** peter.buesseler@dnr.state.mn.us**FAX Number:** 218-739-7601**Web Page address:** <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us>

Total Biennial LCMR Project Budget	LCMR Appropriation:	\$ 392,000
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Legal Citation: ML 2003, Chp. 128, Art. 1, Sec. 9, Subd 5(e)

Appropriation Language: \$196,000 the first year and \$196,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources. \$147,000 of this appropriation is to develop stewardship plans for private forested lands and implement stewardship plans on a cost-share basis. \$245,000 of this appropriation is to develop stewardship plans on private prairie lands and implement prairie management on public and private lands. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2006, at which time the project must be completed and final products delivered, unless an earlier date is specified in the work program.

II & III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY:

This project targeted two key natural resources: private forestland and native prairie. Private (non industrial) landowners own 40% (5,000,000+ acres) of the forestland in Minnesota. These acres have been identified as critical to the overall sustainability of our forest resources. Less than one percent of the state's native prairie remains. Seventy-five percent of these remnant acres are on private land.

The purpose of this project was to 1) provide stewardship advice to private landowners to improve the sustainability of native prairie and forest habitat on their property; 2) cost-share stewardship practices on private forest land; and 3) accelerate prairie management on priority public and private native prairie sites.

Result #1: Landowner Motivation Through Stewardship Plans: Qualified private sector professionals were used to develop sustainable, ecosystem-based land stewardship plans. Each plan requires a field inventory of the resources and adds to the

landscape information base. Plans offer alternatives to meet both landowner and landscape objectives.

Accomplishments:

- Woodland Stewardship Plans: 127 plans were written on 11835 acres statewide
- Prairie Stewardship Plans: 20 plans were written on 1950 acres

Result #2: Cost Sharing To Convert Forest Stewardship Plans To Action: Private land improvements were cost-shared 50% by the landowner, and 50% by state and/or federal funds. Practices ranged from planting seedlings, invasive species control, and timber stand improvement.

Accomplishments:

- 132 landowners implemented forest stewardship practices on 385 acres

Result #3: Accelerate And Enhance Management On Public And Private Prairie Lands:

Accelerated prairie management crews and private contractors were used to begin tackling a long-standing "back-log" of prairie stewardship projects on public and private land in priority prairie areas. Projects included tree and brush removal, prescribed burning, restorations and prescribed grazing.

Accomplishments:

- Accelerated management was carried out on 128 sites improving the condition of 11,171 acres of native prairie

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1. Landowner Motivation Through Stewardship Plans

Description: Use qualified private sector professionals to develop sustainable, ecosystem-based land stewardship plans around landowner goals and land capability. Each plan requires a field inventory of the resources and adds to the landscape information base. Plans offer alternatives to meet both landowner and landscape objectives. The Forest Stewardship Committee and the DNR will oversee professional standards and training. Predicted accomplishments:

Woodland Stewardship plans on 18,750 acres, 240 landowners (\$75,000)

Prairie Stewardship plans on 2,000 acres, 30 landowners. (\$50,000)

Professional natural resource advisors will competitively bid their services. Advisors include forestry consultants, prairie biologists, non-profit conservation groups, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). Local units of government may apply to use their own staff if private sector response is not sufficient. These efforts accelerate the continuing accomplishments of the DNR Divisions of Forestry and Ecological Services, as well as those ongoing efforts of partner federal agencies and SWCD's.

Summary Budget Information for Result 1:	LCMR Budget:	\$ 125,000
	Minus amount spent	\$ 117,932
	Balance:	\$ 7,068

Completion Date: 25% will be completed by January 30, 2004; 50% by January 30, 2005; 75% by January 30, 2006, and 100% by June 30, 2006. The additional year

allows for efficient use of the cost share dollars. The July 1 start date eliminates most of the first field season. The extension provides two full field seasons to accomplish the forest and prairie planning and development work.

