



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2016 Work Plan

Date of Report: December 8, 2015
Date of Next Status Update Report: November 24, 2016
Date of Work Plan Approval:
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2018
Does this submission include an amendment request?

PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA Addition

Project Manager: Margaret (Peggy) Booth
Organization: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Ecological & Water Resources
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Location: City of Duluth

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation:	\$500,000
	Amount Spent:	\$0
	Balance:	\$500,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2016, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

Appropriation Language:

I. PROJECT TITLE: Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA Addition

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

About 10 acres of rare pine forest and Lake Superior beach dunes on Minnesota Point will be acquired by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources from the City of Duluth and designated as part of the Minnesota Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area (SNA). This acquisition will increase the SNA to about 28 acres and thus will permanently protect the unique state imperiled forest which is the only one of its kind in Minnesota. Also, the proposed addition to the SNA will increase the connectivity for both protection of existing rare species and geological features across a larger portion of the Minnesota Point sand spit and improved management for the SNA. The timing of the acquisition is critical in implementing and helping fund a portion of the proposed relocation of the runway at the Duluth Airport Authority’s Sky Harbor Airport. This relocation is the most feasible solution identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment to address requirements of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to achieve a safer flight approach to the airport while conserving the old growth forest.

III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of October 1, 2016:

Project Status as of April 1, 2017:

Project Status as of October 1, 2017:

Project Status as of April 1, 2018 (if needed):

Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Acquisition, Designation & Initial Site Development

Description:

The Department of Natural Resources and its SNA program will initiate and complete acquisition of 6 parcels totaling about 10 acres on Minnesota Point from the City of Duluth. The proposed acquisition parcels have been recognized as important for protection since 1996 and scored 93 out of 100 possible points using the SNA Candidate Site Evaluation Guide – one of the highest scores to date of any sites proposed for SNA acquisition.

The proposed parcels are within an Outstanding Site of Biodiversity Significance, Minnesota Point Central. This site captures the best quality combination of native plant communities and rare features on Minnesota Point. The biodiversity significance of this site is based on the uniqueness of Minnesota Point in Minnesota and the Great Lakes basin, significant rare plant locations, and good to excellent quality examples of native plant communities. The site is adjacent to two High and one Moderate Sites of Biodiversity Significance.

Several state listed species occur on the parcels, or on adjacent parcels with similar habitats. These include five Special Concern, four Threatened, and one Endangered species. Of these species, three are found exclusively on Minnesota Point in Minnesota.

Four native plant communities have been mapped on the parcels: Red Pine – White Pine Woodland (Minnesota Point) (FDn32b), Beachgrass Dune (Lake Superior) (LKu32a), Juniper Dune Shrubland (Lake Superior) (LKu32b), and Sand Beach (Lake Superior) (LKu32c). All four have a state conservation state rank (S-rank) of S1, Critically

Imperiled. Of these NPCs, FDn32b, LKu32a, and LKu32b are found exclusively on Minnesota Point in Minnesota. LKu32c has only been identified at one other site in Minnesota.

The addition of these parcels to the existing SNA will benefit management, preservation, and enforcement efforts. Management of invasive species will be more efficient and effective across the site while operating under a single ownership. A single ownership will also better facilitate enforcement of public activities that may harm rare species or geological features across the site.

The project will include acquisition fact sheet approval, initial site assessment, appraisal and review, boundary survey (if needed), title review, county board approval, closing and other activities necessary to meet the state/DNRs acquisition requirements. The property will be designated as the Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA through a Commissioner’s Designation Order.

