

## **2007 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2009

**PROJECT TITLE:** Prairie Stewardship Assistance for Private Landowners

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Jason Garms

**AFFILIATION:** MNDNR Ecological Resources - SNA

**MAILING ADDRESS:** 500 Lafayette Rd Box 25

**CITY/STATE/ZIP:** Saint Paul, MN 55155

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**E-MAIL:** jason.garms@dnr.state.mn.us

**WEBSITE:** www.dnr.state.mn.us

**FUNDING SOURCE:** Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** \$220,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to develop stewardship plans and implement prairie management on private prairie lands on a cost-share basis with private or federal funds.

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$220,000**

### **Overall Project Outcome and Results**

This project provided voluntary, long-range conservation planning and management assistance to private landowners with native prairie. Native prairie is Minnesota's most threatened natural habitat. Less than 1% of the state's native prairie survives — and most of this is on private land. This project provided native prairie landowners with stewardship plans that inventoried and evaluated native prairie and other land resources on their property, identified the landowner's goals and objectives, and recommended ecologically sound management strategies. A total of 25 Prairie Stewardship Plans were created with this project's funds. Landowners were also given an opportunity to participate in 3 different workshops and field days where they could learn more about appreciating and managing their prairies. Furthermore, this project helped landowners with existing stewardship plans to implement their plans by providing cost-share assistance for management practices. Examples of practices cost-shared include prescribed burning (349 acre completed), invasive species treatments (65 acres completed), prairie reconstruction (33 acres completed), and woody encroachment removal (273 acres completed).

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

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

## Trust Fund 2007 Work Program Final Report

**Date of Report:** August 17, 2009

### Trust Fund 2007 Work Program Final Report

**Date of Work program Approval:** June 5, 2007

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2009

#### I. PROJECT TITLE: Prairie Stewardship Assistance for Private Landowners (4d)

**Project Manager:** Jason Garms

**Affiliation:** DNR Ecological Resources, Scientific and Natural Areas Program

**Mailing Address:** 500 Lafayette Rd Box 25

**City / State / Zip:** Saint Paul, MN 55155

**Telephone Number:** 651-259-5130

**E-mail Address:** jason.garms@dnr.state.mn.us

**FAX Number:** 651-296-1811

**Web Page address:** www.dnr.state.mn.us

**Location:** The 'prairie' portions of Minnesota. This includes: Tallgrass Aspen Parkland, Prairie Parkland, and portions of the Eastern Broadleaf Forest ECS Provinces (map attached)

<b>Total Trust Fund Project Budget:</b>	<b>Trust Fund Appropriation:</b>	<b>\$ 220,000</b>
	<b>Minus Amount Spent:</b>	<b>\$ 216,423</b>
	<b>Equal Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 3,577</b>

**Legal Citation:** ML 2007, Chap. 30, Sec.2, Subd.4(d).

**Appropriation Language:** \$220,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to develop stewardship plans and implement prairie management on private prairie lands on a cost-share basis with private or federal funds.

#### II. AND III. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY:

This project provided voluntary, long-range conservation planning and management assistance to private landowners with native prairie. Native prairie is Minnesota's most threatened natural habitat. Less than 1% of the state's native prairie survives — and most of this is on private land. This project provided native prairie landowners with stewardship plans that inventoried and evaluated native prairie and other land resources on their property, identified the landowner's goals and objectives, and recommended ecologically sound management strategies. A total of 25 Prairie Stewardship Plans were created with this project's funds. Landowners were also given an opportunity to participate in 3 different workshops and field days where they could learn more about appreciating and managing their prairies. Furthermore, this project helped landowners with existing stewardship plans to implement their plans by providing cost-share assistance for management practices. Examples of practices cost-shared include prescribed burning (349 acre completed), invasive

species treatments (65 acres completed), prairie reconstruction (33 acres completed), and woody encroachment removal (273 acres completed).

