

M.L. 2017 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2022

PROJECT TITLE: Scientific and Natural Areas Acquisition and Restoration, Citizen Science, and Engagement

PROJECT MANAGER: Molly Roske

AFFILIATION: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Ecological & Water Resources, Scientific and Natural Areas statewide program supervisor

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FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b, as amended by M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 9 as extended by M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$ 2,500,000

AMOUNT SPENT: \$ 1,522,712

AMOUNT REMAINING: \$ 977,288

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

Volunteers, staff, and contractors with Minnesota DNR completed enhancement and improvement activities on almost two-thousand acres of quality habitat on 75 of Minnesota's SNAs. A 10-acre wetland acquisition was added to Hastings SNA. Many thousands more people learned about, visited, or helped steward an SNA thanks to this funding.

Overall Project Outcomes and Results

Minnesota's Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) are public lands representing the state's best hope for protecting rare features and averting biodiversity loss. This appropriation strengthened the "science" in SNA through monitoring-based habitat enhancement, citizen-science action and outreach, and strategic acquisition to protect additional high-quality natural lands. Over 1,930 acres across 75 SNAs were treated for terrestrial invasive species, received much-needed prescribed disturbance (e.g., prescribed fire, haying, etc.) or received other site improvement work, to maintain the overall quality of natural habitats for the rare and unique species that call these lands home. Such habitat work was guided by monitoring and site-assessment efforts taken on by staff as well as by volunteers: at least 190 SNA stewardship or interpretive events were held with an estimated attendance of nearly 6,000 participant volunteers donating thousands of hours to the educational, citizen-science, and stewardship aims of the SNA Program, led in part by the network of long-term volunteer Site Stewards serving at almost all SNAs by caring for the land and reporting observations. Online users observed upgrades to each SNA's webpage with improved interpretive narrative and consistent, unified themes; likewise, enhanced SNA social media presence and content have dramatically ramped up followers, subscribers, and forum membership numbers since this funding began, extending the reach and audience of the SNA Program on a variety of platforms to enhance public support for conservation. The project permanently protected a new tract consisting of 10 acres of high-quality wetland as an addition to Hastings SNA near the confluence of the Vermillion and Mississippi Rivers, important for water quality and for many special-concern and migratory bird species in the Mississippi flyway. Through this appropriation's support for programmatic acquisition work, around ten other SNA acquisition projects were recruited and developed, though several of these have proceeded instead on alternative funding.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

The SNA website is updated regularly, e.g., with improved species lists from monitoring efforts or for new or expanded SNAs, and with a frequently updated [events calendar](#) now also appearing in the "LCCMR Updates" e-newsletters. The 46th (Summer 2022) issue of the SNA [Nature Notes e-newsletter](#) was delivered to 10,790

subscribers (more than double since this appropriation began). The SNA Facebook channel now has ~9.1K followers, and the SNA Program contributes twice-monthly content to the DNR Instagram channel. The Minnesota SNAs Flickr group has 108 members currently sharing over 1,500 high-quality photos of the beauty and diversity of Minnesota's SNAs.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2017 Work Plan Final Report

Date of Report: August 8, 2022

Final Report

Date of Work Plan Approval: June 6, 2017

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2022

PROJECT TITLE: Scientific and Natural Areas Acquisition and Restoration, Citizen Science, and Engagement

Project Manager: Molly Roske

Organization: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Ecological & Water Resources

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Location: statewide

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation:	\$2,500,000
	Amount Spent:	\$1,522,712
	Balance:	\$977,288

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b, as amended by M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 9 as extended by M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2

Appropriation Language:

\$2,500,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire ~~at least 250 acres of~~ land with high-quality native plant communities and rare features to be established as scientific and natural areas as provided in Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, subdivision 5, restore and improve ~~at least 1,000 acres of~~ scientific and natural areas, and provide technical assistance and outreach, including site steward events. At least one-third of the appropriation must be spent on restoration activities. A list of proposed acquisitions and restorations must be provided as part of the required work plan. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum management standards, as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. When feasible, consideration must be given to accommodate trails on lands acquired. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2020, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Conservation of the state's rarest resources through the state Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) will be strengthened through strategic acquisition and land protection, monitoring-based restoration and improvements, and citizen science-based action and outreach. About 250 acres of at risk native plant communities and wildlife habitat of state significance identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) and the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan will be acquired and designated as SNAs. Ecological information and monitoring will help guide or evaluate native habitat restoration, enhancement, and site improvement activities on about 1000 acres of SNAs threatened by human impacts, invasive species, and lack of natural disturbance regimes. Furthermore, in cooperation with Conservation Corp of Minnesota, science-based information and citizen science projects will be basis for an expanded SNA outreach initiative including 50 events and a network of SNA site stewards at 130 SNAs.

II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Amendment Request February 28, 2018: Request to remove activities from project budget and budget overview table from work plan. Amendment Approved by LCCMR 3/6/2018

Project Status as of February 28, 2018: Ann Pierce (with support from Judy Schulte) is temporally acting as Project Manager until the SNA Unit Supervisor position (previously held by Peggy Booth) is filled. A formal amendment request tied to the Project Manager will be completed once the position is filled.

Work has been initiated on two SNA acquisition parcels. The first is a 125 acre addition to Avon Hills Forest SNA in Stearns County, of which approximately 70 acres will be acquired utilizing the ML15 SNA acquisition appropriation and 55 acres will be acquired utilizing this appropriation. The second is a 68 acre addition to Cannon River Turtle Preserve SNA in Goodhue County. Woody invasive treatment has been done on 55 acres at 2 SNAs. A new contract with Conservation Corps of Minnesota began in January 2018 to manage SNA social media and site stewards with CCM work towards this appropriation beginning July 1, 2018.

Amendment Request October 29, 2018: Request to add an addition to the Grey Cloud Dunes SNA to the fee acquisition parcel list. This outstanding biodiversity significance addition includes areas of dry barrens prairie and Mississippi River shoreline and would improve the overall ecological connectivity and management of Grey Cloud Dunes SNA. Request to remove the Avon Hills Forest SNA Forest addition parcel as that parcel will be purchased through the ML15 appropriation. Also, request to add "See attached Budget Worksheet" where the budget overview table was removed through the February 28, 2018 amendment, it helps align this work plan to the format of newer work plans. **Amendment approved by LCCMR 11/09/2018.**

Project Status as of October 29, 2018: Ann Pierce (with support from Judy Schulte) is temporally acting as Project Manager until the SNA Unit Supervisor position (previously held by Peggy Booth) is filled. A formal amendment request tied to the Project Manager will be completed once the position is filled.

Work has been initiated on one SNA acquisition parcel (a 68 acre addition to Cannon River Turtle Preserve SNA) with several others currently being negotiated. Woody invasive treatment has been done on 64 acres at 4 SNAs. Herbaceous Invasive treatment has been done on 121 acres at 7 SNAs.

The SNA Facebook channel achieved 5224 page likes by September 2018 with a highest monthly reach in August 2018 of 70,621. The SNA Flickr social media channel facilitates sharing high quality photo with 66 members sharing over 1007 photos as of September 30, 2018. The 27th (Fall 2018) issue of the Nature Notes e-newsletter

was delivered to over 5,923 subscribers. With ENRTF support, from March 1, 2017 through February 2018, 99 events were held involving over 990 people (previous events were reported through the ML14 ENRTF appropriation). As of June 2018, there are 149 SNA Site Stewards— who submit reports on their work and findings and who participate in special activities on SNAs. From March through September 2018, 24 stewardship events were held involving over 181 people that donated 552 hours of volunteer service. Also, 54 interpretive events hosted 707 attendees. As of September 2018, 123 SNAs (75% of SNAs) have one or more volunteer stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks – with a total of 151 stewards. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Amendment Request February 13, 2019: Request to add Rock Valley Prairie SNA (also referenced as Sioux Agency Prairie) to the acquisition parcel list. Fee title acquisition would take place through a life estate. Rock Valley Prairie, an approximately 150 acre tract, contains high biodiversity significance A and B quality prairie that houses many state special concern plant, reptile, insect, and bird species along with many Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Of special note, this site appears to be the last stronghold for Bull Snakes (also referred to as gophersnakes) in the area. The closest known viable population occurs over 120 miles east along the river in Scott County. The SNA program has been trying to protect this tract for well over a decade.

Life estate appraisal are conducted in the following manner to estimate the value of the remainderman's interest (the remainderman is the person or entity who receives the rights to the property upon the death of the life tenant).

- 1) Estimate the most likely time of death of the life tenant(s) by using federal actuarial tables
- 2) Forecast the future value of the property at this time (future value)
- 3) Discount the forecasted future value of the property over the remaining duration of the life estate at the appropriate discount rate.

The land would not be designated as an SNA or open to the public until after the landowner's death. In order to secure the conservation values until the landowner's death, the landowner will donate a native prairie bank conservation easement that would put further stipulations on the use and management of the parcel and require the landowner to follow a DNR approved prairie stewardship plan. The life estate would also allow DNR the ability to further manage and support the habitat complex and the species within from now until the landowner's death. This approach allows for protection and management in the interim, reduces the amount paid for the parcel and reduces the need for additional acquisition and professional service costs at a later time.

