



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2015 Work Plan

**Date of Report:** June 1, 2015

**Date of Next Status Update Report:** December 31, 2015

**Date of Work Plan Approval:**

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2018

**Does this submission include an amendment request?**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte

**Organization:** MN DNR – SNA Program

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**Location:** Statewide

<b>Total ENRTF Project Budget:</b>	<b>ENRTF Appropriation:</b>	<b>\$3,325,000</b>
	<b>Amount Spent:</b>	<b>\$0</b>
	<b>Balance:</b>	<b>\$3,325,000</b>

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 09d

**Appropriation Language:**

\$3,325,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire native prairie bank easements on at least 675 acres, prepare baseline property assessments, restore and enhance at least 1,000 acres of native prairie sites, and provide technical assistance to landowners. A list of proposed easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required work plan. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2018, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

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

**II. PROJECT STATEMENT:** Of Minnesota’s 235,000 acres of remaining native prairie, about 100,000 acres has no form of protection. At the same time, the Midwest experiencing the highest rate of grassland-to-cropland conversion seen since the 1920’s. The MN Prairie Conservation Plan provides a road map for all partners to pursue the protection all remaining native prairie over the next 20 years – this project is one of those efforts. This project aims to work with landowners of native prairie identified by the MN Biological Survey (MBS) 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 675 acres of native prairie will be permanently protected by the DNR’s Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easement program. The current landowner “waiting list” for NPB includes 75 projects for over 6000 acres. Native prairie restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on about 1000 acres of NPBs threatened by invasive species and lack of natural disturbance regimes. This project will also conduct research on conservation grazing as a form of disturbance ecology for managing the structure and diversity of grassland habitats. This research will help land managers develop specific management practices applicable to Minnesota’s grassland types.

**III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**Project Status as of December 31, 2015:**

**Project Status as of July 31, 2016:**

**Project Status as of December 31, 2016:**

**Project Status as of July 31, 2017:**

**Project Status as of December 31, 2017:**

**Overall Project Outcomes and Results:**

**IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

**ACTIVITY 1: NPB Acquisition of Prairie of Biodiversity Significance**

**Description:** The SNA Program will protect and buffer high quality native prairie sites of by acquisition of NPB conservation easements on 675 acres. Payment rates are formula based, which is 65% of the marginal agricultural land rate as established by BWSR (M.S. 84.96). These rates are updated annually and reflect current land values within a given township. Conservation easement baseline reports will be completed on 9 NPBs, including all NPBs acquired with this funding. Additional baselines may be completed on previously acquired NPB acquisitions, with a focus on those acquired with ENRTF funds. Monitoring and easement stewardship-related work during this appropriation period will be completed on about 15 NPBs, with a focus on those acquired with ENRTF funds. Priority sites are identified by MBS and target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, and key habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Any lands needing restoration will be completed using a combination of funds from Activity 3 ~~2~~ below and/or state appropriations. It is anticipated that only 20 of the 675 acres acquired will need restoration.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:**

**ENRTF Budget:** \$ 2,614,750  
**Amount Spent:** \$ 0  
**Balance:** \$ 2,614,750

Outcome	Completion Date
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1. acquisition of NPB conservation easement - 675 acres of native prairie	6/30/18
2. baseline property reports for acquired NPB easements	6/30/18
3. accelerated landowner outreach for NPB enrollment	6/30/18
4. monitoring and stewardship of NPB easements (15 NPBs)	6/30/18