#### **IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:**

This project provides voluntary, long-range conservation planning and management assistance to private landowners with native prairie. Trust Fund dollars will leverage additional funding from the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP), a federal program, which assists states working with private landowners to benefit habitat for “at-risk species”.

**Need:** Native prairie is Minnesota’s most threatened natural habitat. Less than 1% of the state’s ‘old growth’ prairie survives — *and most of this is on private land (100,000+ acres)*. The condition of these sites is frequently deteriorated due to encroachment by woody species, competition from non-native plants, and lack of fire. Many have not received active management for over 50 years. There are an estimated 3000 private landowners with native prairie. To date, 72 landowners (6054 ac) have enrolled in the Prairie Bank easement program, 79 have LIP agreements for habitat enhancement, and 443 (17,593 ac) are in the MN Prairie Tax Exemption program. When approached, they are almost always interested in improving the stewardship of their native prairie remnant, but often lack the expertise or resources to address this growing backlog of management needs. While prairies on public land also need accelerated management, this project is the only source of assistance directed specifically to private landowners with native prairie.

##### **Result 1: Prairie Stewardship Planning and Education**

**Description:** Trust Fund and LIP funding will result in technical assistance and stewardship plans for approximately 25 landowners within the prairie region of the state covering an estimated 2000 acres of private land. DNR prairie specialists and qualified private-sector prairie professionals who competitively bid their services will assist landowners complete a prairie stewardship plan. Together the landowner and natural resource professional will prepare a plan that inventories and evaluates native prairie and other land resources on the property, identifies landowner goals and objectives, and recommends ecologically sound management strategies. Landowners are also provided information about federal, state, and non-government programs available to assist them in protecting and managing their prairie. In addition, 1-2 workshops/field days on practices such as managing native prairie pastures, prairie restorations, and/or other topics will be developed for targeted groups of landowners. These will be designed and hosted with partners such as the MN Dept of Agriculture, Sustainable Farming Association of MN, Working Lands projects, etc.

**Summary Budget Information for Result 1:** **Trust Fund Budget: \$ 65,000**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 63,197**  
**Balance: \$ 1,803**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. 2 Workshops/field days developed for landowners	50% by June, 2008; and 100% by June 30, 2009	\$3,000	3 workshops completed
2. Stewardship plans provided to 25 landowners	25% will be completed by January 30, 2008; 50% by June, 2008; 75% by January 30, 2009, and 100% by June 30, 2009	\$62,000	25 plans written

### **Result 1 Final Report Summary:**

With ETF funds: Competitive contracts were awarded to 2 professional consultants who completed 24 prairie stewardship plans (listed below). Staff from the DNR's Scientific and Natural Areas Program is also wrote one stewardship plan. DNR staff hosted a prescribed burn workshop (3/8/08) for private landowners – providing instruction on the ecological and operational principles of managing prairie with fire. DNR staff also participated in the MN Cattlemen's Association's summer grazing conference (7/15/08) and field tours - supplying materials and technical assistance related to sustainable grazing practices on native rangelands. A second private landowner prescribed workshop was held (4/4/09), but the demonstration burn scheduled for the same day was cancelled due to unfavorable weather conditions (the reason for unspent funds).

#### Prairie Stewardship Planning sites (PB = Native Prairie Bank easements)

Site Name	County	Site Name	County
1. Home Lake 28 PB	Norman	14. Hantho 25 PB	Lac Qui Parle
2 .Rogers PB	Clay	15. Minnesota Falls 3 PB	Yellow Medicine
3. Marsh Grove 36 PB	Marshall	16. Agassiz 23 PB	Lac Qui Parle
4. Spring Prairie 22	Clay	17. Otrey 26 PB	Big Stone
5. Bilden PB	Wilkin	18. Johnson PB	Big Stone
6. Nidaros 21 PB	Otter Tail	19. Norway Lake 5 PB	Kandiyohi
7. Lund 2 PB	Douglas	20. Moulton 10 PB	Murray
8. Wittwer	Pope	21. Moulton 11 PB	Murray
9. Woodke PB	Grant	22. Altona 31 PB	Pipestone
10. Olson PB	Grant	23. Linden 6 PB	Brown
11. Lund 21 PB	Douglas	24. Storden 4-1 PB	Cottonwood
12. Walls 18 PB	Traverse	25. Fredin	Cottonwood
13. Johnsonville 30 PB	Redwood		