Amendment Approved by LCCMR 3/8/2019

Project Status as of February 13, 2019: Ann Pierce (with support from Judy Schulte) is temporally acting as Project Manager until the SNA Unit Supervisor position (previously held by Peggy Booth) is filled. A formal amendment request tied to the Project Manager will be completed once the position is filled.

Work has been initiated to acquire an approximate 60 acre addition to Grey Cloud Dunes SNA. Cannon River Turtle was noted in the November 1, 2018 update, however a partner has come forward to purchase this property for SNA with alternative funding. Woody removal & Invasive Species Treatment: Woody invasive treatment has been done on 64 acres at 4 SNAs. Herbaceous Invasive treatment has been done on 121 acres at 7 SNAs. 11.6 miles of firebreak have been installed on 14 SNAs. Site development activities have taken place on 4 SNAs.

The 28th (Winter 2018) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter was delivered to 6,254 subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel achieved 5,623 page likes by December 2018 with a highest monthly reach in December 2018 of 15,797. The SNA Flickr channel facilitates sharing high quality photos with 69 members sharing over 1,000 photos as of December 2018. From September through December 2018, 15 stewardship events were held

involving 229 people that donated 629 hours of volunteer service. Also, 10 interpretive events hosted 304 attendees. As of December 2018, 126 SNAs (~75% of SNAs) have one or more volunteer stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks – with a total of 153 stewards. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Amendment Request October 31, 2019: Request to change Project Manager from Ann Pierce to Molly Roske, SNA Program Supervisor (molly.roske@state.mn.us, 651-259-5094).

Request to move funds within appropriation to facilitate spending down of remaining balance in final year, according to the following specific adjustments:

- to move \$13,950 from *Personnel* to *Contracts*;
- to move \$2050 from *Other* to *Contracts*;
- to move \$300 from *Travel* to *Printing*.

Request to add Hastings SNA to Project Parcel List, a high-quality bulrush wetland on the Vermillion River. This parcel contains forested floodplain and marsh habitat for SGCN bird species, and migrating bird species along the Mississippi Flyway. Its location adjacent to the existing Hastings SNA would expand on protected wetland habitat within the Vermillion River watershed and facilitate invasive species management actions. **Amendment Approved by LCCMR 11/4/2019.**

Project Status as of October 31, 2019: Acquisition: The appraisal to acquire an approximate 60-acre addition to Grey Cloud Dunes SNA is complete, while three other parcels (two additions to an existing SNA, and one new SNA) have been proposed and passed DNR internal review toward the appraisal stage of acquisition. Woody removal & Invasive Species Treatment: Woody invasive treatment has been done on 64 acres at 4 SNA units. Herbaceous Invasive treatment has been done on 128 acres at 7 SNA units. 12.3 miles of firebreak have been installed on 15 SNA units. Prescribed disturbance (burns 123 acres, 3 sites; haying 143 acres on 2 sites) has been completed for a total of 266 acres. Site development activities have taken place on 7 SNAs.

The 29th (Spring 2019) and 30th (Summer 2019) issues of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter were delivered to record numbers of subscribers, while the SNA Facebook channel achieved 6000+ page likes and the SNA Flickr channel continues to grow the number of members (71) sharing high quality photos (1000+) of SNAs. From January through June 2019, 13 stewardship events were held involving 145 people that donated about 400 hours of volunteer service. Also, 59 interpretive events hosted about 1900 attendees. 3c. As of June 2019, about 75% of SNAs have one or more volunteer stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks – with a total of 174 stewards. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Amendment Request as of March 30, 2020: Request to move funds within appropriation to facilitate spending down of the remaining balance in this appropriation's final year, according to the following specific adjustments:

- to move \$97,800 from *Contracts* into the following budget items in the respective amounts of:
- \$35,500 to *Personnel*;
- \$2,000 to *Equipment*;
- \$2300 to *Professional Services for Acquisition*;
- \$58,000 to *Travel*.

The shifting of the above funds, in particular the larger amounts from contracts into travel and personnel, is needed to achieve restoration outcomes under COVID-19-related changes to field work. Firstly, SNA Program anticipates a need for DNR staff to complete the majority of remaining restoration work while uncertainty remains over the ability of contractors to get the work done under statewide work restrictions. Second, in order for staff to complete this work there is a need for additional vehicles in order to maintain social distancing guidelines between individuals, resulting in fleet costs at least twice as high as under normal circumstances.

These budget changes will enable the fulfillment of restoration outcomes, and will ensure that more than one-third of the appropriation is spent on restoration activities.

Request to add Wabu Woods SNA addition to Project Parcel List, consisting of ~0.1 miles of shoreline on Deer Lake (a lake of outstanding biodiversity significance), in addition to high-quality examples of the Native Plant Communities (NPCs) of: Lowland white cedar forest, Red oak-sugar maple-basswood forest, and low shrub poor fen. Parcel map enclosed. **Amendment Approved by LCCMR 4/29/2020.**

Project Status as of March 30, 2020: Acquisition: Two small but valuable wetland additions to Hastings SNA have moved through DNR approvals and are now undergoing appraisal/valuation processes under Lands & Minerals project management. The proposed new Rock Valley Prairie SNA in Yellow Medicine County has advanced through the appraisal stage, and the landowner is considering sale without retention of the life-estate. The above projects are all on track to option by June 30, 2020. The proposed addition to Grey Cloud Dunes SNA has been slowed due to a change in private ownership, and will not move forward in time for close of this appropriation but rather will proceed with ML2018 appropriation funds. A future Amendment request may be made to utilize the additional year allocated in the appropriation language, to complete these SNA acquisitions. Enhancement & Improvement: Woody invasives removal has been carried out on 322 acres at 14 SNA sites, while herbaceous invasives treatment has been done on 153 acres at 18 SNA sites. Prescribed disturbance (fire: 123 acres on 3 SNA sites, haying: 166 acres on 4 SNA sites) has been performed on a total of approx. 290 acres and 7 SNAs, with installation and/or maintenance of >25 miles of firebreak on 15 SNA sites. Site development activities have taken place on 19 SNAs.

Outreach: Record numbers of subscribers (nearing 7,500) received the 35th (Spring 2020) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter, while the SNA Facebook channel achieved over 6,900 page likes with the highest monthly reach in November 2019 of 66,049! The SNA Flickr channel continues to grow in audience (78 members) sharing 1,000+ high quality photos of SNAs. In the past 6 months, 19 SNA stewardship events were held involving 2210 people who donated about 450 hours of volunteer service. About 75% of SNAs have one or more volunteer site stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks – with a total of 173 stewards. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Project extended to June 30, 2021 by LCCMR 6/18/20 as a result of M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2, legislative extension criteria being met.

Amendment Request November 2, 2020: Request to move funds within appropriation to facilitate spending down of the remaining balance in this appropriation's final year, according to the following specific adjustments:

- to move \$36,500 from *Travel* into the following budget items in the respective amounts of:
- \$30,000 to *Personnel*;
- \$6,500 to *Equipment*.

The shifting of the above funds reflects the needs of the SNA Program to achieve enhancement and acquisition outcomes given the significant changes to 2020 field work. In particular, the prior funding shifts in the March 2020 Amendment Request were made before the appropriation was then extended by the legislature for an additional year, and before the true extent of the limitations on staff movement and fieldwork over the course of the 2020 field season were known. It is now necessary to shift some of those funds back from travel costs into personnel- and equipment-related budget lines, as staff continue this work for an extra year toward completion of the project's goals, despite the additional measures taken to mitigate the risks to safety and health in the current environment.

Request to change Activity Budget totals in this Work Plan to the amounts in the following table. This is largely the result of the per-activity budget breakdown having been removed from the overall Project Budget to better match past changes to LCCMR budget tracking requirements, and the LCCMR-approved budget-line changes in

past Amendment Requests not having been itemized by the Activity amounts affected. The changes proposed below still comply with the appropriation requirement that at least one-third of the project budget be spent on Activity 2.

Activity 1: Acquisition & Protection of Sites of Biodiversity Significance	\$ 1,081,780 \$ 1,099,370
Activity 2: Native Habitat Restoration, Enhancements & Improvements	\$ 1,011,281 \$ 1,000,200
Activity 3: Citizen Science & Public Engagement in Natural Areas	\$ 406,939 \$ 400,430

Amendment Approved by LCCMR 11/20/2020.

Project Status as of November 2, 2020: Acquisition: the adjacent 10-acre wetland addition to Hastings SNA has optioned and is slated to go before the Dakota County Board Nov. 3, 2020 for approval and subsequent close. The DNR's offer on another 30-acre wetland addition to this same SNA was declined by the landowner late in FY20, and that project is currently in abeyance. The 62-acre addition to Wabu Woods SNA and a new 224-acre Little Mantrap Lake SNA have both optioned (see project list), and SNA and LAM staff are working to schedule County Board presentations for approval as soon as possible, to close on these acquisitions in winter/spring 2021.

Enhancement & Improvements: Woody invasive treatment has been carried out on 495 acres at 23 SNAs, while herbaceous invasives treatment has been performed on 615 acres at 48 SNAs, for a total of 1,110 acres treated for invasives at 55 SNAs. Prescribed burns have been conducted on 135 acres at five SNAs on this project to date, and 25 miles of firebreak have been installed on 22 SNAs. Prescribed haying has occurred on 166 acres at four SNAs, and site development activities have occurred on 21 SNAs on this project to date.