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2015:**

**Activity Status as of July 31, 2016:**

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2016:**

**Activity Status as of July 31, 2017:**

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2017:**

**Final Report Summary:**

**ACTIVITY 2: Monitoring and Stewardship of Acquired Easements**

**Description:** The policy of the DNR is to follow, as closely as possible, established industry practices in the stewardship of its conservation easement interests. DNR policy also directs each division or program to determine the amount of funding necessary to perform stewardship activities and seek funding from appropriate sources sufficient to meet its conservation easement stewardship obligations. The intent of this stewardship is to protect both the conservation values of the property protected by these easements and the investment of the state in those interests. Elements of this stewardship include regular compliance monitoring, effective record keeping and reporting, and resolution of any issues discovered during monitoring. The Native Prairie Bank Program implements this policy by following the “Ecological and Water Resources Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines”. This plan calls for annual landowner contacts as well as on-the-ground site evaluations every year for the first three years, then once every three years if no violations are found. Budgeted into this work plan is funding to be deposited into conservation easement account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements. The dedicated stewardship and enforcement funds will provide the support needed for long-term, ongoing monitoring and enforcement activities of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal. For Native Prairie Bank easements, the DNR has estimated that annual expenses for each project and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity (\$15,000/easement). Funds for this activity will be deposited into a conservation easement stewardship account expected to be established in 2015. This account is further explained in Section VIII-B question #7 under “Conservation Easement Acquisition”. ~~is pending establishment of an easement monitoring and enforcement account.~~

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:**

**ENRTF Budget:** \$ 135,000  
**Amount Spent:** \$ 0  
**Balance:** \$ 135,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. monitoring and stewardship of ~9 acquired easements	6/30/18

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2015:**

**Activity Status as of July 31, 2016:**

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2016:**

**Activity Status as of July 31, 2017:**

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2017:**

**Final Report Summary:**

**ACTIVITY 3: Native Prairie Restoration & Enhancement**

**Description:** Restoration and enhancement activities would be completed on about 1000 acres. Management practices at 10 NPB sites would be measured to evaluate if objectives were met as part of adaptive management. Restoration and enhancement activities – including bringing sites acquired up to minimum standards – would be carried out through landowner agreements, DNR staff, Conservation Corps MN (CCM), Sentence to Service (STS), volunteers, and/or contractors. Activities include seed collection, planting, exotics control, woody encroachment removal, boundary signing, site cleanup, prescribed burns/mowing, and monitoring. All restorations will use seeds/plants of a local ecotype, collected from onsite or within the Seed Zone. 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 3:**

<b>ENRTF Budget:</b>	<b>\$ 309,000</b>
<b>Amount Spent:</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 309,000</b>

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. 20 acres of prairie reconstruction (restoration)	6/30/18
2. 130 acres of woody removal & exotics species treatment	6/30/18
3. 850 acres of prescribed burns	6/30/18
4. NPB easement boundary signs & development work to meet minimum standards on 9 NPB sites (including those acquired with this funding)	6/30/18
5. adaptive management monitoring on 5 NPB sites	6/30/18

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2015:**

**Activity Status as of July 31, 2016:**

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2016:**

**Activity Status as of July 31, 2017:**

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2017:**

**Final Report Summary:**

**ACTIVITY 4: Native Prairie Landowner Assistance & Incentives**

**Description:** Private landowners will increase their stewardship of native prairie through a suite of strategies. Six prairie management workshops/field days for private landowners and other practitioners will be held. DNR staff will meet with 40 landowners to provide technical consultation on how to best manage their prairie. At least 15 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan including an evaluation their prairie’s condition, identification of management needs, and recommendations for management action.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 4:**

**ENRTF Budget:** \$ 131,250  
**Amount Spent:** \$ 0  
**Balance:** \$ 131,250

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. 3 workshops/field days for prairie landowners & practitioners	6/30/18
2. consultations, guidance, mgmt. asst., etc. to 40 landowners	6/30/18
3. prairie stewardship plans provided to 8 prairie landowners	6/30/18

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2015:****Activity Status as of July 31, 2016:****Activity Status as of December 31, 2016:****Activity Status as of July 31, 2017:****Activity Status as of December 31, 2017:****Final Report Summary:****ACTIVITY 5: Conduct research on conservation grazing****Description:**