Final Results

- *Woodland Stewardship Plans:* 127 plans were written on 11835 acres statewide.
- *Prairie Stewardship Plans:* 20 plans were written on 1950 acres

Less funds were spent on stewardship than anticipated due to a few contractors not completing the total amount of work that they bid on. These unused funds were spent on habitat projects.

Result 2. Cost Sharing To Convert Forest Stewardship Plans To Action (1,965 total acres)

Landowners with Forest Stewardship plans may apply. Private land improvements will be cost-shared 50% by the landowner, and 50% by state and/or federal funds. LCMR cost-share contribution will be coordinated with federal and state programs to ensure cost effectiveness. The Forest Stewardship Committee and DNR will oversee practices and rates and recommend moving funds between results. LCMR's cost share contribution will be at least doubled by landowners and other private donors.

Predicted accomplishments – actual mix will vary with landowner requests:

<u>Wildlife habitat:</u>	<u>Reforestation:</u>	<u>Forest Development:</u>	<u>Riparian Protection:</u>
880 acres	325 acres	490 acres	270 acres

Summary Budget Information for Result 2:	LCMR Budget:	\$ 72,000
	Minus amount spent	\$ 72,120
	Balance:	\$ (120)

Completion Date: 25% will be completed by January 30, 2004; 50% by January 30, 2005; 75% by January 30, 2006, and 100% by June 30, 2006. The additional year allows for efficient use of the cost share dollars. The July 1 start date eliminates most of the first field season. The extension provides two full field seasons to accomplish the forest and prairie planning and development work

Result Status:

Cost shared projects for 132 private landowners on the following projects:

- Controlled invasive species - 53.1 acres,
- Site preparation and planted seedlings - 237 acres
- Released 52 acres of plantation.
- Timber stand improvement - 43 acres

Result #3: Accelerate and enhance prairie management on public and private prairie lands (7,800 – 8,800 total acres)

Accelerated prairie management crews will supplement current levels of effort in priority prairie areas. This effort will focus on tree removal and prescribed burning. Projects will incorporate both public and private prairie land in these areas – resulting in maximum resource results.

Existing grasslands are impaired by the encroachment of woody vegetation. A lone tree, for example, can affect nesting grassland birds over a radius of 200 yards around that tree (6.5 ac.). A ¼ mile long tree line on the edge of a field influences approximately 40 acres. The cost of tree removal has ranged between \$5.22 and \$8.00 per tree, or \$25 per acre impacted. Tree and brush removal funded by this project will improve an estimated 3,400 acres annually of native prairie and other grassland habitat.

Prescribed burns on native prairie every four to five years is the most effective means to accomplish management goals. The cost for prescribed burning averages \$25 per acre. This project will accelerate existing efforts and result in an estimated additional 500-1000 acres burned annually.

Summary Budget Information for Result 3:	LCMR Budget:	\$ 195,000
	Minus amount spent	\$ 199,635
	Balance:	\$ (4,635)

Completion Date: 10% will be completed by January 30, 2004; 50% by January 30, 2005; 100% by June 30, 2006.

Final Results:

Prairie management project were carried out primary through the Lac Qui Parle Wildlife Management Area, Talcott Lake Wildlife Management Area and Windom SNA Area offices. In addition, some work was done in the Felton Prairie area of northern Clay County. Final project accomplishments were:

- Tree and brush removal: 102 public and private prairie sites, benefiting an estimated 10,535 acres
- Prescribed burns: 14 burns totaling 375 acres
- Restorations: worked on 9 restoration projects totaling 137 ac
- Exotic species control: 3 sites totaling 124 ac
- Prescribed grazing: fencing for 1 'flash-graze' project and one 'grass-banking' project

V. TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET:

All Results: Personnel	\$ 87,000
All Results: Equipment	\$ 50,000
All Results: Prof/Tech Contracts	\$125,000
All Results: Other Contracts	\$ 36,000
All Results Acquisition	\$0
All Results Other – Cost share	\$ 93,000
Other - travel	\$ 1,000
TOTAL LCMR PROJECT BUDGET:	\$ 392,000

To complete habitat enhancement projects in as cost effective and time efficient manner as possible, some minor budget shifts may occur between the amounts listed above for Personnel, Equipment, Contracts, Other – Cost share, Other - travel and Equipment.