Public Engagement & Outreach: most work in this activity has shifted onto more recent ENRTF appropriations; achievements made on this appropriation include record numbers of subscribers (nearing 7,500) having received the 35th (Spring 2020) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter, while the SNA Facebook channel achieved over 6,900 page likes with the highest monthly reach in November 2019 of 66,049! No additional in-person events were able to be held on this appropriation after the prior reporting period, but nearly 80% of SNAs now have a volunteer site-steward helping report observations and assisting with management tasks (current total of 174 stewards). Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Amendment Request April 30, 2021: Request to move funds from the following budget lines, in the following amounts:

- \$30,000 from *Fee Acquisition*
- \$ 3,601 from *Professional/Technical/Service Contracts*
- \$ 1,905 from *Travel expenses*

To move into the following budget lines in the following amounts:

- \$30,000 into *Professional Services for Acquisition*
- \$ 4,945 into *Personnel*
- \$ 561 into *Equipment/Tools/Supplies*.

The largest shift above, \$30,000 from Fee Acquisition to Professional Services for Acquisition, represents the effects of several challenging acquisition projects which have resulted in acquisition-related costs exceeding budgetary planning on this project. This challenge is offset by the fact that the projects slated to reach binding contract (Option to Purchase) by the close of this Fiscal Year will exceed acre goals while under budget, due to lower cost-per-acre appraised prices on these particular sites, and therefore the shift of these dollars will not adversely affect available budget for Fee Acquisition. Smaller shifts above reflect needed minor adjustments to close the appropriation cleanly. The changes proposed above still comply with the appropriation requirement that at least one-third of the project budget be spent on Activity 2. **Amendment Approved by LCCMR 5/24/2021.**

Project Status as of April 30, 2021: Acquisition: an offer has been made on the 10-acre wetland parcel adjacent to Hastings SNA, and closing on this parcel is anticipated in coming weeks. The 224-acre new Little Mantrap Lake

SNA has optioned and been approved by the County Board but is currently awaiting the resolution of an access easement issue before an offer can be made to initiate the latter steps of the acquisition process. The 62-acre addition to Wabu Woods SNA was presented to the County Board, and is currently under continued discussions between County commissioners and DNR regional leadership.

Enhancement & Improvements: Terrestrial invasive species treatment (of both woody and herbaceous invasives) has been carried out on a total of 1,015 acres treated at 85 SNAs. Prescribed burns have been conducted on 123 acres at three SNAs on this project to date, and 31 miles of firebreak have been installed on 29 SNAs, while prescribed haying (as an alternative to burns) has occurred on 166 acres at four SNAs. Site development activities have been carried out on 27 SNAs on this project to date.

Public Engagement & Outreach: most work in this activity has shifted onto more recent ENRTF appropriations; achievements made on this appropriation include then-record numbers of subscribers (nearing 7,500) having received the 35th (Spring 2020) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter, while the SNA Facebook channel achieved over 6,900 page likes with the highest monthly reach in November 2019 of 66,049 Facebook users reached by the SNA page's content. All told, this funding appropriation supported the organizing of at least 190 events held involving thousands of attendees and volunteers donating thousands of hours. Nearly 80% of SNAs had a volunteer Site Steward by the end of spending on this appropriation, individuals who help report observations and assist with management tasks (totaled 174 Stewards at end of activity on this funding). Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Project Status as of June 18, 2021: Acquisition: an offer has been made on the 10-acre wetland parcel adjacent to Hastings SNA, and closing on this parcel is anticipated in coming weeks. The 224-acre new Little Mantrap Lake SNA has optioned and been approved by the County Board but is currently awaiting the resolution of an access easement issue before an offer can be made to initiate the latter steps of the acquisition process; this project may be funded by a blend of ML17 and ML18 SNA ENRTF funding. The 62-acre addition to Wabu Woods SNA was presented to the County Board, and is currently under continued discussions between County commissioners and DNR regional leadership, but its advancement in time to make use of ML17 SNA ENRTF funding is uncertain at this time.

Enhancement & Improvements: Terrestrial invasive species treatment (of both woody and herbaceous invasives) has been carried out on a total of 1,178 acres on 68 SNAs. Just over 301 acres at 10 SNA sites have received prescribed disturbance, with burns having been conducted on 135 acres at five SNAs and prescribed haying (as an alternative to burns) having occurred on 166 acres at 5 SNA sites on this project to date; 31 miles of firebreak have also been installed on 23 SNAs. Site development activities have been carried out on 27 SNAs on this project to date.

Public Engagement & Outreach: work in this activity has shifted onto more recent ENRTF appropriations; achievements made on this appropriation include then-record numbers of subscribers (nearing 7,500) having received the 35th (Spring 2020) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter, while the SNA Facebook channel achieved over 6,900 page likes with the highest monthly reach in November 2019 of 66,049 Facebook users reached by the SNA page's content. All told, this funding appropriation supported the organizing of at least 190 events held involving thousands of attendees and volunteers donating thousands of hours. Nearly 80% of SNAs had a volunteer Site Steward by the end of spending on this appropriation, individuals who help report observations and assist with management tasks (totaled 174 Stewards at end of activity on this funding). Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Amendment Request June 18, 2021: Request to extend Activity 1 (Acquisition & Protection) dollars on this appropriation via a LCCMR extension, for an additional Fiscal Year to close on the appropriation's acquisition projects with binding agreement. Attached is the Option to Purchase for the addition to Little Mantrap Lake SNA, with the transaction only awaiting resolution of an access easement by the current landowner; closing is anticipated within the coming months.

Amendment Approved by LCCMR 6/29/21

Request to adjust Activity 2 Outcomes to the following commitments/achievements, and alter completion date of outcomes to match appropriation's legislative extension:

Outcome	Completion Date
2a. ~ 300 1000 acres of woody removal & exotics species treatment	6/30/201
2b. ~ 700 300 acres of prescribed burns disturbance	6/30/201
2c. development work on ~10 sites	6/30/201

Due to pandemic-related restrictions on conducting prescribed burns on state lands during field season 2020 and the start of field season 2021, acre-outcomes on burns are behind with narrow suitability for sites to receive prescribed haying instead (note change from "prescribed burns" to "prescribed disturbance" in text, so as to widen the range of management tools available to achieve the objective). The proposed changes scale down acre targets on 2b. while scaling up acre commitments in 2a, invasives species treated acres. These changes correspondingly offset each other in terms of relative cost-per-acre of these activities, as opposed to an acre-for-acre exchange in acre-commitments. These changes are also tracked in-text in Activity 2 narrative below.

Amendment Approved by LCCMR 6/29/21

November 2021 Update: Land acquisition/protection activities continue on this appropriation in FY22. The 10-acre wetland addition to Hastings SNA closed in the final days of Fiscal Year 2020. The 224-acre proposed new Little Mantrap Lake SNA in Becker County has optioned and been approved by the County Board, but is currently awaiting the resolution of an access easement issue before an offer can be made to the landowner to initiate the latter steps of the acquisition process.

April 2022 Update: Land acquisition/protection activities continue on this appropriation in FY22. A new hire was recently made, the SNA Statewide Acquisition Coordinator, who will help ensure that remaining acquisition-related steps are completed on this appropriation. Costs for the pre-closing survey of the proposed 224-acre Little Mantrap Lake acquisition in Becker County have increased due to on-site and data-related challenges encountered by the survey team; see Amendment Request. This project is still awaiting the resolution of an access easement issue before an offer can be made to the landowner to initiate the final steps to close on the acquisition, but closing is anticipated in the coming weeks prior to the end of Fiscal Year.

Amendment Request April 1, 2022: Request to remove from the Parcel List lines 25-34, which are all the sites where restoration planting was the intended activity. Restoration planting activities were contemplated as part of the initial ML17 SNA proposal, but due to higher costs of plantings as compared to other habitat enhancement and improvement activities, that aspect of restoration was removed from Activity 2 outcomes at time of spring 2017 budget reductions. However, these were never correspondingly removed from the Parcel List at that time, yet no funds or outcomes tied to restoration were in the appropriation as awarded July 1, 2017.

Request to move \$50,000 from *Fee Acquisition* to *Professional Services for Acquisition*. Funds are already low in the *Professional Services* budget-line due to high-complexity acquisition projects (some of which have since fallen through, described above). The final acquisition project on this appropriation (Little Mantrap Lake) has not closed yet so there is additional work that will happen in this budget category before the appropriation closes. Furthermore, survey costs of the Little Mantrap Lake site this winter exceeded average/estimated costs due to deep snow and other site conditions that presented (and continue to present – survey efforts are ongoing at time of this reporting) significant challenges and delays to the survey team. The purchase price in the binding Option Agreement for this site (\$505,000) is well within the remaining balance that this shift, if made, would leave in the *Fee Title Acquisition* budget line (\$807,000).