Throughout the prairie pothole region, low nesting success is a key factor limiting populations of ground nesting birds. Ground nesting birds can have high rates of nesting success in moderately grazed pastures, and having more grass on the landscape can help elevate nesting success across all habitats, both grazed and ungrazed. This study will evaluate nesting on idle grasslands and pastures with different grazing intensities to identify grazing practices that are most compatible with nesting effort and success for ground nesting birds. The outcome will be Minnesota specific BMPs for conservation grazing to meet a range of conservation objectives. To implement this study, the MN DNR will partner with the University of Minnesota, Dept. of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology who will hire and manage a graduate student. This student will operate under the supervision of Dr. Todd Arnold, as well as the guidance of the DNR Farmland Research Group. Using funds from this appropriation, a sole source contract will be established with the University to fund the student and research activities.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 5:**

**ENRTF Budget:** \$ 135,000  
**Amount Spent:** \$ 0  
**Balance:** \$ 135,000

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Hire grad. student, conduct research, analyze results	6/30/18
2. Develop and disseminate grazing BMP's	6/30/18

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2015:****Activity Status as of July 31, 2016:****Activity Status as of December 31, 2016:****Activity Status as of July 31, 2017:**

**Activity Status as of December 31, 2017:**

**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>), and advertised locally via mailings and flyer postings. Results of the grazing study will be widely disseminated online, in press, and presented to a variety of stakeholders. The study will be submitted for professional, peer reviewed publication. In addition, the study’s findings and management implications will be provided to land use decision makers, including public land managers, farmers, SWCD staff, and agricultural consultants.

**Status as of December 31, 2015:**

**Status as of July 31, 2016:**

**Status as of December 31, 2016:**

**Status as of July 31, 2017:**

**Status as of December 31, 2017:**

**Final Report Summary:**

**VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. ENRTF Budget Overview:**

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Overview Explanation
Personnel:	\$ 287,000	Acquisition Coordinator & Prairie Biologist (.2 FTE for 3-yrs) = \$\$46,494  Specialist and Technician (1 FTE spread across 4 people for 3-yrs) = \$217,259  Laborer and seasonal crews (.25 FTE spread across 2 people for 3-yrs) = \$23,247
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$ 293,000	Professional/technical Contractors: the state bid process will be sought for adaptive management monitoring and the development of Prairie Stewardship Plans (\$28,000).  Service contracts: will use CCM or the state bid process for completing woody encroachment removal & exotics control, prescribed burning/mowing projects, as well as site development (\$130,000).  A sole source contract will be established with the University of MN (Dept. of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology) for grazing research

		(\$135,000).
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ 11,362	Supplies, parts, tools, repair costs & supplies for restoration and enhancement, including safety items, hand tools, etc.; signs & posts; workshop & event supplies
Easement Acquisition:	\$ 2,390,000	Landowner payments for an estimated 9 easements protecting 675 acres that will be held by the MN DNR.
Monitoring and Easement Stewardship	\$ 135,000	Funds will be deposited into conservation easement account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements
Professional Services for Acquisition:	\$ 100,000	Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition; anticipate about 9 transactions; cost/transaction varies greatly between projects...\$8000 - \$12,000/acquisition
Printing:	\$ 1,500	Printing of materials for workshops and field days, and prairie stewardship plans
Travel Expenses in MN:	\$ 41,500	Fleet charges for trucks, cars, & equipment, e.g. mowers, seeders; mileage, lodging & meals as per state contracts
Other: Direct and Necessary	\$ 65,638	DNR costs for the appropriation, see below
<b>TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:</b>		<b>\$3,325,000</b>