To be acquired and designated as SNA, the site must be recommended for SNA designation in an Ecological Evaluation report which serves as the site’s baseline assessment for fee acquisitions. All such sites are predominantly MBS-mapped native plant communities and contain habitat for rare species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. In addition, SNA staff use the “*SNA Candidate Site Evaluation Guide*” (developed through the ENRTF-funded SNA strategic planning process) which incorporates criteria to rate which sites are currently pursued. Criteria include diversity and quality of the native habitat, occurrence of rare species, occurrence of native plant communities under-represented in SNA system, parcel size, location of parcel in relation to biodiversity hotspots (particularly MBS-mapped areas of outstanding and high biodiversity significance) and other conservation lands (including *SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan’s* Conservation Opportunity Areas), potential for long-term management, and additional factors (e.g. landowner readiness, urgency, and willingness to donate; degree of threat, and partnership opportunities).

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$500,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$500,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Initial site assessment, appraisal & review, acquisition is optioned	12/31/16
2. County approval, title review, closing, DNR receives title to 10 acres of property	6/30/17
3. SNA designation	12/31/17

Activity Status as of October 1, 2016:

Activity Status as of April 1, 2017:

Activity Status as of October 1, 2017:

Activity Status as of April 1, 2018 (if needed):

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description:

The DNR website will be updated with information on the expanded SNA. An announcement of the acquisition will be posted on the SNA Facebook page. A local news release will be issued by the Duluth Airport Authority.

Status as of October 1, 2016:

Status as of April 1, 2017:

Status as of October 1, 2017:

Status as of April 1, 2018 (if needed):

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget Overview:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Overview Explanation
Fee Title Acquisition:	\$475,000	~10 acres in 3 parcels to be designated as SNA & owned in fee by DNR
Professional Services for Acquisition:	\$25,000	Includes real estate transaction costs & LAM billings; appraisal & review; property survey (if needed); attorney general; closing costs; recording fees & deed tax; etc.
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$500,000	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: NA

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

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: NA

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

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state	\$	\$	No other funds are budgeted for the state’s deliverables proposed for this appropriation.
State	\$0	\$0	No other funds are budgeted for the state’s deliverables proposed for this appropriation; in-kind contributions by the project manager to administer this project will not be tracked.
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$	\$	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

The City of Duluth and the Duluth Airport Authority.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:

The proposed expanded SNA was identified as an outstanding biodiversity site important for protection in the 1996 Minnesota Point Pine Forest Site Evaluation report. In describing the 26-acre forest that the expanded SNA would encompass, the report states “The pine forest near the end of Minnesota Point is the last natural remnant of a forest that once stretched the length of the point. This old-growth forest stand in an urban setting, located on the longest freshwater baymouth bar in the world, is uniquely significant in Minnesota.”

Because this forest is the only one of its type in Minnesota and because the SNA contains rare features not otherwise permanently protected in the state, the protection of the Minnesota Point Pine Forest as an SNA is necessary to achieve the primary goal and several objectives in the *SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan*. Specifically, this SNA is necessary to meet the primary goal of “the state’s natural heritage is not lost from any ecological region of Minnesota.” The relevant objectives this SNA is needed to meet are: Obj. 1 – 5 occurrences of each existing native plant community are within designated SNAs within each ecological subsection; Obj. 2 – 3 occurrences of each existing species of plant and animal are within designated SNAs within each ecological subsection; Obj. 3 – 1 of each type geological feature in the state is within a designated SNA; and Obj. 6 – the SNAs’ natural features and public benefit are sustained over time.

Payment to Duluth for this land is essential in helping meet the required state/local match needed for relocation of the runway of the Sky Harbor Airport. Without this relocation, the FAA would require cutting down or harming much of the rare pine forest on Minnesota Point.

Through SNA designation the site is provided the highest level of land protection in the State Outdoor Recreation System. Nonetheless, to sustain the SNA overtime requires ongoing appropriations for SNA natural resource management, such as future funding from the Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund.

C. Funding History:

Funding Source and Use of Funds	Funding Timeframe	\$ Amount
no previous state funding has gone to SNA acquisition at Mn Pt; to see the SNA program funding history, please look at the SNA work plan		\$
		\$
		\$

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

A. Parcel List: See attached list

B. Acquisition/Restoration Information:

Fee Title 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.