Amendment approved by LCCMR 4/7/22

Final Report of Overall Project Outcomes and Results: Minnesota's Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) are public lands representing the state's best hope for protecting rare features and averting biodiversity loss. This appropriation strengthened the "science" in SNA through monitoring-based habitat enhancement, citizen-science action and outreach, and strategic acquisition to protect additional high-quality natural lands. Over 1,930 acres across 75 SNAs were treated for terrestrial invasive species, received much-needed prescribed disturbance (e.g. prescribed fire, haying, etc.), or received other site improvement work, to maintain the overall quality of natural habitats for the rare and unique species who call these lands home. Such habitat work was guided by monitoring and site-assessment efforts taken on by staff as well as by volunteers: at least 190 SNA stewardship or interpretive events were held with an estimated attendance of nearly 6,000 participant volunteers donating thousands of hours to the educational, citizen-science, and stewardship aims of the SNA Program, led in part by the network of long-term volunteer Site Stewards serving at almost all SNAs by caring for the land and reporting observations. Online users observed upgrades to each SNA's webpage with improved interpretive narrative and consistent, unified themes; likewise, enhanced SNA social media presence and content have dramatically ramped up followers, subscribers, and forum membership numbers since this funding began, extending the reach and audience of the SNA Program on a variety of platforms to enhance public support for conservation. The project permanently protected a new tract consisting of 10 acres of high-quality wetland as an addition to Hastings SNA near the confluence of the Vermillion and Mississippi Rivers, important for water quality and for many special-concern and migratory bird species in the Mississippi flyway. Through this appropriation's support for programmatic acquisition work, around ten other SNA acquisition projects were recruited and developed, though several of these have proceeded instead on alternative funding.

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Acquisition & Protection of Sites of Biodiversity Significance

Description:

The SNA Program will protect and buffer MBS-recommended sites of biodiversity significance by acquisition and SNA designation of ~250 acres. Proactive landowner contacts will be targeted in 4 high priority opportunity areas identified in the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan, including prairie core areas in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. In 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. Candidate sites are numerically evaluated with priority to MBS-mapped outstanding and high biodiversity significance sites that are predominantly MBS-mapped native plant communities with habitat for rare species and Species in Greatest Conservation Need. The attached ML2017 Parcel List and ML17 SNA Projects map set identify priority project areas for this appropriation. The DNR may request to add other qualifying sites to the list. Most acquisition will be of fee title, but if more appropriate, acquisition could be of an SNA-administered conservation easement with SNA designation.

Consideration will be given to accommodating trails on lands acquired with these funds using criteria including: 1) statutory purpose of SNAs to "protect and perpetuate in an undisturbed natural state those natural features which possess exceptional scientific or educational value" and statutory direction that "physical development shall be limited to facilities absolutely necessary for protection, research, and educational projects, and where appropriate, for interpretive services;" 2) measures needed to appropriately protect and manage specific natural features the site would be designated to protect; 3) pre-existing trail corridors and corridors of disturbance; and 4) a commitment to long term monitoring and management responsibilities by a third party.

Conservation easement monitoring will be done on about 3 SNA-held conservation easements. The SNA Program manages 20 SNA-related conservation easements (protecting over 1510 acres within or adjoining 10 SNAs). The goal of the SNA Program is to monitor each easement every 3 years, so through this appropriation about 6 easements would receive a formal on-site monitoring visit with results entered into the department

land records, landowners contacted, management opportunities identified, and follow-up visits conducted if needed to address issues discovered.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget:

\$ 1,099,370

Outcome	Completion Date
1a. acquisition as SNA of ~250 acres of high quality habitat	6/30/20
1b. proactive landowner contact in ~4 priority areas for acquisition/protection	6/30/20
1c. monitoring for ~3 SNA conservation easements	6/30/20

Note: budget for this Activity includes \$5,630 for direct & necessary services which are prorated across all costs except budgets for landowner payments; no direct & necessary charges are budgeted for the \$0.9M in landowner payments nor \$100K in transaction costs; actual charges will be based on actual expenditures.

Activity 1 Status as of February 28, 2018: 1a. Work has been initiated on two SNA acquisition parcels. The first is a 125 acre addition to Avon Hills Forest SNA in Stearns County, of which approximately 70 acres will be acquired utilizing the ML15 SNA acquisition appropriation and 55 acres will be acquired utilizing this appropriation. The second is a 68 acre addition to Cannon River Turtle Preserve SNA in Goodhue County. 1b & 1c. To-date proactive landowner contacts and conservation easement monitoring is being done with ML15 ENRTF.

Activity 1 Status as of November 1, 2018: 1a. Work has been initiated on one SNA acquisition parcel (a 68 acre addition to Cannon River Turtle Preserve SNA) with several others currently being negotiated. In February, a 125 acre addition to Avon Hills Forest SNA in Stearns County was noted with a plan to acquire approximately 70 acres utilizing the ML15 SNA acquisition appropriation and 55 acres utilizing this appropriation, however, the appraisal came in lower than expected and the acquisition was able to be fully funded utilizing the ML15 appropriation. 1b. Staff are collaborating with a variety of conservation partners throughout the state to reach out to landowners who own in the Conservation Opportunity Areas outlined in our 2014 Strategic Acquisition Plan, and whose parcels are the most important additions to the SNA land ownership portfolio. Staff have made contact with landowners about possible additions to Falls Creek (Washington Co.), Grey Cloud Dunes (Washington Co.), Hythecker Prairie (Faribault Co.), Mille Lacs Moraine (Crow Wing Co.), Crystal Spring (Washington Co.) and Hastings Sand Coulee (Washington Co.). Potential new SNA's where staff have made landowner contacts are: Little Mantrap SNA (Becker Co.), Rose Dell (Rock Co.) and Purrington Prairie (Cottonwood Co.). 1c. Two conservation easement have been monitored to-date.

Activity 1 Status as of February 13, 2019: 1a. Work has been initiated to acquire an approximate 60 acre addition to Grey Cloud Dunes SNA. Since the landowner is in the foreclosure process, DNR is preparing to order an appraisal which would allow an offer to be made as soon as the 1 year waiting period is over. We are also hoping to move forward on a beautiful new SNA in Yellow Medicine County that will protect 140 acres of native prairie near Sioux Agency State Park. Please see February 13, 2019 amendment for more details on this. Cannon River Turtle was noted in the November 1, 2018 update, however a partner has come forward to purchase this property for SNA with alternative funding. 1b. Staff are collaborating with a variety of conservation partners throughout the state to reach out to landowners who own land within the Conservation Opportunity Areas outlined in our 2014 Strategic Acquisition Plan, and whose parcels are the most important additions to the SNA land ownership portfolio. Staff have made contact with landowners about possible additions to Falls Creek (Washington Co.), Hythecker Prairie (Faribault Co.), Mille Lacs Moraine (Crow Wing Co.), Crystal Spring (Washington Co.) and Hastings Sand Coulee (Washington Co.). New contacts with landowners since the last report include another Falls Creek SNA landowner, a landowner near Ripley Esker SNA, landowners near Wabu Woods SNA 1c. Two conservation easement have been monitored to-date.

Activity 1 Status as of October 31, 2019: The appraisal of the proposed addition to Grey Cloud Dunes SNA in Washington Co. is complete, awaiting review and the RCA before an offer can be made. SNA staff are working

closely with an array of partners (Friends of the Mississippi River, City of Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Department, Washington County, DNR Division of Parks and Trails, and DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife) on this acquisition.

The proposed two smaller acquisitions of additions to Hastings SNA in Dakota County (total of 40 acres) that are primarily wetland, have been approved through the DNR's Strategic Land Asset Management (SLAM) internal review process, and are now assigned to a DNR Division of Lands and Minerals Project Manager to complete the acquisition. One landowner has requested a full appraisal, while the other has accepted an expedited valuation process.

Rock Valley Prairie is a proposed new SNA in eastern Yellow Medicine County with high quality prairie and important bull snake habitat. This has passed through the SLAM process, the acquisition has been assigned to a DNR Project Manager, and it is currently being reviewed by the survey unit before an appraisal is ordered.

Activity 1 Status as of March 30, 2020: Grey Cloud Dunes SNA addition will not move forward on this appropriation at this time, due to a change in private ownership, which will not permit Optioning by 6/30/2020. We hope to continue this acquisition process with the ML2018 SNA appropriation.

The proposed two smaller acquisitions of additions to Hastings SNA in Dakota County (total of 40 acres) that are primarily wetland, have been approved through the DNR's Strategic Land Asset Management (SLAM) internal review process, and are now assigned to a DNR Division of Lands and Minerals Project Manager to complete the acquisition. One landowner has requested a full appraisal, while the other has accepted an expedited valuation process. Both parcels are on track to option by 6/30/2020.

Rock Valley Prairie is a proposed new SNA in eastern Yellow Medicine County with high quality prairie and important bull snake habitat. This has passed through the SLAM process, the acquisition has been assigned to a DNR Project Manager, and the appraisal is complete. The landowner has indicated a willingness to consider fee-title sale without retaining the Life estate initially requested. This project is also on track to option by 6/30/2020.

Activity 1 Status as of November 2, 2020: 1a. The 10-acre wetland addition to Hastings SNA has optioned and is slated to go before the Dakota County Board Nov. 3, 2020 for approval and subsequent close. The DNR's offer on another 30-acre wetland addition to the same, Hastings SNA, was declined by the landowner in June 2020, and that project is currently in abeyance. Likewise, the landowner of the parcel being pursued for a new Rock Valley Prairie SNA decided to defer negotiations on sale to the state. The 62-acre addition to Wabu Woods SNA and a new 224-acre Little Mantrap Lake SNA have both optioned (see project list), and SNA and LAM staff are working to schedule County Board presentations for approval as soon as possible, to then work toward closing on these acquisitions. These projects are on track to close soon. 1b. SNA Program staff have continuously conducted proactive landowner outreach contact, with over ten landowners in the SNA Program's Strategic Land Protection Plan's targeted Conservation Opportunity Areas. 1c. Monitoring has been conducted on 5 distinct SNA conservation easements on 4 SNAs to date.

