

Trust Fund 2009 Work Program

Date of Report: May 11, 2009
Date of Next Status Report: December 1, 2009
Date of Work program Approval: TBA
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2011

I. PROJECT TITLE: Bluff land Restoration and Set Out Seedlings 2i
Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership

Project Manager: Dave Neu
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Location: Bluffland Restoration will occur in HCP Area 11, and Set Out Seedlings will occur in HCP Area 9.

Total Trust Fund Project Budget:	Trust Fund Appropriation:	\$	85,000
	Minus Amount Spent:	\$	- 0 -
	Equal Balance:	\$	85,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2009, Chap. 243, Sec. 2, Subd. 4e2i

Appropriation Language:

\$3,375,000 is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the sixth appropriation for acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$770,000 is for the Department of Natural Resources agency programs and \$2,605,000 is for agreements as follows: \$450,000 with Pheasants Forever; \$50,000 with Minnesota Deer Hunters Association; \$895,000 with Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; \$85,000 with National Wild Turkey Federation; \$365,000 with the Nature Conservancy; \$210,000 with Minnesota Land Trust; \$350,000 with the Trust for Public Land; \$100,000 with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; \$50,000 with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and \$50,000 with Friends of Detroit Lakes Watershed Management District to plan, restore, and acquire fragmented landscape corridors that connect areas of quality habitat to sustain fish, wildlife, and plants. The United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service is a cooperating partner in the appropriation. Expenditures are limited to the project corridor areas as defined in the work program. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to

meet at least minimum habitat and facility management standards as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. This appropriation may not be used for the purchase of residential structures, unless expressly approved in the work program. All conservation easements must be perpetual and have a natural resource management plan. Any land acquired in fee title by the commissioner of natural resources with money from this appropriation must be designated as an outdoor recreation unit under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.07. The commissioner may similarly designate any lands acquired in less than fee title. A list of proposed restorations and fee title and easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required work program. All funding for conservation easements must include a long-term stewardship plan and funding for monitoring and enforcing the agreement. To the maximum extent practical, consistent with contractual easement or fee acquisition obligations, the recipients shall utilize staff resources to identify future projects and shall maximize the implementation of biodiverse, quality restoration projects in the project proposal into the first half of the 2010 fiscal year.

II. PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS:

Bluffland Restoration:

The Southeastern Minnesota bluffland is one of the 11 project areas. The bluffland corridor runs along the Mississippi River across three counties, Wabasha, Winona, and Houston. Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (Strategy for Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare) identifies the Bluffland subsection of southeastern MN as having the highest percentage of species of greatest conservation need, particularly reptiles, with 11 of 15 species considered in great conservation need. This strategy further identifies bluff prairies and oak savannas as two of the most rare habitats remaining across Minnesota.

The Timber rattlesnake is a state threatened species occurring exclusively in the southeastern Minnesota counties of Goodhue, Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona. Since rattlesnake dens are central to their lives, protecting dens and enhancing surrounding habitat is critical to conserving this species. This project will implement habitat restoration activities directed at reducing the amount of canopy cover to 30% or less around the den sites by controlling invasive plant species such as Eastern red cedar, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and prickly ash. A multiple treatment approach will be utilized that includes hand cutting of red cedars and invasive brush species, prescribed burns, and exotic species control. During this grant period, approximately 120 acres of Timber rattlesnake habitat on public and private lands will be impacted.

This proposal will compliment the existing Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) Blufflands Landscape project. LIP assists eligible, private landowners, who wish to voluntarily manage their land to benefit listed species, with the development of habitat management plans and financial assistance for habitat enhancement and restoration. Through this proposal one of the most critical habitats in Minnesota will be conserved and enhanced. The proposal will focus on the population

sustainability of the timber rattlesnake (*C. horridus*), three other at-risk snake species (racer, bullsnake, and hognose snake) and other numerous at-risk plant species in the Bluffland subsection of southeastern MN.

This proposal will provide a demonstrated measurable outcome of impacting approximately 120 acres of critical timber rattlesnake habitat in Minnesota. This project helps to take a more holistic restoration management approach to treating the entire bluff; thereby, safeguarding the long-term integrity of the work. Restoring cliff and bluffland habitats will positively impact habitat for the state listed timber rattlesnake. Through an innovative adaptive management approach, habitat for these species will be improved. Maintaining viable populations of the species in the wild allows in-situ scientific research and enhances our knowledge of the contributions the animal makes to the bluff prairie– forest ecosystems. This proposal is of great regional significance and has the potential for replication throughout the blufflands region.

Set Out Seedlings:

An estimated 30,000 trees and shrubs will be planted in riparian areas within HCP Area 9. At 500 trees per acre on average approximately 60 acres will be planted. The riparian areas in SW Minnesota have been identified in the North American Wild Turkey Management Plan as a Habitat Focus Area.

Local NWTF Chapters and/or DNR will order the trees and seeds through local nurseries and coordinate the planting in their respective areas. Labor to plant the trees and seeds will be donated by local volunteers, or carried out by DNR.