\*Direct and Necessary expenses include both Department Support Services (Human Resources, IT Support, Safety, Financial Support, Communications Support, Planning Support, and Procurement Support) and Division Support Services. Department Support Services are described in the agency Service Level Agreement, and billed internally to divisions based on rates that have been developed for each area of service. These services are directly related to and necessary for the appropriation. Department leadership services (Commissioner's Office and Regional Directors) are not assessed. Division Support Services include costs associated with Division business offices and clerical support. Those elements of individual projects that put little or no demand on support services such as large single-source contracts, land acquisitions, and funds that are passed-thru to other entities are not assessed Direct and Necessary costs for those activities. For this work plan, landowner easement payments with an associated cost of \$2,565,000 have not been assessed Direct and Necessary costs. In addition to itemized costs captured in our proposal budget, direct and necessary costs cover HR Support (~\$5,967), Safety Support (~\$1,476), Financial Support (~\$7,857), Communication Support (~\$4,564), IT Support (~\$10,229), Planning Support (~\$2,816), Procurement Support (~\$940), and division and regional program management (~\$31,789) that are necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects.

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the SNA program, this funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. 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.

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:** NA

**Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:** A total of 1.45 FTE's spread across 7 different people for 3-years.

**Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF**

**Appropriation:** How many employees a future contractor will use, the hours they will work, or what salary they may pay their employees is not known. What is known is that \$293,000 in contracts will be executed.

**B. Other Funds: NA**

**VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:**

**A. Project Partners:** To accelerate efforts, the Native Prairie Bank Program is coordinating with Minnesota Prairie Plan partners and using the network of established Local Technical Teams (LTT's) to reach out to landowners and increase program enrollment. The LTT's are local staff from SWCD's, NRCS, DNR, USFWS, The Nature Conservancy and Pheasants Forever - to name a few. The LTT's have already begun cultivating relationships with prairie landowners and eagerly await funding to deliver this program to willing landowners. Funds from this appropriation will not be used to fund these partner activities.

The MN DNR will partner with the University of Minnesota, Dept. of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology to hire and manage a graduate student. This student will conduct the research described in activity 5 under the supervision of Dr. Todd Arnold, as well as the guidance of the MN DNR Farmland Research Group. Using funds from this appropriation, a sole source contract will be established with the University to fund the student and research activities.

**B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:** The Native Prairie Bank Program targets MBS identified sites with high biodiversity native prairie and has set a program enrollment goal of 35,000 acres by 2025 (i.e. adding 25,000 acres in the next 10 years). It is anticipated that the remaining, available native prairie acres will be protected by other DNR programs, as well as partner organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

**C. Funding History:**

Funding Source and Use of Funds	Funding Timeframe	\$ Amount
ENRTF ML10, Ch362, Sec2, Sub4b & ML13, Ch52, Sec2, Subd17: SNA/NPB restoration, enhancement & acquisition (estimated prairie stewardship portion only)	July 2010-June 2014	\$ 653,600
ENRTF ML10, Ch362, Sec2, Subd4f2k: MN Habitat Cons. Partnership – SNA/NPB restoration & enhancement (estimated prairie stewardship portion only)	July 2010-June 2012	\$ 31,500
ENRTF ML11, First Special Session, Ch2, Art.3, Sec. 2, Subd4h: Native Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition	July 2011-June 2014	\$1,000,000
ENRTF ML13, Ch52, Sec. 2, Subd4c: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Acquisition	July 2013-June 2016	\$750,000
OHF ML10, CH361, Art1, Sec2, Subd2a: Accelerated Prairie – SNA/NPB prairie acquisition, restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2010-June 2015	\$ 650,000
OHF ML11, 1SS, Ch6, Art1, Sec2, Subd4b: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2011-June 2016	\$ 229,370
OHF ML11, 1SS, Ch6, Art1, Sec2, Subd4a: SNA & NPB acquisition (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2011-June 2016+	\$ 347,870
OHF ML12, Ch262, Art1, Sec2, Subd4h: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2012-June 2017	\$ 184,629
OHF ML13, Ch137, Art1, Sec2, Subd4g: Accelerated Prairie –	July 2013-June 2018	\$ 96,110



SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)		
OHF ML13, Ch137, Art1, Sec2, Subd4c: SNA & NPB acquisition (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2013-June 2018+	\$ 753,500
OHF ML14, Ch256, Art1, Sec2, Subd4h: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2014-June 2019	\$ 285,650
OHF ML14, Ch256, Art1, Sec2, Subd2e: NPB acquisition	July 2014-June 2019+	\$ 3,000,000

**VIII. FEE TITLE ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION EASEMENT/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS:**

**A. Parcel List:** See attached Parcel List

**B. Acquisition/Restoration Information:**

**Conservation Easement Acquisition**

**1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.**

Eligibility for Native Prairie Bank is established in both M.S. 84.96 and MN Rule 6136.09. To qualify, land must be covered by native prairie vegetation and have never been plowed. Eligible lands are prioritized based on factors including: size, quality and diversity of the native prairie habitat; occurrence of, or suitable habitat for rare species; location relative to other native prairie and/or public land; and potential for long-term habitat management and enhancement. MBS data is the foundation for many of these evaluation factors. The Native Prairie Bank program uses the “*Native Prairie Bank Evaluation Form*” evaluate and score individual projects.

**2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.**

- *Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan* – [www.dnr.state.mn.us/prairieplan](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/prairieplan)
- *Minnesota’s State Wildlife Action Plan* – [www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwcs](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwcs)
- *Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda* – [www.dnr.state.mn.us/conservationagenda](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/conservationagenda)
- *MN Statewide Conservation Plan* - [www.lccmr.leg.mn/documents/scpp/statewide\\_plan/scpp\\_2008-07-08\\_final\\_plan\\_overview.pdf](http://www.lccmr.leg.mn/documents/scpp/statewide_plan/scpp_2008-07-08_final_plan_overview.pdf)

**3. For any conservation easement acquired, a restoration and management must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.**

Each parcel acquired as a new NPB will have a Prairie Stewardship Plan. Prairie Stewardship Plans include, 1) a resource inventory and assessment of all the lands be native plant communities or restored to plant communities that would have been native to the site, 2) the landowner’s goals as well as the NPB programs, and 3) prairie management alternatives/recommendations. The goals for the NPB’s management are based upon soils, topography, geology, and other factors necessary to sustain the plant community. Each plan includes an implementation timetable which summarizes ongoing management needs and a statement on funding. Long-term management costs (e.g. invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated. Each Prairie Stewardship Plan is kept in a DNR internal shared electronic filing system accessible to all SNA staff.

4. **For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.**

NA

5. **If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction. A copy of the written approval should be provided to LCCMR.**

NA

6. **Provide a statement addressing how conservation easements will address specific water quality protection activities, such as keeping water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, protecting groundwater, and not permitting artificial hydrological modifications.**

Native Prairie Bank easements address water quality protection by promoting or prohibiting the following activities:

- No artificial excavation, cultivation, drainage or filling
- No drawing of water from the easement as a source for irrigation, and no irrigation on the easement
- No dumping of garbage, junk or hazardous materials on the easement
- No application of pesticides unless authorized by the DNR
- All acres are to be covered with, and managed for, perennial native vegetation

7. **Describe the long-term monitoring and enforcement program for conservation easements acquired on parcels by your organization, including explanations of the process used for calculating conservation easement monitoring and enforcements costs, the process used for annual inspection and reporting on monitoring and enforcement activities, and the process used to ensure perpetual funding and implementation of monitoring and enforcement activities.**