Activity 1 Status as of April 30, 2021: 1a. An offer has been made on the 10-acre wetland addition to Hastings SNA, and the acquisition is slated to close in the coming days. The 62-acre addition to Wabu Woods SNA was presented to the County Board, and is currently under continued discussions between County commissioners and DNR regional leadership. The 224-acre new Little Mantrap Lake SNA has optioned and been approved by the County Board but is currently awaiting the resolution of an access easement issue before an offer can be made to initiate the latter steps of the acquisition process. 1b. SNA Program staff have continuously conducted proactive landowner outreach contact, with over ten landowners in the SNA Program's Strategic Land Protection Plan's targeted Conservation Opportunity Areas. 1c. Monitoring was conducted on 5 distinct SNA conservation easements on 4 SNAs with funds from this appropriation.

Activity 1 Status as of June 18, 2021: 1a. An offer has been made on the 10-acre wetland parcel addition to Hastings SNA, and closing on this parcel is anticipated in coming weeks. The 224-acre new Little Mantrap Lake SNA has optioned and been approved by the County Board but is currently awaiting the resolution of an access easement issue before an offer can be made to the landowner to initiate the latter steps of the acquisition

process; this project may be funded by a blend of ML17 and ML18 SNA ENRTF funding, pending ML18 extension by the legislature. The 62-acre addition to Wabu Woods SNA was presented to the County Board, and is currently under continued discussions between County commissioners and DNR regional leadership, but its advancement in time to make use of ML17 SNA ENRTF funding remains uncertain at this time. 1b. SNA Program staff have continuously conducted proactive landowner outreach contact, with over ten landowners in the SNA Program's Strategic Land Protection Plan's targeted Conservation Opportunity Areas. 1c. Monitoring was conducted on 5 distinct SNA conservation easements on 4 SNAs with funds from this appropriation.

November 2021 Update: 1a. The 10-acre wetland addition to Hastings SNA closed in the final days of Fiscal Year 2020. A revised Commissioner's Designation Order for the newly-expanded property is in preparation. The 224-acre new Little Mantrap Lake SNA in Becker County has optioned and been approved by the County Board but is currently awaiting the resolution of an access easement issue before an offer can be made to the landowner to initiate the latter steps of the acquisition process; this project may be funded by a pro-rated blend of ML17 and ML18 SNA ENRTF funding. The proposed addition to Wabu Woods SNA has encountered setbacks and while there may yet be prospects for some acquisition to expand this SNA, the project will not advance in time to make use of this appropriation. 1b. SNA Program staff have continuously conducted proactive landowner outreach contact, with over ten landowners in the SNA Program's Strategic Land Protection Plan's targeted Conservation Opportunity Areas. 1c. Monitoring was conducted on 5 distinct SNA conservation easements on 4 SNAs with funds from this appropriation.

April 2022 Update: 1a. The revised Commissioner's Designation Order for Hastings SNA is in preparation, to reflect the increased acreage of high-quality bulrush wetland on the Vermillion River – including forested floodplain and marsh habitat for SGCN bird species and migrating birds along the Mississippi Flyway – added to the SNA on this appropriation. Also, the SNA Program was successful in bringing on board its new SNA Statewide Acquisition Coordinator on March 30th, 2022 (having gone without a permanent incumbent in this role since February 2020); this position is central to helping facilitate the finalization of new or updated SNA designation orders and their publication to the State Register. The 224-acre Little Mantrap Lake acquisition still awaits settlement of an access easement issue before an offer can be made to the landowner, but the Option remains current. Survey on this site has progressed over the winter, a strategic choice to take advantage of frozen conditions instead of the wet, difficult terrain that dominates areas of the site in summer. However, the survey crew has encountered extra challenges due to unusually deep snow and discrepancies in neighboring parcels' boundary records, adding to anticipated Professional Services costs. 1b. SNA Program staff continuously conducted proactive landowner outreach contact over the course of this appropriation with over ten landowners in the SNA Program's Strategic Land Protection Plan's targeted Conservation Opportunity Areas. 1c. Monitoring was conducted on 5 distinct SNA conservation easements on 4 SNAs with funds from this appropriation.

Final Report Summary: 1a. The revised Commissioner's Designation Order for Hastings SNA is in preparation, to reflect the 10-acre addition to the SNA acquired on this appropriation, consisting of high-quality bulrush wetland on the Vermillion River including forested floodplain and marsh habitat for bird species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) and migratory birds along the Mississippi Flyway.

The final acquisition project on this appropriation was on-track to be a new 224-acre SNA site, Little Mantrap Lake SNA. However, this project encountered one final delay preventing the use of these ML17 funds by the appropriation deadline: once the current landowner finally reached a settlement with their neighbors in the spring of 2022 in the court proceedings over an access easement, the DNR extended its purchase offer to the landowner based on the 2019 appraisal and Option to Purchase agreement. Note that the landowner had agreed to several extensions with DNR of the Option to Purchase on this site such that the binding contract would remain valid, and in general the landowner demonstrated many times their good-will effort to go above and beyond to take every action necessary for this parcel to become the next SNA. However, in spring (April) of 2022 once their access easement lawsuit was settled and DNR's offer to them was made, the landowner requested a re-appraisal on the grounds that there had likely been significant change in market value since the

2019 appraisal (given real estate market trends over the last few years). DNR honors this landowner request as a reasonable one, even though the extra time required to re-appraise would not allow closing to occur by June 30, 2022. The DNR has an interest in maintaining good relationships not only with landowners with whom DNR is actively engaged in real-estate transactions, but also in keeping a positive reputation as a good state agency to work with; the alternative, which would've been having this very committed landowner feel at the end like they were cheated out of their land by the DNR, would be highly detrimental to all involved.

Accordingly, we have made the necessary amendment request on the ML18 SNA ENRTF appropriation to instead retain the fee-title acquisition budget on that funding for closing on the Little Mantrap Lake property. The project is currently out for appraisal adjustment and is on-track to close with ML18 funding this fiscal year.

This results in a significant unused portion of the fee-title acquisition of this project budget returning to the Trust Fund, but it is important to note that there has been a tremendous amount of acquisition effort supported by this appropriation. Though only 10 acres total were able to be purchased with these funds, all-told this funding enabled or advanced the programmatic acquisition work on at least twelve other potential acquisition projects that fulfill the agency's SLAM goals and/or are within the SNA Program's Conservation Opportunity Areas. There were also extenuating circumstances involved in some of those projects not making it to the finish line on this appropriation, including but not limited to the following situations (with some examples of affected properties):

- landowners decided to reconsider their intentions to sell to DNR at this time, some of them influenced by the uncertainty and real-estate volatility brought on by the economic ramifications of the pandemic (e.g. Rock Valley Prairie, Falls Creek addition, another Hastings addition);
- properties experienced a change of landowner, which has not killed the project but set back acquisition discussions/negotiations by several years at least (Hastings Sand Coulee addition, Grey Cloud Dunes additions, Wabu Woods addition);
- initial failure to garner County Board approval, which is required for SNA acquisitions per Minnesota Statutes §§ [84.033](#) and [97A.145](#); conversations continue with hopes that County Board approval may yet be granted to proceed with acquisition on other funding (Wabu Woods addition);
- projects that became successful acquisitions after this appropriation funded the initial proactive landowner outreach work (outcome 1b.), but which did not use ML17's fee-title dollars because they were purchased on other funding – often with the participation/funding of an acquiring partner – or were instead gifted to the DNR (Avon Hills Forest SNA addition – ML15 SNA ENRTF; Cannon River Turtle Preserve addition – TPL acquired & conveyed to state; Crystal Spring addition – TPL acquired & and conveyed to state; Purrington Prairie – donated; and now Little Mantrap Lake – ML18 SNA ENRTF).

Through this appropriation it has become clear that the proactive landowner outreach, guided by the 2014 Strategic Land Protection Plan's Conservation Opportunity Areas and period Gap Analysis updates, is a critically important component of SNA Program's land acquisition work.

Also, the cost-per-acre of SNA acquisitions is widely variable and it has proved difficult to project, years in advance (when writing the project's proposal), what one acquisition project may cost overall because the SNA Program acquires land all over the state and in many different development (and therefore price market) contexts. Offer price is determined by the appraisal of fair market value, not by some other calculated payment rate that could be more readily predicted within certain average ranges.

1b. SNA Program staff continuously conducted proactive landowner outreach contact over the course of this appropriation with over ten landowners in the SNA Program's Strategic Land Protection Plan's targeted Conservation Opportunity Areas. 1c. Monitoring was conducted on 5 distinct SNA conservation easements on 4 SNAs with funds from this appropriation.

ACTIVITY 2: Native Habitat Restoration, Enhancements & Improvements

Description:

Native habitat enhancement and site improvements activities will be completed on about 1000 acres at about 40 state designated SNAs as guided by ecological data and monitoring.