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater than \$3,500: A slip-on pumper unit may be purchased for prescribed burning (\$6,250). All current department slip-ons are fully utilized during the burn season. After the LCMR project, the pumper unit would continue to be used for prescribed burning in the project area. Alternatively, additional pumper units for ATVs will be considered. These would fall below the \$3,500 capital expenditure level.

VI PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SPENDING

A. Past Spending:

Results 1 & 2: This LCMR acceleration of the efforts to assist private forest and prairie landowners began in FY98 with \$875,000. Over \$1,250,000 in private sector funds has been matched to the LCMR funds. The combined efforts of all partners have created tens of thousands of acres of habitat, tree planting, and restoration projects. Stewardship plans have been written to guide the management of well over 1,000,000 acres of private land.

Funds for Landowner Assistance and Cost sharing

Funding Source by FY	1996-97	1998-99	2000-01	2002-03
LCMR – MFA	\$0	\$875,000	\$450,000	\$545,000
Partners and Private	\$996,315	\$975,512	\$764,000	\$456,000
Other State Sources (with DNR FTE's)	\$1,800,000	\$1,900,000	\$1,920,000	\$1,875,000
Federal Sources (no CRP)	\$1,889,907	\$690,456	\$388,855	\$354,000

Result 3: The Department has used a variety of funds for prairie management in the past (e.g. Game and Fish dollars, Heritage Enhancement, Nongame, and federal funds to name a few). Division of Wildlife's FY01 spending on prairie management was approximately \$1,049,574. Funds have been inadequate to fully fund this comprehensive approach to prairie establishment and management.

Based on experience using State workers in DNR's southwest Region, average costs for establishing, managing and enhancing native vegetation is \$514 per acre and requires a minimum 5-year time span for each acre seeded. Costs ranged from \$405/acre to \$700/acre depending on site characteristics and location. A private contractor indicated his charge for the same work could be as much as \$950 per acre.

B. Current Spending:

Result 1 & 2: Federal Sources: Depending on congressional action, an estimated \$200,000/yr of Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) funds and \$350,000/yr of Forest Stewardship Program funding is expected to be available for forest planning and cost-share assistance. LCMR funds have been requested for both planning and cost-share activities in order to provide a mix of state and federal funds for each of these project results. This should maximize flexibility to address any FLEP program or funding changes over the life of this project.

Other State Sources (FTE's) \$1,536,000. This represents time spent by DNR Forestry staff preparing stewardship plans for landowners.

Result 3: The Department will continue to carry out its current level of prescribed burning and woody encroachment cutting on state prairie lands. This LCMR project accelerates that effort and targets both public and private lands in selected prairie areas.

C. Future Spending:

Result 1 & 2: Funding for future stewardship plan preparation and implementation on private land is expected to be needed from federal FSP and FLEP programs, LCMR and other state funds, and private landowner contributions.

Result 3: A total of 5 bienniums will be needed to make significant progress on the backlog of prairie management needs on public and private lands in priority prairie areas.

VII PROJECT PARTNERS

A. Partners Receiving LCMR Funds: DNR Divisions involved in the project include Forestry, Ecological Services, and Wildlife. Competitively bid, performance based contracts are awarded to private sector professionals to prepare Forest Stewardship (\$75,000) and Prairie Stewardship (\$50,000) plans as requested by landowners.

B. Project Cooperators

- Many private landowners – to be determined as they are involved in plans and projects.
- Minnesota Association of Consulting Foresters members and other qualified professionals will provide plans.
- Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA)

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- DNR Division of Forestry (Doug Anderson) – Supervise forest contracts; keep financial records.
- DNR Division of Ecological Services (Peter Buessler) – supervise prairie contracts.
- Minnesota Forest Stewardship Committee will screen funding applicants and recommend cost share priorities for forest stewardship plans and projects.