The policy of the DNR is to follow, as closely as possible, established industry practices in the stewardship of its conservation easement interests. The intent of this stewardship is to protect both the conservation values of the property protected by these easements and the investment of the state in those interests. Elements of this stewardship include the creation of baseline property reports, enforcement protocols, regular compliance monitoring, effective record keeping and reporting, and maintaining effective working relationships with the owners of these easement properties. The Native Prairie Bank Program implements this policy by following the "Ecological and Water Resources Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines". This plan calls for annual landowner contacts as well as on-the-ground site evaluations every year for the first three years, then once every three years if no violations are found. Budgeted into this work plan is funding to be deposited into conservation easement stewardship account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements. The dedicated stewardship and enforcement funds will provide the support needed for long-term, ongoing monitoring and enforcement activities of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal. For Native Prairie Bank easements, the DNR has estimated that annual expenses for each project and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity (~\$15,000/easement). For each specific Native Prairie Bank easement, initial investment dollars are determined by using a DNR approved Conservation Easement Stewardship Calculator. ~~Funding for this activity is pending establishment of an easement monitoring and enforcement account.~~

Funds for this activity will be deposited into the conservation easement stewardship account expected to be established in 2015 and Minnesota Management & Budget protocols will be adhered to. After the closing of each Native Prairie Bank easement acquired with this appropriation, the calculated easement stewardship funds will be deposited into this account. Once funds are deposited and interest begins to accrue, this accrued interest will be applied towards actual expenses tied to annual landowner contact, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and minor enforcement protocols.

## **Restoration**

- 1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.**

All restoration activities done with this appropriation are on perpetual Native Prairie Bank lands administered by the SNA Program.

- 2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.**

Each restoration project will be based upon an ecological restoration and management plan and/or project plan with goals for reconstructing plant communities that are native to the site that are based upon soils, topography, geology, and other factors necessary to sustain the plant community. Each plan includes an implementation timetable which summarizes ongoing management needs. Each restoration and management plan and project plan is kept in a DNR internal shared electronic filing system accessible to all SNA staff.

- 3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.**

The SNA Program follows or exceeds the recommendations found in the BWSR “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines”. SNA restorations typically follow the current BWSR Guidelines, including Project Guidance, Plant Community Restoration, and Temporary Cover. The SNA Program follows the general direction of the BWSR Guidelines for “Recommended Steps for Obtaining Plant Materials”, and has additional and more restrictive requirements for restoration material sources. Specifically, restoration and management of DNR lands are governed by DNR Operational Order #124 on “Plant Material Standards for Native Plant Community Restoration” and a pending Operational Order on “DNR Pollinator Habitat Program Guidelines” (which include BMPs).

- 4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.**

Long-term management costs (e.g. invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated.

- 5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.**

DNR has a standing general contract with CCM under which the SNA Program often does project or activity specific agreements. For restoration projects, CCM has been and will continue to be used when appropriate for hand seed harvest. CCM also does some invasive species control on NPBs and will be considered on restoration projects for post-planting weed control.

- 6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.**

Restoration projects will be evaluated and a report submitted to the LCCMR to ascertain how well the native plants have been established and non-natives controlled. The evaluation reports include a summary of management plan outcomes, activities completed through the project, maps of the project area, a statement of ongoing management needs and funding, and a summary of the evaluation.

#### **IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S):**

**X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: NA**

**XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than December 31, 2015, July 31, 2016, December 31, 2016, July 31, 2017, and December 31, 2017. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2018.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
M.L. 2015 Project Budget  
Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition  
Legal Citation:  
Project Manager: Judy Schulte  
Organization: MNDNR - SNA  
M.L. 2015 ENRTF Appropriation: \$3,325,000  
Project Length and Completion Date: 3 Years, June 30, 2018  
Date of Report: May 13, 2015