Habitat enhancement and improvement activities will be carried out by DNR staff/SNA crews, Conservation Corps of Minnesota, contractors Sentence to Service, and/or volunteers. Activities include invasive species treatment and woody encroachment removal; prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance for ecological management purposes, such prescribed haying, mowing or grazing, necessary where use of fire is limited); site clean-up, signing, fencing (removal or installation as needed for management purposes). Enhancement of degraded and rare land features helps implement the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan and achieve Habitat Recommendation 5 of the SCPP. This activity may include work to bring acquired parcels up to the DNR's minimum standards.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget:

\$ 1,000,200

Outcome	Completion Date
2a. ~1000 acres of woody removal & exotics species treatment	6/30/21
2b. ~300 acres of prescribed disturbance	6/30/21
2c. development work on ~10 sites	6/30/21

Note: total budget for this Activity includes \$60,881 for direct & necessary services which are prorated across all costs except budgets for CCM contracts and MNIT service level agreement (SLAs); no direct & necessary charges are budgeted for the estimated \$127K in CCM contracts; actual charges will be based on actual expenditures.

Activity 2 Status as of February 28, 2018: Cumulative results to date: 2a. Woody removal & Invasive Species Treatment: Woody invasive treatment has been done on 55 acres at 2 SNAs. 2b. Prescribed Burning/Prescribed Disturbance: To date this work is being doing with ML15 and ML16 ENRTF appropriations. 2c. Development: To date this work is being doing with ML15 and ML16 ENRTF appropriations.

Activity 2 Status as of October 29, 2018: Cumulative results to date: 2a. Woody removal & Invasive Species Treatment: Woody invasive treatment has been done on 64 acres at 4 SNAs. Herbaceous Invasive treatment has been done on 127 acres at 7 SNAs. 2b. Prescribed Burning/Prescribed Disturbance: To date this work is being done with the ML16 ENRTF appropriation. 2c. Development: To date this work is being doing with the ML16 ENRTF appropriation.

Activity 2 Status as of February 13, 2019: Cumulative results to date: 2a. Woody removal & Invasive Species Treatment: Woody invasive treatment has been done on 64 acres at 4 SNAs. Herbaceous Invasive treatment has been done on 121 acres at 7 SNAs. 2b. Prescribed Burning/Prescribed Disturbance: 11.6 miles of firebreak installed on 14 SNAs. 2c. Development: Site development activities have taken place on 4 SNAs.

Activity 2 Status as of October 31, 2019: Cumulative results to date: 2a. Woody removal & Invasive Species Treatment: Woody invasive treatment has been done on 64 acres at 4 SNAs. Herbaceous Invasive treatment has been done on 128 acres at 7 SNA units. 2b. Prescribed Burning/Prescribed Disturbance: prescribed burning occurred on 123 acres on 3 SNAs. 12.3 miles of firebreak have been installed on 15 SNAs. Prescribed haying has occurred on 143 acres at 2 SNAs. 2c. Development: Site development activities have taken place on 7 SNAs.

Activity 2 Status as of March 30, 2020: Cumulative results to date: 2a. Woody removal & Invasive Species Treatment: Woody invasive treatment has been done on 322 acres at 14 SNAs. Herbaceous Invasive treatment has been done on 153 acres at 18 SNA units. 2b. Prescribed Burning/Prescribed Disturbance: prescribed burning occurred on 123 acres on 3 SNAs, and 25.12 miles of firebreak have been installed on 15 SNAs. Prescribed haying has occurred on 166 acres at 4 SNAs. 2c. Development: Site development activities have taken place on 19 SNAs.

Activity 2 Status as of November 2, 2020: Cumulative results to date: 2a. Woody invasive treatment has been carried out on 495 acres at 23 SNAs, while herbaceous invasives treatment has been performed on 615 acres at 48 SNAs, for a total of 1,110 acres treated for invasives at 55 SNAs. Given the postponement of prescribed burning on DNR lands in light of the current health and safety challenges in the state, SNA staff have been working hard to overachieve on acres receiving invasives treatment. 2b. Prescribed burns have been conducted on 135 acres at five SNAs on this project to date, and 25 miles of firebreak have been installed on 22 SNAs. Prescribed burning has not been allowed to proceed in calendar year 2020 by the DNR or on DNR-owned or -administered lands, and while it remains uncertain whether burns will be permitted in spring 2021, staff continue the necessary prep work for burns just in case (e.g. firebreak installation). Prescribed haying has occurred on 166 acres at four SNAs on this project to date, as an alternative form of prescribed disturbance while burning remains off the table. 2c. Development: Site development activities have occurred on 21 SNAs on this project to date.

Activity 2 Status as of April 30, 2021: 2a. Woody invasive treatment has been carried out on 560 acres at 60 SNAs, while herbaceous invasives treatment has been performed on 453 acres at 25 SNAs, for a total of 1,015 acres treated for invasives at 85 SNAs, and an additional 223 acres of invasives treatment has been initiated. Terrestrial invasive species mapping has also been carried out on about 156 acres at one SNA with these funds, in preparation for future invasives treatment work. 2b. Prescribed Burning/Prescribed Disturbance: prescribed burning occurred on 123 acres on 3 SNAs, and 31 miles of firebreak have been installed on 29 SNAs in preparation for the upcoming prescribed burn season under additional pandemic-specific safety guidelines and protocols as approved by the DNR. Prescribed haying has occurred on 166 acres at 4 SNAs. 2c. Development: Site development activities have taken place on 27 SNAs to date.

Activity 2 Status as of June 18, 2021: 2a. Woody invasive treatment has been carried out on 548 acres at 41 SNAs, while herbaceous invasives treatment has been performed on 631 acres at 105 SNAs, for a total of 1,178 acres treated for invasives on 68 SNAs. Terrestrial invasive species mapping has also been carried out on about 156 acres at one SNA with these funds, in preparation for future invasives treatment work planning. 2b. Prescribed Disturbance: prescribed burning occurred on 135 acres on 5 SNAs, and 31 miles of firebreak have been installed on 29 SNAs in preparation for further burns. Prescribed haying has also occurred on 167 acres at 5 SNAs, bringing total prescribed disturbance to 301 acres on 9 SNAs. 2c. Development: Site development activities have taken place on 27 SNAs to date, including access improvements such as gates and parking lots, signage (including boundary, entry, interpretive, rules, and funding acknowledgement signs), site cleanup, and trail work and fencing installation where appropriate to the SNA.

Final Report Summary: (Note that while no work in this activity-area has occurred since this appropriation closed for non-acquisition work as of 6/30/21, some accomplishments that were completed in FY20 or FY21 were discovered to have not been submitted/reported previously, and are added here to last report's totals.) 2a. Woody invasive treatment has been carried out on 607 acres at 28 SNAs (42 distinct SNA tracts), while herbaceous invasives treatment has been performed on about 750 acres at 54 SNAs (118 different SNA tracts), for a total of about 1,363 acres treated for invasives on 61 SNAs. That is to say, this appropriation permitted SNA staff, contractors, and volunteers to treat the most urgent patches of terrestrial invasives on over a third of the state's SNAs! Terrestrial invasive species mapping has also been carried out on about 156 acres at one SNA with these funds, in preparation for future invasives treatment work planning. 2b. Prescribed Disturbance: prescribed burning occurred on 183 acres at 6 SNAs (8 different SNA tracts), and 31 miles of firebreak have been installed on 29 SNA tracts in preparation for future burns. Prescribed haying also occurred on 166 acres at 4 SNAs (5 tracts), and a 62-acre prescribed mowing project occurred at another SNA, bringing total prescribed disturbance on this appropriation to 412 acres on 11 SNAs. All told, this habitat enhancement work totals about 1,931 acres and was completed on 65 SNAs. 2c. Development: Site development activities have taken place on 27 SNAs to date, including access improvements such as gates and parking lots, signage (including boundary, entry, interpretive, rules, and funding acknowledgement signs), site cleanup, and trail work and fencing installation where appropriate to the SNA.

More than half of the ML17 SNA ENRTF appropriation (~57%) was spent on these Activity 2 habitat enhancement and improvement outcomes, in fulfillment of the appropriation stipulation that at least one-third of the total funds be spent in this area. The flexibility to adjust outcomes in this activity to what was actually achievable under new protocols and pandemic-related working conditions was critically important and appreciated. While the prescribed burning program has rebounded somewhat since the no-burn field season of 2020, even with an extension year just 26% of the originally-prioritized 700 acres of prescribed burns could be accomplished on this appropriation. Conversely, terrestrial invasives work achieved a more than four-fold increase in treated acres compared to the original commitment of 300 acres. Adding prescribed haying and mowing to the toolbox helped as well, reflecting the pivot staff made toward other means of keeping site floristic quality as high as possible in the absence of prescribed fire.

