



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2011 Work Plan

Date of Status Update:**Date of Next Status Update:** 12/1/2011**Date of Work Plan Approval:** 6/23/2011**Project Completion Date:** 6/30/2014**Is this an amendment request?** _____

Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition**Project Manager:** Jason Garms**Affiliation:** MN DNR**Address:** 500 Lafayette Rd, Box 25**City:** St Paul **State:** MN **Zipcode:** 55155**Telephone Number:** (651) 259-5130**Email Address:** jason.garms@state.mn.us**Web Address:** <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco>

Location:**Counties Impacted:** Statewide**Ecological Section Impacted:** Lake Agassiz Aspen Parklands (223N), Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal (222M), North Central Glaciated Plains (251B), Northern Minnesota and Ontario Peatlands (212M), Northern Minnesota Drift and lake Plains (212N), Northern Superior Uplands (212L), Paleozoic Plateau (222L), Red River Valley (251A), Southern Superior Uplands (212J), Western Superior Uplands (212K)

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation \$:	1,000,000
	Amount Spent \$:	<u>0</u>
	Balance \$:	1,000,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art.3, Sec. 2, Subd. 04h**Appropriation Language:**

\$500,000 the first year and \$500,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire native prairie bank easements, prepare baseline property assessments, restore and enhance native prairie sites, and provide technical assistance to landowners. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2014, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

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

II. PROJECT SUMMARY: This project aims to work with landowners of native prairie sites identified by the MN County Biological Survey (MCBS) and provide them protection options and support their conservation efforts through a suite of tools offered by the DNR Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program. About 200 acres of high quality native prairie will be acquired by the DNR and permanently protected as Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements. NPB conservation easement baseline reports and monitoring will also be completed on about 22 sites; including those sites acquired through these funds and up to 17 existing NPB easement sites. Native habitat restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on about 900 acres of NPBs and high priority private prairie lands threatened by human impacts, invasive species, and lack of natural disturbance regimes. Activities include seed collection, planting, exotics control, woody encroachment removal, boundary signing, prescribed burns, and adaptive monitoring. Private landowners will also receive incentives to protect and enhance their native prairie through field days and workshops (4), and professional consultations (20), Prairie Stewardship Plan development (20), and enrolled or recertified in Prairie Tax Exemption (50).

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of December 2011:

Project Status as of June 2012:

Project Status as of December 2012:

Project Status as of June 2013:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Native Prairie Bank Acquisition of Prairie of Biodiversity Significance

Description: The SNA Program will protect and buffer native prairie sites of biodiversity significance by acquisition of NPB conservation easements on ~200 acres. NPB conservation easement baseline reports and monitoring would be completed on about 22 sites; including those sites acquired through these funds (~1-5 sites) and up to 17 existing NPB easement sites. As of March 2010, the SNA Program manages 96 NPB conservation easements of which 13 have baseline property reports; creating a backlog of 83 baseline reports to complete. Priority sites are identified by MCBS and target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, and key habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). Any buffers, or lands needing restoration, will be completed using a combination of funds from Activity 2 below and/or bonding appropriations. It is anticipated that only 10 of the 200 acres acquired will need restoration.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$570,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$570,000

Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. Acquisition of NPB conservation easement ~200 acres of native prairie	6/30/13	\$521,000

2. Baseline property reports & monitoring for ~22 NPB easements	6/30/13	\$49,000
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Activity Status as of December 2011:

Activity Status as of June 2012:

Activity Status as of December 2012:

Activity Status as of June 2013:

ACTIVITY 2: Native Prairie Restoration & Enhancement

Description: Restoration and enhancement activities would be completed on about 900 acres at up to about 15 NPBs and 5 native prairie stewardship sites. Management practices at ~5 NPB sites would be measured to evaluate if objectives were met as part of adaptive management. This project will contribute towards implementation of the SWAP through restoration of native prairie needed to support SGCN (also Habitat Recommendation 5 of the SCPP). Restoration and enhancement activities – including bringing sites acquired up to minimum standards – would be carried out through landowner agreements, DNR staff, Conservation Corps Minnesota (CCM), Sentence to Serve (STS), volunteers, and/or contractors. Activities include seed collection, planting, exotics control, woody encroachment removal, boundary signing, prescribed burns, and monitoring. All restorations will use seeds/plants of a local ecotype, collected from onsite or within 25 miles. This activity and its funding would include all work needed to bring up to the Department’s minimum standards those NPB easements acquired through this funding.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget: \$250,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$250,000

Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. 12 acres of prairie reconstruction (restoration)	6/30/13	\$14,000
2. 120 acres of woody removal & exotics species treatment	5/30/13	\$140,000
3. 780 acres of prescribed burns	5/30/13	\$80,000
4. NPB easement boundary signs & development work to meet minimum standards on NPB sites acquired through this funding (~2 sites)	6/30/13	\$5,000
5. adaptive management monitoring on ~5 NPB sites	6/30/13	\$11,000

Activity Status as of December 2011:

Activity Status as of June 2012:

Activity Status as of December 2012:

Activity Status as of June 2013:

Final Report Summary:

ACTIVITY 3: Native Prairie Landowner Assistance & Incentives

Description: Private landowners will increase their stewardship of native prairie through a suite of strategies. Four prairie management workshops-field days for private landowners and other practitioners will be held. DNR staff will meet with ~20 landowners to provide technical consultation on how to best manage their prairie. At least 10 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan including an evaluation their prairie’s condition, identification of management needs, and recommendations for management action. In addition, ~50 native prairie landowners will be contacted and site visits conducted to enroll or recertify them in the Prairie Tax Exemption (PTE) program.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 3:

ENRTF Budget: \$180,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$180,000

Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. 4 workshops-field days for prairie landowners & practitioners	6/30/13	\$6,500
2. consultations, guidance, mgmt. asst., etc. to 20 landowners	6/30/13	\$30,000
3. prairie stewardship plans provided to 20 prairie landowners	6/30/13	\$90,000
4. 50 landowners enrolled or recertified in Prairie Tax Exemption	6/30/13	\$53,500

Activity Status as of December 2011:

Activity Status as of June 2012:

Activity Status as of December 2012:

Activity Status as of June 2013:

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: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/index.html>.

Status as of December 2011:

Status as of June 2012:

Status as of December 2012:

Status as of June 2013:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Personnel:	\$ 214,400	Mgmt. Coord. (classified) 0.1 FTE; Spec's & Tech's (classified) 2 FTE; Laborers (classified) & Seasonal Crews (unclassified) .4 FTE
Professional/Technical Contracts:	\$126,000	Professional/technical Contractors (state bid process) will be sought for delivering easement baseline property reports, adaptive management monitoring, private Prairie Stewardship Plans, prairie tax exemption certification and enrollment
Service Contracts:	\$110,500	CCM or state bid process for delivering including woody encroachment removal & exotics control, prescribed burning, and site development
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$17,500	Fleet charges for trucks, cars, mowers, seeders, etc; supplies & printing, parts, tools, repair costs & supplies for restoration and enhancement, signs & posts, workshops & events supplies & printing, supplies & printing for landowner consults, stewardship plans & PTE supplies & printing
Easement Acquisition:	\$450,000	DNR-SNA
Professional Services for Acq:	\$25,800	
Printing:	\$1,800	
Travel Expenses in MN:	\$5,000	mileage, lodging & meals as per state contracts
Other: landowner cost-share	\$49,000	landowner cost-share assistance for restoration and enhancement projects
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$1,000,000	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: Consistent with previously approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the SNA program, this funding will be used to pay project associated costs for classified & unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. The Management Coordinator will be responsible for providing technical guidance statewide to assure adherence with program standards, and for developing and administering contracts statewide, following the state bid process and procedures (e.g. consolidated prescribed burn contracts, stewardship plan contracts, etc.). The Specialist and Technician level positions will work directly with landowners to provide prairie management consultation, and design, coordinate and oversee prairie restoration and enhancement projects. Laborer and seasonal positions will be used to implement management activities such as prescribed burning or invasive species treatments. 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. No funding from this appropriation will be used to cover personnel costs for this work program's Project Manager or for the SNA Program Supervisor.

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

Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) funded with this ENRTF appropriation: 2.5 FTE spread across 8 different positions

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
State			
General Fund and other funds as appropriate	\$72,200	\$	Shared Services (operations support governance) are services that DNR relies on in order to conduct business and support