VIII DISSEMINATION

Copies of Stewardship Plans are provided to local DNR managers and used by the landowner with other agencies and programs.

IX LOCATION:

Private-land forest stewardship work will emphasize the forested portions of Minnesota. Emphasis for prairie work will be on public and private lands in western and southern Minnesota

X REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Periodic workprogram progress reports will be submitted not later than January 30, 2004, July 30, 2004, January 30, 2005, July 30, 2005, and January 30, 2006. A final workprogram report and associated products will be submitted by June 30, 2006.

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2003 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner
 Proposal Title: Forest and Prairie Stewardship of Public and Private Lands 5(a)
 Project Manager Name: Peter Buesseler
 LCMR Requested Dollars: \$392,000

2003 LCMR Proposal Budget	Result 1 Budget:	Amount Spent 6/30/06	Balance 6/30/06	Result 2 Budget:	Amount Spent 6/30/06	Balance 6/30/06	Result 3 Budget:	Amount Spent 6/30/06	Balance 6/30/06	TOTAL FOR BUDGET ITEM	TOTAL SPENT FOR BUDGET ITEM	TOTAL BALANCE FOR BUDGET ITEM
BUDGET ITEM	Stewardship Plan preparation			Cost-sharing for Forest Plans			Accelerated prairie management					
PERSONNEL: Staff Expenses, wages, salaries												
DNR temporary/seasonal laborers							\$87,000	\$81,257	\$5,743	\$87,000	\$81,257	\$5,743
NR Specialist (-375 hrs/yr = 0.18 FTE/yr)							\$0	\$0	\$0			
PERSONNEL: Staff Benefits												
Contracts												
Professional/technical Performance based contracts with private sector professionals												
* Forest Stewardship plans	\$75,000	\$72,941	\$2,059							\$125,000	\$117,932	\$7,068
* Prairie Stewardship plans	\$50,000	\$44,990	\$5,010									
Other contracts: Herbicide spraying, heavy equipment, etc							\$36,000	\$55,884	(19,884)	\$36,000.00	55,884	(\$19,884)
Space rental: NOT ALLOWED	X			X			X			X	X	X
Other direct operating costs												
Equipment / Tools /supplies - purchase												
chain saws							\$21,000	\$20,264	\$736	\$21,000	\$20,264	\$736
safety equipment (chaps, hard hats, etc.)												
hand tools												
Personal burn equipment (backpack pumps, fire shelters, etc.)												
herbicide, fuel, etc.												
Equipment / Tools - lease (DNR Fleet Program)							\$29,000	\$29,810	\$5,190	\$29,000	\$29,810	\$5,190
10-ft mower, Tractor												
Pickups, ATVs, ATV Trailers												
Office equipment & computers												
Other Capital equipment: slip-on fire pumper for prescribed burning							\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Land acquisition												
Land rights acquisition (easement)												
Printing												
Advertising												
Communications, telephone, mail, etc.												
Office Supplies												
Other Supplies												
Travel expenses in Minnesota							\$1,000	\$54	\$946	\$1,000	\$54	\$946
Travel outside Minnesota												
Construction												
Other land improvement: cost-share agreements with landowners to implement stewardship plans				\$72,000	\$72,120	-\$120	\$21,000	\$18,367	\$2,633	\$93,000	\$90,487	\$2,513
Other:												
COLUMN TOTAL	\$125,000	\$117,932	\$7,068	\$72,000	\$72,120	-\$120	\$195,000	\$199,635	-\$4,635	\$392,000	\$389,687	\$2,313

Some minor budget shifts may occur between the amounts listed above for Personnel, Contracts, Other land improvement, Equipment-purchase, Equipment-lease, and Travel in order to complete habitat enhancement projects in as cost effective and time efficient manner as possible.