ACTIVITY 3: Citizen Science & Public Engagement in Natural Areas

Description:

Science-based information will drive the engagement of Minnesotans in citizen science, monitoring and education activities on SNAs. A partnership with the Conservation Corps of Minnesota will sustain a network of 130 SNA volunteer site stewards; organize about 50 events focusing on citizen science monitoring and bio-blitzes, plus volunteer work days, and recreation-educational events (guided nature hikes, etc.) and evaluating the effectiveness of these actions. Ecological and safety training, guidance, and support materials will be provided for site stewards as necessary to recruit and retain these volunteers and ensure their work on SNAs is safe and ecologically appropriate. New and refined electronic/social media communications tools, maps, brochure, and interpretive information will be developed and disseminated to advance the public's understanding of natural systems and biodiversity science and to enhance appropriate recreational use of SNAs. Work will be accomplished in part with the involvement of two CCM individual placement positions each full time for 2 years.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 3:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 400,430

Outcome	Completion Date
3a. SNA website, e-book, social media, maps, brochure & other interpretive info	6/30/20
3b. ~ 50 citizen science & volunteer events (management work days & ed. events)	6/30/20
3c. network of volunteer site stewards at ~130 SNAs	6/30/20

Note: total budget for this Activity includes \$22,605 for direct & necessary services which are prorated across all costs except budgets for CCM contracts and MNIT service level agreement (SLAs); no direct & necessary charges are budgeted for the estimated \$76K in CCM contracts; actual charges will be based on actual expenditures.

Activity 3 Status as of February 28, 2018: A new contract with Conservation Corps of Minnesota began in January 2018 to manage SNA social media and site stewards. Accomplishments related to this activity currently reported under the ML15 ENRTF appropriation. Work towards this appropriation will begin July 1, 2018.

Activity 3 Status as of October 29, 2018: The 27th (Fall 2018) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter was delivered to 5,923 subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel achieved 5224 page likes by September 2018 with a highest monthly reach in August 2018 of 70,621. The SNA Flickr channel facilitates sharing high quality photos with 66 members sharing over 1007 photos as of September 2018. From March through September 2018, 24 stewardship events were held involving over 181 people that donated 552 hours of volunteer service. Also, 54 interpretive events hosted 707 attendees. As of September 2018, 123 SNAs (75% of SNAs) have one or more volunteer stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks – with a total of 151 stewards. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Activity 3 Status as of February 13, 2019: 3a. The 27th (Fall 2018) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter was delivered to 5,923 subscribers and the 28th (Winter 2018) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter was delivered to 6,254 subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel achieved 5,623 page likes by December 2018 with a highest monthly reach in December 2018 of 15,797. The SNA Flickr channel facilitates sharing high quality photos with 69 members sharing over 1,000 photos as of December 2018. 3b. From September through December 2018, 15 stewardship events were held involving 229 people that donated 629 hours of volunteer service. Also, 10 interpretive events hosted 304 attendees. 3c. As of December 2018, 126 SNAs (~75% of SNAs) have one or more volunteer stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks – with a total of 153 stewards. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Activity 3 Status as of October 31, 2019: 3a. The 29th (Spring 2019) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter was delivered to 6,254 subscribers and the 30th (Summer 2019) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter was delivered to 6,700+ subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel achieved over 6,000 page likes by June 30, 2019 with a highest monthly reach in June 2019 of 68,938. The SNA Flickr channel facilitates sharing high quality photos with 71 members sharing over 1,000 photos as of June 30, 2019. 3b. From January-June 2019, 13 stewardship events were held involving 145 people that donated about 400 hours of volunteer service. Also, 59 interpretive events hosted about 1900 attendees. 3c. As of June 2019, about 75% of SNAs have one or more volunteer stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks – with a total of 174 stewards. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Activity 3 Status as of March 30, 2020: Most accomplishments related to this activity since Sept/Oct 2019 currently reported under the ML2018 ENRTF SNA appropriation. 3a. New written site descriptions for the website were completed for 20 SNAs. This completes a multi-year project, from a professional writer, to create a story-telling narrative and unified themes for all SNAs. The 29th (Spring 2019) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter was delivered to 6,254 subscribers, and the 30th (Summer 2019) issue was delivered to 6,700+ subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel surpassed 6,000 page followers in June, 2019. The SNA Flickr channel, which facilitates sharing high quality photos, attained a membership of 71 who were sharing over 1,000 photos as of last status update. 3c. As of June 2019, about 75% of SNAs have one or more volunteer stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks – with a total of 173 stewards. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota facilitate much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Activity 3 Status as of November 2, 2020: Most accomplishments related to this activity since Sept/Oct 2019 are currently being funded by and reported under the ML2018 ENRTF SNA appropriation. 3a. New written site descriptions for the website were completed for 20 SNAs. This completes a multi-year project harnessing the talents of a professional writer, to create a story-telling narrative and unified themes for all SNAs. The 30th (Summer 2019) issue of SNA's Nature Notes newsletter was delivered to 6,700+ subscribers, the final issue funded with this appropriation. The SNA Facebook channel surpassed 6,500 page followers in early November 2019, and the SNA Flickr channel, which facilitates sharing high quality photos, attained a membership of 71 who were sharing over 1,000 photos as of the last status update funded on this appropriation. 3b. Community science and volunteer events have largely moved to more recent funding appropriations since the last reporting window; all-told, at least 175 events were held involving thousands of attendees and volunteers donating thousands of hours, with this funding appropriation. 3c. About 80% of SNAs had one or more volunteer stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks, with a total of 174 stewards at last reporting. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) facilitated much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Activity 3 Status as of April 30, 2021: Most accomplishments related to this activity since Sept/Oct 2019 are currently being funded by and reported under newer ENRTF SNA appropriations. 3a. New written site descriptions for the website were completed for 20 SNAs. This completes a multi-year project harnessing the

talents of a professional writer to create a story-telling narrative and unified themes for all SNAs. The 30th (Summer 2019) issue of SNA's *Nature Notes* newsletter was delivered to 6,700+ subscribers, the final issue whose preparation and release was funded with this appropriation. The SNA Facebook channel surpassed 6,500 page followers in early November 2019, and the SNA Flickr channel, which facilitates sharing high quality photos, attained a membership of 71 who were sharing over 1,000 photos as of the last status update funded on this appropriation. 3b. Community science and volunteer events have largely moved to more recent funding appropriations since the last reporting window; all told, this funding supported SNA staff in coordinating at least 190 events involving thousands of attendees and volunteers donating thousands of hours. 3c. About 80% of SNAs had one or more volunteer Site Stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks, with a total of 174 Stewards at last reporting on this funding. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) facilitated much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Activity 3 Status as of June 18, 2021: Most accomplishments related to this activity since Sept/Oct 2019 are currently being funded by and reported under newer ENRTF SNA appropriations. 3a. New written site descriptions for the website were completed for 20 SNAs. This completes a multi-year project harnessing the talents of a professional writer to create a story-telling narrative and unified themes for all SNAs. The 30th (Summer 2019) issue of SNA's *Nature Notes* newsletter was delivered to 6,700+ subscribers, the final issue whose preparation and release was funded with this appropriation. The SNA Facebook channel surpassed 6,500 page followers in early November 2019, and the SNA Flickr channel, which facilitates sharing high quality photos, attained a membership of 71 who were sharing over 1,000 photos as of the last status update funded on this appropriation. 3b. Community science and volunteer events have largely moved to more recent funding appropriations since the last reporting window; all told, this funding supported SNA staff in coordinating at least 190 events involving thousands of attendees and volunteers donating thousands of hours. 3c. About 80% of SNAs had one or more volunteer Site Stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks, with a total of 174 Stewards at last reporting on this funding. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) facilitated much of the SNA social media and volunteers/site stewards work.

Final Report Summary: 3a. New written site descriptions for the SNA website pages were completed for 20 SNAs. This completes a multi-year project harnessing the talents of a professional writer to create a story-telling narrative and unified themes for all SNAs. The 30th (Summer 2019) issue of SNA's *Nature Notes* newsletter was delivered to 6,700+ subscribers, the final issue whose preparation and release was funded with this appropriation. The SNA Facebook channel surpassed 6,500 page followers in early November 2019 on this funding, and the SNA Flickr channel, which facilitates sharing high quality photos, attained a membership of 71 who were sharing over 1,000 photos as of the last status update funded on this appropriation. 3b. All told, this funding supported SNA staff in coordinating at least 190 events involving thousands of attendees and volunteers donating thousands of hours. (Note: these events were virtually all pre-pandemic.) 3c. About 80% of the state's SNAs had one or more volunteer Site Stewards reporting observations and assisting with management tasks, with a total of 174 Stewards at last reporting on this funding. Contracts with Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) facilitated much of the SNA social media, events, and volunteers/site stewards work.

IV. DISSEMINATION:

Description:

Dissemination will primarily be achieved through the SNA webpage on the DNR website: mndnr.gov/snas, through the SNA Facebook page, and through *Nature Notes* – the SNA Program e-newsletter distributed through GovDelivery.com to subscribers and possibly through Tweets on the DNR Twitter site. Specifically, the DNR website will be updated with information on the new or expanded SNAs. Announcements of the acquisitions and some enhancement-related activities will be posted on the SNA Facebook page.

Status as of February 28, 2018: Accomplishments related to this activity currently are reported under the ML15 ENRTF appropriation. Work towards this appropriation will begin July 1, 2018.

Status as of October 29, 2018: The SNA website is updated regularly with additions of new or edited content and a frequently updated events calendar. The 27th (Fall 2018) issue of the Nature Notes e-newsletter was delivered to 5,923 subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel has achieved 5224 page likes. The SNA Flickr social media channel is used to encourage high quality photo sharing with 66 members sharing 1007 photos.