			the work of the department. These services are more efficient when shared.
General Fund	\$61,200	\$	Division Support Costs that help maintain basic program operations
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$133,400	\$	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: This proposal includes the SNA program’s native prairie partnership project work with Habitat Conservation Partnership (instead of a funding proposal through HCP), The Nature Conservancy (native prairie acquisition, restoration, enhancement and associated monitoring), and the Minnesota River Green Corridors Initiative (landowner outreach for potential NPB easement acquisition on MCBS sites in the MN River Valley). These later two partners are submitting separate, but coordinated LCCMR projects. These efforts are complementary not redundant; all accomplishments on joint projects would be prorated.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: The Division’s long-term goal is to permanently protect an additional 30-35,000 acres of quality native prairie either as NPB or SNA. Thus, the Division could utilize support from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust fund of \$1M to \$10M per biennium for native prairie protection and stewardship over the next 25 years. Historically the Scientific and Natural Area program’s capacity to protect lands has paralleled the acquisition funding available (i.e. a significant acceleration of protection efforts requires an increase in acquisition capacity). DNR incurs a number of one-time costs upon acquisition of a conservation easement, including costs for preparation of a baseline report to document the condition of the property, as well as recurring costs for periodic monitoring of the easement. Costs may vary widely by easement and depend on factors such as size, location or specific easement terms. Fiscal requirements for long-term stewardship of DNR’s conservation easements, including an estimate of periodic monitoring costs, was included in a report submitted February 2011 per the Trust Fund 2008 Work Program for DNR’s Conservation Easement Stewardship and Enforcement Program Plan, ML 2008, Chap. 367, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(h).

C. Spending History:

Funding Source	M.L. 2005 or FY 2006-07	M.L. 2006 or FY 2007	M.L. 2007 or FY 2008	M.L. 2008 or FY 2009	M.L. 2009 or FY 2010	M.L. 2010 or FY 2011
ENRTF	\$50,000 (5a) \$100,000 (5d)		\$50,000 (4b) \$220,000 (4d)	\$37,500 (3c) \$815,000 (3m)	\$37,500 4e	\$31,500 (4f) \$1,046,000 (4b)
OHF						\$650,000
G.O. bonding	\$300,000	\$1,000,000		\$2,000,000		
Landowner and conservation partner donations	\$18,400			\$38,000		

VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: See attached Acquisition/Restoration List.

IX. MAP(S): See attached map.

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: NA

XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted not later than June 30th, and December 30th each year starting in 2012. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2013 as requested by the LCCMR.

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2011 Acquisition/Restoration List**

Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition
Project Manager Name: Jason Garms
M.L. 2011 ENRTF Appropriation: \$1,000,000

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM-Y)		Ecosystem Description	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles (if applicable)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status
		Latitude or UTM-X	Longitude or UTM-Y							
1	Walls 7-1 NPB	218307	5071521	Dry prairie	Restoration will expand existing remnant prairie habitat for Prairie Moonwort & Missouri milk-vetch rare plant species; Regal Fritillaries and other butterfly, bird and animal species	Reconstruction of prairie adjacent to native prairie	1	NA		Cropfield on existing NPB
2	Petersburg 27 NPB	346567	4820187	Dry prairie	Restoration will expand existing prairie habitat for Regal Fritillaries and other butterfly, bird and animal species; restoration will buffer a Threatened Prairie Bush-Clover population and a calcareous fen	Reconstruction of prairie adjacent to native prairie	14	NA		Cropfield on existing NPB
3	Moulton 11 NPB	261722	4866949	Dry prairie	Restoration will expand existing native prairie habitat for habitat for the Threatened Dakota Skipper and Regal Fritillaries	Reconstruction of prairie adjacent to native prairie	19	NA		Cropfield on existing NPB
4	Walls 7-2 NPB	217331	5071209	Dry hill prairie	Restoration will enhance existing remnant prairie habitat for Red Three-awn, soft goldenrod rare plant species; Threatened Dakota skipper, poweshiek skipper, Arogos skipper and other butterfly, bird and animal species	Reconstruction of prairie adjacent to native prairie	2	NA		Cropfield on existing NPB
5	Chanarambie Creek	258042	4866495	Native prairie	Dry gravel, mesic & wet prairies in biggest grassland complex with the highest quality prairie parcels in SW MN	Conservation easement acquisition	40	NA	DNR - SNA	Landowner has expressed interest in pursuing easement options
6	Correll Prairie	245403	5014965	Native prairie	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	Conservation easement acquisition	150	NA	DNR - SNA	Landowner has expressed interest in pursuing easement options
7	Glacial Lakes & Moraine Prairie	307591	5043821	Native prairie	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	NA	DNR - SNA	Landowner has expressed interest in pursuing easement options
8	Root River Prairies	599661	4851588	Native prairie	Southern Dry Bedrock Bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams; habitat for timber rattlesnakes	Conservation easement acquisition	25	NA	DNR - SNA	Landowner has expressed interest in pursuing easement options
9	MN River Bluff Prairies	299289	4963870	Native prairie	MN River River native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation easement acquisition	30	NA	DNR - SNA	Landowner has expressed interest in pursuing easement options
10	Yellow Medicine Coteau Prairie	232251	4957954	Native prairie	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	80	NA	DNR - SNA	Landowner has expressed interest in pursuing easement options
NOTES:										

ENRTF M.L. 2011 Acquisition and Restoration Sites

Native Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition

