



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

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**Date of Status Update:**

**Date of Next Status Update:** 1/1/2012

**Date of Work Plan Approval:** 6/23/2011

**Project Completion Date:** 6/30/2013

**Is this an amendment request?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Project Title:** Acceleration of Minnesota Conservation Assistance

**Project Manager:** Tabor Hoek

**Affiliation:** Board of Water and Soil Resources

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**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)

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**Total ENRTF Project Budget:**

**ENRTF Appropriation \$:** 625,000

**Amount Spent \$:** 0

**Balance \$:** 625,000

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

**Appropriation Language:**

\$313,000 the first year and \$312,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources to provide grants to soil and water conservation districts to provide technical assistance to secure enrollment and retention of private lands in federal and state programs for conservation.

## **I. PROJECT TITLE:** Acceleration of Minnesota Conservation Assistance

**II. PROJECT SUMMARY:** The MN Conservation Assistance Project is an expansion and modification of the existing MN Farm Bill Assistance Project funded by LCCMR in fiscal years 2010 and 2011. This project builds upon the success of this original project is very timely given federal and state program opportunities that are available. The current \$1.0 million LCCMR project is funded until June 30, 2011 and provides funding for 16 full time equivalents (FTEs) while leveraging funding for an additional 6 FTEs. The 22 FTEs are spread across 32 full or part time field technicians (see attached map). It is our desire to maintain and create additional jobs to meet increased demand and new opportunities. We propose to expand this current effort with an additional 10 FTEs to include better coverage of MN within the agricultural region as well as the Northeast forested region. Conservation technicians will focus on grassland, wetland and forest resource management for water quality and wildlife habitat. We will provide assistance on 30,000 ac. per year and leverage over \$60 million in federal and state funding for project implementation.

Numerous programs exist, or are being developed, to implement conservation on private lands. However, with all of these programs, there are seldom funds available to promote programs with landowners, educate them of the many choices they may have, and walk them through the process of enrollment. This project has been very successful at one on one landowner contacts that either retain or restore critical areas for water quality and wildlife habitat. Although we have over 1 year remaining on our existing LCCMR project, we see an emerging need to expand our efforts into areas of MN that we have not been able to focus on due to limited funding.

Acceleration of the existing Farm Bill Assistance Project through this expanded effort addresses the Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land and Habitat priority of the 2011-2012 RFP. Additionally, this project will work to address the concerns being identified within the BWSR Critical Lands Assessment project funded by LCCMR for fiscal years 2010-2011. Fundamentally, it will allow for knowledgeable technicians to contact landowners with expiring CRP contracts and work to insure that existing conservation practices remain or are replaced with another appropriate practice. We see a large opportunity to secure new buffer areas next to critical water bodies as well as forest management where habitat has become unsuitable for certain species.

Although BWSR will act as the manager of this project, it is a direct partnership of BWSR, DNR, Pheasants Forever (PF), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). Many other groups such as US Fish and Wildlife Service, Audubon Society, and local conservation groups also bring financial and program support to the project. There is no funding relationship of this project to any base agency base budget. All funding provided goes directly into staff positions at the local level to accelerate program delivery. This project has not been a part of any state agency base budget.

## **III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**Project Status as of January 31, 2012:**

**Project Status as of July 31, 2012:**

**Project Status as of January 31, 2013:**

**Project Status as of July 31, 2013:**

## **IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

### **ACTIVITY 1: Assistance on 30,000ac. of critical private land projects**

**Description:** Technicians provide the direct link between available conservation programs offered by state and federal agencies and the private landowner. This project will focus on enrollment, retention and

management of 15,000 ac. of native grasslands, wetlands and forest lands each year of the two year project. Opportunity to achieve these results rests with key opportunities within the Federal Farm Bill for programs like CRP and WRP. This project intends to maximize the effectiveness of federal and state conservation program offerings. The committee comprised of BWSR, DNR and Pheasants Forever, will utilize grant funding to cover 70% of the cost for two years of staffing with the remaining 30% provided as cash match at the local level. Applications for program funding are submitted to the committee for review and selection. Staff positions will be selected for funding consideration based upon historical performance, location within DNR Working Lands Initiative areas, resource opportunity/need, ability to provide necessary match to grant, and goals identified by each applicant in their application.