### **Result 2: Prairie Management Practices**

**Description:** Trust Fund and LIP funding will result in habitat improvement on approximately 1500 acres with 50 landowners. Landowners can request financial assistance for management practices they implement themselves, or have DNR prairie staff carry out practices they do not feel qualified to do. In many cases, DNR will package groups of projects, such as prescribed burns, into larger contracts for

professional vendors to competitively bid on — maximizing efficiencies and minimizing costs for landowners.

**Summary Budget Information for Result 2: Trust Fund Budget: \$ 155,000**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 153,226**  
**Balance: \$ 1,774**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Habitat improvement on approximately 1500 acres with 50 landowners	25% will be completed by January 30, 2008; 50% by June, 2008; 75% by January 30, 2009, and 100% by June 30, 2009	\$155,000	

### **Result 2 Final Report Summary:**

With ETF funds: Plans and firebreaks were developed for 15 prescribed burns, with 14 burns being completed in 349 acres. Invasive species treats were applied to 8 different project sites for a total of 65 acres. Treatments included Leafy Spurge and Purple Crown Vetch control with both targeted chemical applications and bio-control agents. While the actual areas that received invasive species treatments is 68 acres, the total surrounding area benefitted is much greater. Woody encroachment removal projects were completed on 12 projects for a total of 273 acres cut and 1100 acres benefitted. A total of 9 prairie reconstruction practices were completed on 3 project sites. Reconstructions practices include seed harvesting, seed bed preparation, seed installation, and posting seeding weed treatments. The prairie reconstruction project sites total 33 acres.

### **V. TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:**

<b>Budget Item</b>		
<b>Staff or Contract Services:</b> NR Specialists, NR Technicians, NR laborers		\$90,000
Stewardship Plan Consultants		\$50,000
<b>Equipment:</b> project supplies, vehicle fleet costs (e.g. ATV, Pick-up, ASV tracked vehicle)		\$23,000
<b>Development:</b>		\$0
<b>Restoration:</b> Landowner reimbursements; contracts for prescribed burning, prairie reconstructions, woody encroachment, etc		\$57,000
<b>Acquisition:</b> <i>(perpetual Prairie Bank easements will be acquired with appropriated bonding funds)</i>		\$0
<b>TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:</b>		<b>\$220,000</b>

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500:** none

**Explanation of Personnel costs:**

- Funds will be used to extend existing DNR seasonal crews or natural resource technicians and specialists undertaking projects in this work program. These positions are unclassified and classified (all AFSME employees must be classified as per contract).
- Only time spent on approved projects will be charged to these funds. Without these funds, none of the projects in this work program would be completed. They are an acceleration of related initiatives.
- To implement projects in the work program, specialized skills (prescribed burning, knowledge of sites and management implications) are often required. DNR employees with the training, experience and certifications required to do these specialized tasks are used to directly implement these projects, and work with landowners and contractors to design, direct and certify completion of projects they carry out.
- Contracts with outside vendors are used when possible, but contractors are not available for some projects.

## VI. OTHER FUNDS & PARTNERS:

### A. Project Partners:

- Landowner Incentive Program: Faith Balch, Landowner Incentive Program Coordinator, DNR Ecological Services – *No LCCMR funding requested*
- DNR Area Wildlife Managers & Ecologists: Work with consultants on plans and landowners on project implementation – *No LCCMR funding requested*

### B. Other Funds Proposed to be spent during the Project Period:

- **Landowners:** Landowners in total contribute 10% or more in cash or in-kind services on stewardship plan implementation.
- **Native Prairie Bank easements:** Approximately \$950,000 in 2006 bonding funds will be spent during the project period to provide permanent protection to prairie on private land.