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 1 Balance	Activity 2 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 2 Balance	Activity 3 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 3 Balance	Activity 4 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 4 Balance	Activity 5 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 5 Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<b>NPB Acquisition</b>			<b>Easement Stewardship</b>			<b>Restoration &amp; Enhancement</b>			<b>Landowner Assistance &amp; Incentives</b>			<b>Research on conservation grazing</b>				
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b>																	
This funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. These positions would not exist, but for special project funding received through the ENRTF and other funds	\$110,000	\$0	\$110,000				\$102,000	\$0	\$102,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$75,000				\$287,000	\$287,000
Acquisition Coordinator & Prairie Biologist (2 FTE for 3-yr)																	
Specialist and Technician (1 FTE spread across 4 people for 3-yr)																	
Laborer and seasonal crews (.25 FTE spread across 2 people for 3-yr)																	
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</b>							\$130,000		\$130,000	\$28,000		\$28,000	\$135,000		\$135,000	\$293,000	\$293,000
Professional/Technical Contracts																	
Activity 3- Outcome 5: (~15,000) Adaptive Management Monitoring (~5 NPBs).																	
Activity 4-Outcome 3: (~\$28,000) Prairie Stewardship Plans (8 plans). Contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding process																	
Activity 5-Outcomes 1 & 2: (\$135,000) Work Order Contract with the University of MN for Grazing Research Project (University Project Manager: Todd W. Arnold)																	
<b>Service Contracts</b>																	
Activity 3-Outcome 1: (~\$10,000) Prairie reconstruction/restoration (20 ac) Priority given to CCM; contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding processes																	
Activity 3-Outcome 2: (~\$77,500) Woody removal & exotic species treatment (130ac) Priority given to CCM; contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding processes																	
Activity 3-Outcome 3: (~\$27,500) Prescribed Burns (850 ac) Priority given to CCM; contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding processes																	
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies</b>																	
Supplies, parts, tools, repair costs & supplies for restoration and enhancement, including safety items, handtools, etc; signs & posts; workshop & event supplies	\$750	\$0	\$750				\$9,862	\$0	\$9,862	\$750	\$0	\$750				\$11,362	\$11,362
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>																	
Estimate securing about 9 easements for 675 acres that will be held by the MN DNR - SNA Program	\$2,390,000	\$0	\$2,390,000													\$2,390,000	\$2,390,000
Long term easement stewardship funding				\$135,000	\$0	\$135,000										\$135,000	\$135,000
<b>Professional Services for Acquisition</b>																	
Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition; anticipate about 9 transactions; cost/transaction vary between projects...\$8000 - \$12,000/acquisition	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000													\$100,000	\$100,000
<b>Printing</b>																	
Printing of materials for workshops and field days, and prairie stewardship plans										\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500				\$1,500	\$1,500
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b>																	
Fleet charges for trucks, cars, & equipment, e.g. mowers, seeders; mileage, lodging & meals as per state contracts	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000				\$29,500	\$0	\$29,500	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000				\$41,500	\$41,500
<b>Other: Direct and Necessary Costs</b>																	
DNR's direct and necessary costs pay for activities that are direct and related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. This includes HR Support (~\$5,967), Safety Support (~\$1,476), Financial Support (~\$7,857), Communication Support (~\$4,564), IT Support (~\$10,229), Planning Support (~\$2,816), Procurement Support (~\$940) and division and regional program management (~\$31,789).	\$8,000	\$0	\$8,000				\$37,638	\$0	\$37,638	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000				\$65,638	\$65,638
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,614,750</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,614,750</b>	<b>\$135,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$135,000</b>	<b>\$309,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$309,000</b>	<b>\$131,250</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$131,250</b>	<b>\$135,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$135,000</b>	<b>\$3,325,000</b>	<b>\$3,325,000</b>

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**

**M.L. 2015 Parcel List**

**Project Title:** Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

**Legal Citation:**

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte ~~Peggy Booth (interim)~~