Tree and shrub plantings greatly increase the ability of the wild turkey to survive severe Minnesota winters. Research has shown the wild turkey can withstand temperatures in excess of 40 degrees below zero for up to two weeks. However, the limiting factor could be the availability of natural food sources, such as the ones that provided by the tree and shrub plantings proposed by this program. Location of fruit and berry shrub plantings will be coordinated, if possible, with known wintering and roost sites of wild turkey. The goal of the program is to help the populations of wild turkey to survive the winter in greater numbers to create more opportunity for Minnesota sportsmen/women to pursue, observe, and experience the gobble of the wild turkey in the spring.

Native food cover will be planted on both private and public lands; thereby, complementing public and private investments in habitat for wildlife and native plant communities. In addition, these natural food sources will help facilitate wildlife population sustainability during the winter months.

III. PROGRESS SUMMARY: All Habitat Conservation Partnership progress summaries (twice annually) will be generated by the Partnership online reporting system. This system provides an accomplishment, expenditure and narrative update to LCCMR for each individual work plan.

IV. OUTLINE OF PROJECT RESULTS:

Result 1: Restore up to 120 acres of Bluffland Habitat

Description: Restore up to 120 acres of bluffland habitat by removing red cedar and other invasive species through hand-cutting, prescribed burning and herbicides. Other funds may restore an additional 100 acres of bluffland habitat. The NWTF project manager will direct, monitor and report. Additional assistance will come from MN DNR staff and volunteers.

Summary Budget Information for Result 1: Trust Fund Budget: \$70,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 70,000

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget	Status
1. Impact 120 acres	July 2011	\$70,000	
2.			
3.			

Completion Date: *July 2011*

Result Status as of: All Habitat Conservation Partnership progress summaries will be generated by the Partnership online reporting system. This system provides an accomplishment, expenditure and narrative update to LCCMR for each individual work plan.

Final Report Summary: The final report will be generated by the Partnership online reporting system and will include the project abstract, and detailed accounting of expenditures and accomplishments for individual work plans.

Result 1: Direct seed/plant up to 60 acres in Area 9

Description: Local NWTF chapters will identify properties, order oak seed and/or seedlings and plant up to 60 acres of habitat on public and private lands. Other funds may plant an additional 40 acres in Area 9 and other areas. NWTF volunteers and/or DNR will order and plant the trees and shrubs, project manager will direct, monitor and report.

Summary Budget Information for Result 1: Trust Fund Budget: \$15,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$15,000

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget	Status
1. 60 acres planted	July 2011	\$15,000	
2.			
3.			

Completion Date: *July 2011*

Result Status as of: All Habitat Conservation Partnership progress summaries will be generated by the Partnership online reporting system. This system provides an accomplishment, expenditure and narrative update to LCCMR for each individual work plan.

V. TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET:

Staff or Contract Services: \$9,000

Equipment:

Development:

Restoration: \$ 76,000

Acquisition, including easements:

Other:

TOTAL TRUST FUND PROJECT BUDGET: \$ 85,000

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500:

VI. OTHER FUNDS & PARTNERS:

A. Project Partners: MN DNR

B. Other Funds Proposed to be Spent during the Project Period: \$55,000 est.

C. Past Spending: None partnered with LCCMR, although NWTF spent \$23,510 (state wildlife grant) and MN DNR and other organizations spent \$24,412.62 in 2006-2007 on a similar project.

D. Time: 2009-2011

VII. DISSEMINATION: Accomplishment Reports and press releases will be made available at <http://www.mnhabitatcorridors.org>

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work program progress reports will be submitted not later than December 1, 2009. A final work program report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2011 as requested by the LCCMR. All reports will be generated using the HCP online reporting system.

IX. RESEARCH PROJECTS: NA

Attachment A: Budget Detail for 2008 Projects - Summary and a Budget page for each partner

Project Title: Bluffland Restoration and Set Out Seedlings - 2i									
Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership (VI)									
Project Manager Name: Dave Neu - NWT Senior Regional Biologist									
Trust Fund Appropriation: \$ 85,000									
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									
2008 Trust Fund Budget	Result 1 Budget:	Amount Spent (date)	Balance (date)	TOTAL BUDGET	Result 2 Budget:	Amount Spent (date)	Balance (date)	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
	Restore up to 120 acres of bluffland habitat				Direct seed and plant seedlings on 60 acres				
BUDGET ITEM			0				0		
PERSONNEL: wages and benefits and travel	7,000	0	7,000	7,000	2,000	0	2,000	2,000	9,000
Contracts			0				0		
Professional/technical (with whom?, for what?)			0				0		
Other contracts (with whom?, for what?) list out: personnel, equipment, etc.			0				0		
Other direct operating costs (for what? – be specific)			0				0		
Equipment / Tools (what equipment? Give a general description and cost)			0				0		
Office equipment & computers - NOT ALLOWED unless unique to the project			0				0		
Other Capital equipment (list specific items)			0				0		
Land acquisition			0				0		
Land rights acquisition (less than fee)			0				0		
Professional Services for Acq.			0				0		
Printing			0				0		
Other Supplies (list specific categories)			0				0		
Construction (for what?)			0				0		
Other land improvement (seedlings, stakes, mats, tubes)	63,000	0	63,000	63,000	13,000	0	13,000	13,000	76,000
Other (Describe the activity and cost be specific)			0				0		
COLUMN TOTAL	\$70,000	\$0	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000	Subd. 4e2i \$85,000