Budget Item	LCCMR	Landowner In-kind
<b>Staff or Contract Services:</b> NR Specialists, NR Technicians, NR laborers	\$90,000	\$0
Stewardship Plan Consultants	\$50,000	\$0
<b>Equipment:</b> project supplies, vehicle fleet costs (e.g. ATV, Pick-up, ASV tracked vehicle)	\$23,000	\$0
<b>Development:</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Restoration:</b> Landowner reimbursements; contracts for prescribed burning, prairie reconstructions, woody encroachment, etc	\$57,000	\$12,000
<b>Acquisition:</b> ( <i>perpetual Prairie Bank easements will be acquired with appropriated bonding funds</i> )	\$0	\$0
	<b>\$220,000</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>

**C. Past Spending:** This project continues the success of several previous Trust Fund projects, which provided prairie stewardship assistance for private landowners (1999, 2001, 2003, & 2005).

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>FY07</b>
Landowner Incentive Program (federal funds)	\$174,000	\$150,000
Prairie Stewardship of Private Lands (5d)	\$50,000	\$50,000
Habitat Corridors Partnership (2k)	\$23,000	\$23,000
<i>Prairie Management on Public and Private lands</i> <i>(pvt lands portion)</i>		<i>(pvt lands portion)</i>

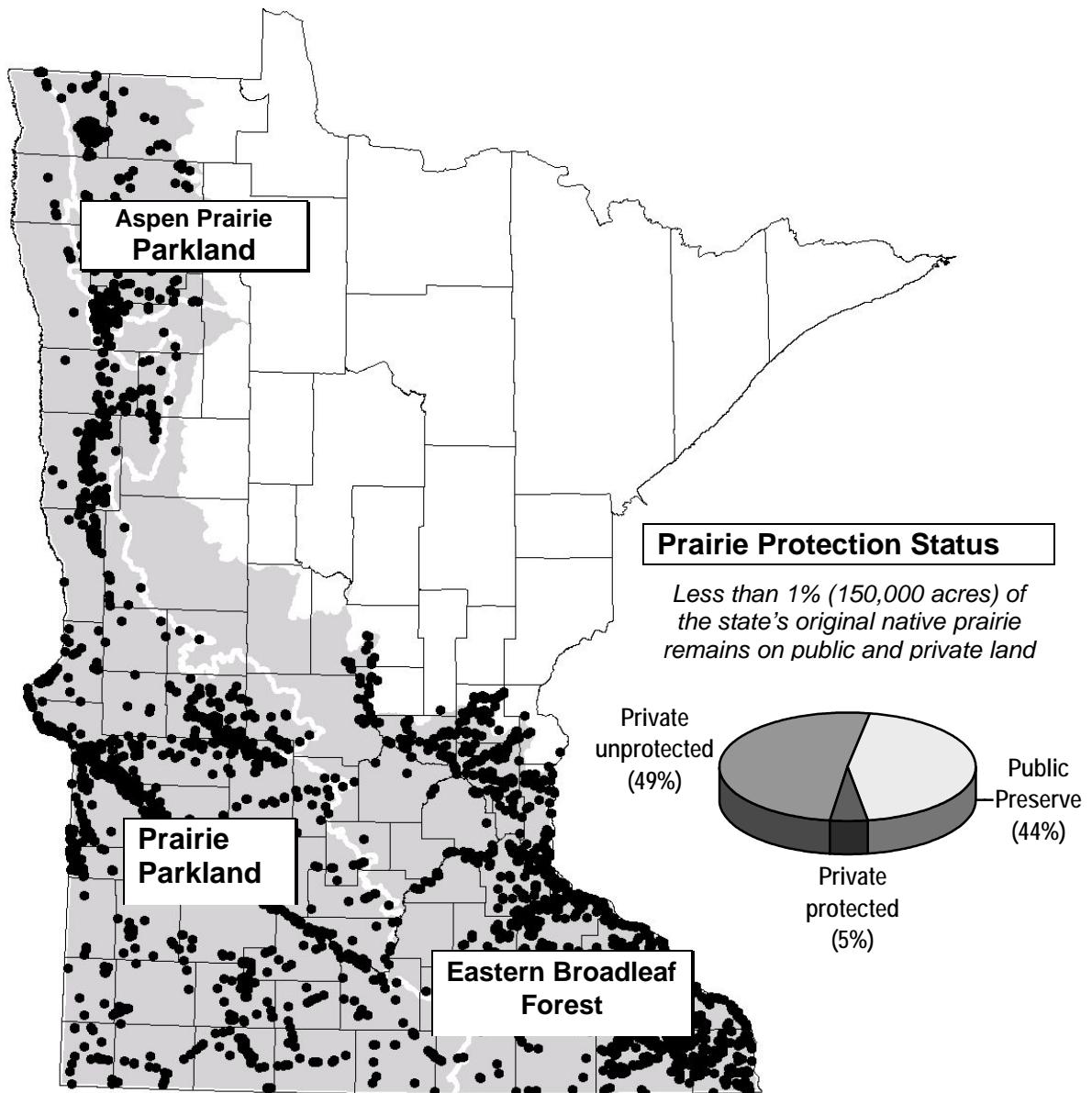
**D. Time:** 2 years are needed to complete the project. 25% will be completed by January 30, 2008; 50% by June 30, 2008; 75% by January 30, 2009, and 100% by June 30, 2009.