**Organization:** MN DNR - SNA

**M.L. 2015 ENRTF Appropriation:** \$3,500,000

**Project Length and Completion Date:** 3 Years, June 30, 2018

**Date of Report:** May 13, 2015 ~~January 21, 2015~~

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	County	Site Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status
		Latitude	Longitude										
1	Chanarambie Creek Prairies	43° 55' 12.9" <del>258042</del>	96° 1' 8.0" <del>4866495</del>	\$2818/ac	\$ -	Murray, Pipestone	Dry gravel, mesic & wet prairies in biggest grassland complex with the highest quality prairie parcels in SW MN	Conservation Easement	60	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
2	Lac Qui Parle Prairies	43° 12' 10.4" <del>243928</del>	96° 10' 32.1" <del>5016740</del>	\$2850/ac	\$ -	Big Stone	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	80	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
3	Glacial Lakes & Moraine Prairie	45° 25' 20.0" <del>307590</del>	95° 14' 34.5" <del>5043824</del>	\$1750/ac	\$ -	Pope, Kandiyohi	Dry sand-gravel prairies of the Alexandria Moraine, provides habitat for the Threatened Dakota Skipper as well as the Poweshiek Skipperling and Regal Fritillary	Conservation Easement	80	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
4	Root River Prairies	43° 46' 14.6" <del>599660</del>	91° 39' 51.8" <del>4854587</del>	\$2025/ac	\$ -	Houston, Filmore, Winona	Southern Dry Bedrock Bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams; habitat for timber rattlesnakes	Conservation Easement	20	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
5	Upper MN River Prairies	44° 40' 21.2" <del>299289</del>	95° 19' 2.0" <del>4963870</del>	\$2880/ac	\$ -	Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville, Redwood	MN River native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation Easement	80	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
6	Yellow Medicine Coteau Prairie	44° 43' 42.7" <del>232254</del>	96° 25' 47.0" <del>4957954</del>	\$2990/ac	\$ -	Yellow Medicine	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	80	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
7	Blue Mounds/Touch-The-Sky Prairie	43° 43' 16.2" <del>236540</del>	96° 12' 43.3" <del>4848534</del>	\$3925/ac	\$ -	Rock	Mesic to wet prairie with rock outcrops; provides habitat for many rare rock outcrop plants	Conservation Easement	40	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
8	Glacial Ridge Prairie	47° 41' 46.9" <del>250832</del>	96° 18' 43.9" <del>5288396</del>	\$1425/ac	\$ -	Polk	Large complex of mesic to wet prairie; expands habitat for many rare butterfly and bird species, including the Dakota Skipper and Poweshiek Skipperling	Conservation Easement	160	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
9	Des Moines River Prairie	43° 50' 31.2" <del>334295</del>	95° 7' 7.6" <del>4844654</del>	\$4425/ac	\$ -	Jackson	Part Des Moines River complex of native prairie including oak savanna; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation Easement	80	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
10	Kellogg-Weaver Dunes	44° 16' 10.6" <del>587858</del>	91° 56' 2.8" <del>4892489</del>	\$2100/ac	\$ -	Winona	Rare habitats ranging from bare sand, to mature dunes with dry, mesic, or wet prairie. Area includes large population of Blanding turtles.	Conservation Easement	25	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
11	Frontenac Hay Creek	44° 30' 20.5" <del>547742</del>	92° 25' 6.1" <del>4928584</del>	\$2300/ac	\$ -	Goodhue	Unique bedrock bluff prairie, as well as sand and gravel prairie communities; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation Easement	25	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	
12	Rothsay Prairie	46° 29' 27.0" <del>240802</del>	96° 21' 23.4" <del>5152854</del>	\$1750/ac	\$ -	Wilkin	Large complex of mesic to wet prairie; expands habitat for many rare butterfly and bird species	Conservation Easement	80	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	

**NOTES:** The above list represents locations with identified high quality prairies and interested landowners. This proposal will target these locations and enroll 675 acres; not all sites on the list will be enrolled. The 20 acres of prairie restoration will occur on one or more of the easement sites listed above. Exactly where the 20 acres will be located will be known after negotiations with landowners. Parcel lists for restoration will be reported in work program updates.

# PARCEL MAPS

NATIVE PRAIRIE STEWARDSHIP & PRAIRIE BANK EASEMENT ACQUISITION

LCCMR  
2015



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Division of Ecological and Water Resources

Project Manager: Judy Schulte, Scientific and Nature Areas Program

