To be acquired and designated as SNA, the site must be recommended for SNA designation in an Ecological Evaluation report which serves as the site’s baseline assessment for fee acquisitions. All such sites are predominantly MBS-mapped native plant communities and contain habitat for rare species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. In addition, SNA staff use the “*SNA Candidate Site Evaluation Guide*” (developed through the ENRTF-funded SNA strategic planning process) which incorporates criteria to rate which sites are currently pursued. Criteria include diversity and quality of the native habitat, occurrence of rare species, occurrence of native plant communities under-represented in SNA system, parcel size, location of parcel in relation to biodiversity hotspots (particularly MBS-mapped areas of outstanding and high biodiversity significance) and other conservation lands (including *SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan’s* Conservation Opportunity Areas and *Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan’s* Core Areas), potential for long-term management, and additional factors (e.g. landowner readiness, urgency, and willingness to donate; degree of threat, and partnership opportunities).

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.

- *SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan* – www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/sna/plan

- *Lower St. Louis River Habitat Plan* – <http://stlouisriver.org/lower-st-louis-river-habitat-plan>
- *City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map* – <http://www.duluthmn.gov/planning/long-range-planning/comprehensive-plan/>

- 3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, 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.**

An Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) will be completed for the enlarged Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA using other ENRTF funds allocated for SNA management plans. The AMP will include goals, ecological description, priority features with indicators, desired future conditions, and management recommendations. The intended outcome of management of the SNA is that 1) all the site's native plant communities are sustained over time, and 2) that visitors are accommodated safely. The goals for the SNA's management are based upon soils, topography, geology, and other factors necessary to sustain each 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 and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including, but not limited to, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated. Each AMP 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.**

The DNR follows Minnesota Statutes 84.033 which require that any land acquired for designation as a SNA must have county board approval as prescribed under MS 97A.145.

- 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.**

As part of the DNR acquisition process, all SNA acquisitions are required to have approval of the Ecological and Water Resources Division Director and land conveyances are accepted by the Director or Deputy Director of Division of Lands and Minerals who have delegated authority to approve this for the Commissioner.

IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S): see attached

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM:

XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted no later than October 1, 2016, April 1, 2017, October 1, 2017, and April 1, 2018 (if needed). A final report and associated products will be submitted before September 15, 2018 (as necessary for state FY closeout data to be available and summarized).

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2016 Project Budget**



Project Title: Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA Addition

Legal Citation: M.L. 2016, Chp. xx, Sec. x, Subd. 0xx

Project Manager: Margaret (Peggy) Booth

Organization: MnDNR

M.L. 2016 ENRTF Appropriation: \$500,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 2 Years, June 30, 2019

Date of Report: December 8, 2015

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 1 Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	Acquisition, Designation & Initial Site Dev.				
Fee Title Acquisition - 3 parcels totalling about 10 acres to be owned in fee by DNR	\$475,000				
Professional Services for Acquisition Includes real estate transaction costs & LAM billings; appraisal & review; property survey (if needed); attorney general; closing costs; recording fees & deed tax; etc.	\$25,000				
COLUMN TOTAL	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2016 Parcel List

Project Title: Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA Addition

Legal Citation: M.L. 2016, Chp. xx, Sec. x, Subd. 0xx

Project Manager: Margaret (Peggy) Booth

Organization: MnDNR

M.L. 2016 ENRTF Appropriation: \$500,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 2 Years, June 30, 2019

Date of Report: December 2, 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	Mn Pt Pine Forest Addition	46° 43' 15.9"	92° 2' 27.8"	\$500,000	NA	St. Louis	4 critically imperilled (S1) native plant communities including white pine woodland & beachgrass dune	Fee Title Acquisition	10.35	0.195	Public	MnDNR	
2													
3													

NOTES:

Minnesota Point Pine Forest Acquisition Project



0 0.06 0.12 0.18 0.24 0.3 Miles

north ↑