The BWSR Board provides final funding authorization and enters into reimbursement contracts with selected SWCD's. The BWSR also coordinates contracts, maintains data on program impacts and results for the committee.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 625,000**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 0**  
**Balance: \$ 625,000**

**Activity Completion Date:**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>
1. Contracts with SWCD's for employment of 10 staff equivalents	July 1, 2011	\$625,000
2. 30,000 ac. native grasslands, wetlands restored or enhanced	June 30, 2013	\$0
3. BWSR Published program impacts and results	August 31, 2013	\$0

**Activity Status as of January 31, 2012:**

**Activity Status as of July 31, 2012:**

**Activity Status as of January 31, 2013:**

**Activity Status as of July 31, 2013:**

**Final Report Summary: July 31, 2013**

**V. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** Data is collected on staff time spent, acres impacted and landowners contacted on a quarterly basis and is available to the project partners and participants. The overall status of conservation programs in MN is available at [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/coenrol.xls](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/coenrol.xls).

**Status as of January 31, 2012:**

**Status as of July 31, 2012:**

**Status as of January 31, 2013:**

**Status as of July 31, 2013:**

**Final Report Summary: July 31, 2013:**

**VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. ENRTF Budget:**

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Personnel:	\$	
Professional/Technical Contracts:	\$625,000	Contracts with SWCD's to employ 10 fte's over 2 year period for a total of 20 fte's. Specific table of allocations to selected SWCD's provided upon contract signing.
<b>TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>	

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** N/A

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500:** N/A

**Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) funded with this ENRTF appropriation:** 20

**B. Other Funds:**

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
<b>Non-state</b>			
SWCD Cash Match	\$250,000	\$	Cash match to ENRTF
<b>State</b>			
DNR, BWSR	\$150,000	\$	Cash enhancement to employ additional fte's.
<b>TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$</b>	

**VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:**

**A. Project Partners:** MN BWSR, MN DNR, MN Pheasants Forever, and MN SWCD's

**B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:** This project creates an employment opportunity for 10 fte's over the next 2 years for a total of 20 fte's. The investment in 10 fte's leverages an estimated \$37,500,000 in federal and state conservation program payments to MN landowners. This project is necessary to continue progress towards meeting MN prairie and wetland conservation needs identified in the MN Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, July 2008 (SCPP). During this 2 year project, the committee will be working to expand funding opportunities within federal sources such as Natural Resources Conservation Service as well as MN Clean Water Fund. Future funding is expected to become even more challenging.

**C. Spending History:**

Funding Source	M.L. 2005 or FY 2006-07	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				\$1,000,000	

**VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: N/A**

**IX. MAP(S): N/A**

**X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: N/A**

**XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted not later than January 31, 2012, July 31, 2012, and January 31, 2013. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 1, 2013 as requested by the LCCMR.**

**Attachment A: Budget Detail for M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Projects**

<b>Project Title: Acceleration of Minnesota Conservation Assistance, \$625,000</b>					
<b>Legal Citation: M.L. 2011, Chp. , Sec. , Subd.</b>					
<b>Project Manager: Tabor Hoek</b>					
<b>M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 625,000</b>					
<b>Project Length and Completion Date: June 30, 2013</b>					
<b>Date of Update:</b>					
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET</b>	<b>Activity 1 Budget</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<b>SWCD contracts for services</b>				
<b>Professional/Technical Contracts: Contracts with SWCD's to employ 10 fte's over 2 year period. Specific table of allocations to selected SWCD's provided upon contract signing.</b>	625,000	0	625,000	625,000	625,000
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>