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

**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

**Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted not later than January 30, 2008, June 30, 2008, January 30, 2009, and June 30, 2009. A final work program report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2009 as requested by the LCCMR.**

**IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS:**



Known occurrences of 'old growth' native prairies and associated rare species in the Prairie Parkland, Aspen Parkland, and Eastern Broadleaf Forest ECS Provinces\*.

Over 50% of these are on private land

Prepared by Peter Buesseler  
 Data source: DNR Natural Heritage Database  
 \*Ecological Classification System Version 99A

<b>Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2007 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner (if applicable)</b>									
<b>Project Title:</b> Prairie Stewardship Assistance for Private Landowners (Subd. 4d)									
<b>Project Manager Name:</b> Jason Garms									
<b>Trust Fund Appropriation: \$220,000</b>									
1) See list of non-eligible expenses, do not include any of these items in your budget sheet									
2) Remove any budget item lines not applicable									
<b>2007 Trust Fund Budget</b>	<b>Result 1 Budget:</b>	<b>Amount Spent (date)</b>	<b>Balance (date)</b>	<b>Result 2 Budget:</b>	<b>Amount Spent (date)</b>	<b>Balance (date)</b>	<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>	
	Prairie Stewardship Planning and Education			Prairie Management Practices					
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>									
<b>PERSONNEL: wages and benefits</b> (represents .5FTE/yr; NR specialist, DNR laborers)	12,000	11,319	681	78,000	78,000	0	90,000	681	
<b>Contracts</b>			0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Professional/technical</b> (Stewardship Plan Consultants)	50,000	50,000	0	0	0	0	50,000	0	
<b>Other contracts</b> (contracts for prescribed burning, prairie reconstructions, woody encroachment, etc)			0	57,000	56,594	406	57,000	406	
<b>Equipment / Tools</b> (project supplies, vehicle fleet costs (e.g. ATV, Pick-up, ASV tracked vehicle)	3,000	1,878	1,122	20,000	18,632	1,368	23,000	2,490	
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$65,000</b>	<b>\$63,197</b>	<b>\$1,803</b>	<b>\$155,000</b>	<b>\$153,226</b>	<b>\$1,774</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>	<b>\$3,577</b>	