Status as of February 13, 2019: The SNA website is updated regularly with additions of new or edited content and a frequently updated events calendar. The 28th (Winter 2018) issue of the Nature Notes e-newsletter was delivered to 6,254 subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel has achieved 5,623 page likes. The SNA Flickr social media channel is used to encourage high quality photo sharing with 69 members sharing 1000s of photos.

Status as of October 31, 2019: The SNA website is updated regularly with additions of new or edited content and a frequently updated events calendar. The 30th (Summer 2019) issue of the Nature Notes e-newsletter was delivered to 6,700+ subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel has achieved over 6,000 page likes. The SNA Flickr social media channel is used to encourage high quality photo sharing with 71 members sharing 1000s of photos.

Status as of March 30, 2020: The SNA website is updated regularly with additions of new or edited content and a frequently updated events calendar. The 35th (Spring 2020) issue of the Nature Notes e-newsletter was delivered to 7380 subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel has over 6,900 page likes and over 7,200 followers. The SNA Flickr social media channel is used to encourage sharing of high-quality SNA photos, with 78 members sharing thousands of images.

Status as of November 2, 2020: The SNA website is updated regularly with additions of new or edited content, including for new or expanded SNAs, and a frequently updated events calendar. The 39th (Fall 2020) issue of the SNA Program's Nature Notes e-newsletter was delivered to 8,380 subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel has achieved 7,295 page likes, and the SNA Program currently contributes content twice monthly to a new DNR Instagram channel. The SNA Flickr social media channel is used to encourage high-quality photo sharing, with 93 members currently sharing nearly 1,100 photos.

Status as of April 30, 2021: The SNA website is updated regularly with additions of new or edited content, including for new or expanded SNAs, and a frequently updated events calendar. The 41st (Spring 2021) issue of the SNA Program's Nature Notes e-newsletter was delivered to 9,027 subscribers. The SNA Facebook channel has achieved 7,707 page likes and 8,234 followers, and the SNA Program currently contributes content twice monthly to a new DNR Instagram channel. The SNA Flickr social media channel is used to encourage high-quality photo sharing, with 96 members currently sharing over 1,140 photos.

Final Report Summary: The SNA website is updated regularly with additions of new or edited content, including for new or expanded SNAs, and a frequently updated [events calendar](#). (SNA Program staff appreciate that our events calendar's updates have begun to appear in the "LCCMR Updates" newsletter emails, and thanks LCCMR staff for making that possible!) The 46th (Summer 2022) issue of the SNA Program's [Nature Notes e-newsletter](#) was delivered to 10,790 subscribers. The [SNA Facebook channel](#) has achieved around 9.1K followers, and the SNA Program currently contributes content twice monthly to the [DNR Instagram channel](#). The [SNA Flickr social media channel](#) is used to encourage high-quality photo sharing, with 108 members currently sharing over 1,525 photos.

V. Project Budget SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget Overview: See attached Budget Worksheet

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

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the SNA Program, this funding is used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid mostly 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.

Direct and Necessary expenses are for Department Support Services (Human Resources, IT Support, Safety, Financial Support, Communications Support, Planning Support, and Procurement Support. 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. 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 payments (~\$900,000), acquisition professional services (\$100,000), and CCM contracts (~\$203,000) have not been assessed Direct and Necessary costs. In addition to itemized costs captured in the proposal budget, direct and necessary costs cover HR/People Support (\$18,211), Safety Support (\$5,101), Financial Support (\$16,910), Communication Support (\$6,580), IT Support (\$36,769), Planning Support (\$4,560), and Procurement Support (\$985) that are necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects.

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: 6.0 FTE each for two years spread over 20-30 positions – for a total of 12.0 FTEs

Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: 2.0 FTE for 1 year for CCM & ~1.5 FTE fieldwork contractors for 2 years – for a total of 5.1 FTEs

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state	\$0	\$0	We seek landowner and partner donations for acquisitions. If any other funds are used for landowner payments for acquisitions funded in part with this appropriation, accomplishments will be pro-rated by the actual expenditures per funding source.
State**	\$0**	\$0**	Some SNA acquisitions are funded with a combination of state appropriations (e.g. OHF and RIM). If any other funds are used for landowner payments for acquisitions funded in part with this appropriation, accomplishments will be pro-rated by the actual expenditures per funding source. In-kind contributions by the project manager to administer this project and office/computer/phone costs for DNR staff work on this project will not be tracked.
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$0	\$0	

** As indicated below, Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations for acquisition and prairie restoration and enhancement occur concurrently with this ENRTF appropriation. These OHF funds are used for similar but

separate projects as the ENRTF funding. Because of the multiple, overlapping appropriations, it would not be accurate to list those as match here. Also, the SNA program typically annually receives an internal general fund grant for about \$30,000 for similar but separate invasive species projects.

VI. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

Partners receiving ENRTF funding – none.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:

Achieving the goals of the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan to protect 136,000 more acres as SNAs this century, as well as the science-based land management and public engagement depends upon ongoing support from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust fund of \$5M to \$10M per biennium. Annual/biennial appropriations will also be sought from the Outdoor Heritage Fund and state bonding.

C. Funding History:

Funding Source and Use of Funds	Funding Timeframe	\$ Amount
ENRTF ML13, Ch 52, Sec 2, Subd 4b: SNA acquisition, restoration, enhancement & public	July 2013-June 2016	\$ 1,500,000
ENRTF ML14, Ch226, Subd 7a: SNA acquisition, restoration, enhancement & public engagement	July 2014-June 2017	\$ 2,540,000
ENRTF ML15, Ch76, Sec 2, Subd 9c: SNA acquisition, restoration, enhancement & public engagement	July 2015-June 2018	\$ 4,000,000
ENRTF ML16, Ch186, Sec 2, Subd 91a: Scientific and Natural Area restoration	July 2016-June 2019	\$ 1,386,000
ENRTF ML16, Ch186, Sec 2, Subd 91b: Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA addition	July 2016-June 2019	\$ 500,000
OHF ML12, Ch262, Art1, Sec2, Subd 4h: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated SNA portion only)	July 2012-June 2017	\$ 276,940
OHF ML13, Ch137, Art1, Sec2, Subd 4g: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated SNA portion only)	July 2013-June 2018	\$ 144,170
OHF ML13, Ch137, Art1, Sec2, Subd 4c: SNA & NPB acquisition (estimated SNA portion only)	July 2013-June 2018+	\$ 246,500
OHF ML14, Ch256, Art1, Sec2, Subd 4h: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated SNA portion only)	July 2014-June 2019	\$ 285,650
OHF ML15, 1SS, Ch1, Art1, Sec2, Subd 2a: SNA acquisition	July 2015-June 2020+	\$ 1,000,000
OHF ML15, 1SS, Ch1, Art1, Sec2, Subd 2k: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated SNA portion only)	July 2015-June 2020	\$ 762,000
OHF ML16, Ch171, Art1, Sec2, Subd 2a: SNA acquisition	July 2016-June 2021+	\$ 228,000
OHF ML16, Ch171, Art1, Sec2, Subd 2j: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated SNA portion only)	July 2016-June 2021	\$ 527,900
State Wildlife Grant (federal) – SNA management plans	March 2012-August 2013	\$ 49,800

VII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- The project is for 4 years, will begin on July 1, 2017, and end on June 30, 2022.
- Periodic project status update reports will be submitted November 1 and April 1 of each year.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted by August 15, 2022 (or as soon as possible after state fiscal year closeout).

VIII. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S): See original ML17 SNA Acquisition and Restoration Projects map set, and attached map of acquired Hastings SNA addition (Kaehler parcel). Restoration was removed from Activity 2 outcomes and budget at time of Work Plan approval; no restorations (planting or seeding to establish native species populations, or re-establish previously present native species populations) were completed on this funding.

IX. 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*" (initially 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
- *Minnesota's State Wildlife Action Plan* – www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwcs
- *Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan* – www.dnr.state.mn.us/prairieplan

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.

Each parcel acquired as a new SNA in fee will have an Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) or if as an addition to an existing SNA, that SNAs Management Plan may be amended to add the new parcel. The AMPs include goals, ecological description, priority features with indicators, and management recommendations. The intended outcome of management of SNAs is that 1) all the lands be native plant communities or restored to plant communities that would have been native to the site, 2) these plant communities are sustained over time, and 3) that visitors are accommodated safely (unless visitor access is restricted by designation order). The goals for the SNA'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 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.

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/enhancement-related activities done with this appropriation are on lands designated as SNA which the state owns in fee or easement.

- 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/enhancement 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 BOWSR Guidelines, including Project Guidance, Plant Community Restoration, Temporary Cover and Forest/Woodlands. 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 #130 on “Pollinator Habitat” (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/disturbance, 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.

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 and site improvement projects, CCM has been and will continue to be used when appropriate for hand seed harvest, invasive species treatment, prescribed burning, 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.

Plant community reconstruction and rehabilitation 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. Each evaluation report will include a summary of management plan outcomes, activities completed through the project, map of the project area, statement of ongoing management needs and funding, and summary of the evaluation.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**M.L. 2017 Project Budget - Final**

Project Title: Scientific and Natural Areas Acquisition and Restoration, Citizen Science, and Engagemen

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b

Project Manager: Molly Roske

Organization: MnDNR

M.L. 2017 ENRTF Appropriation: \$2,500,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 4 Years, June 30, 2021

Date of Report: August 8, 2022

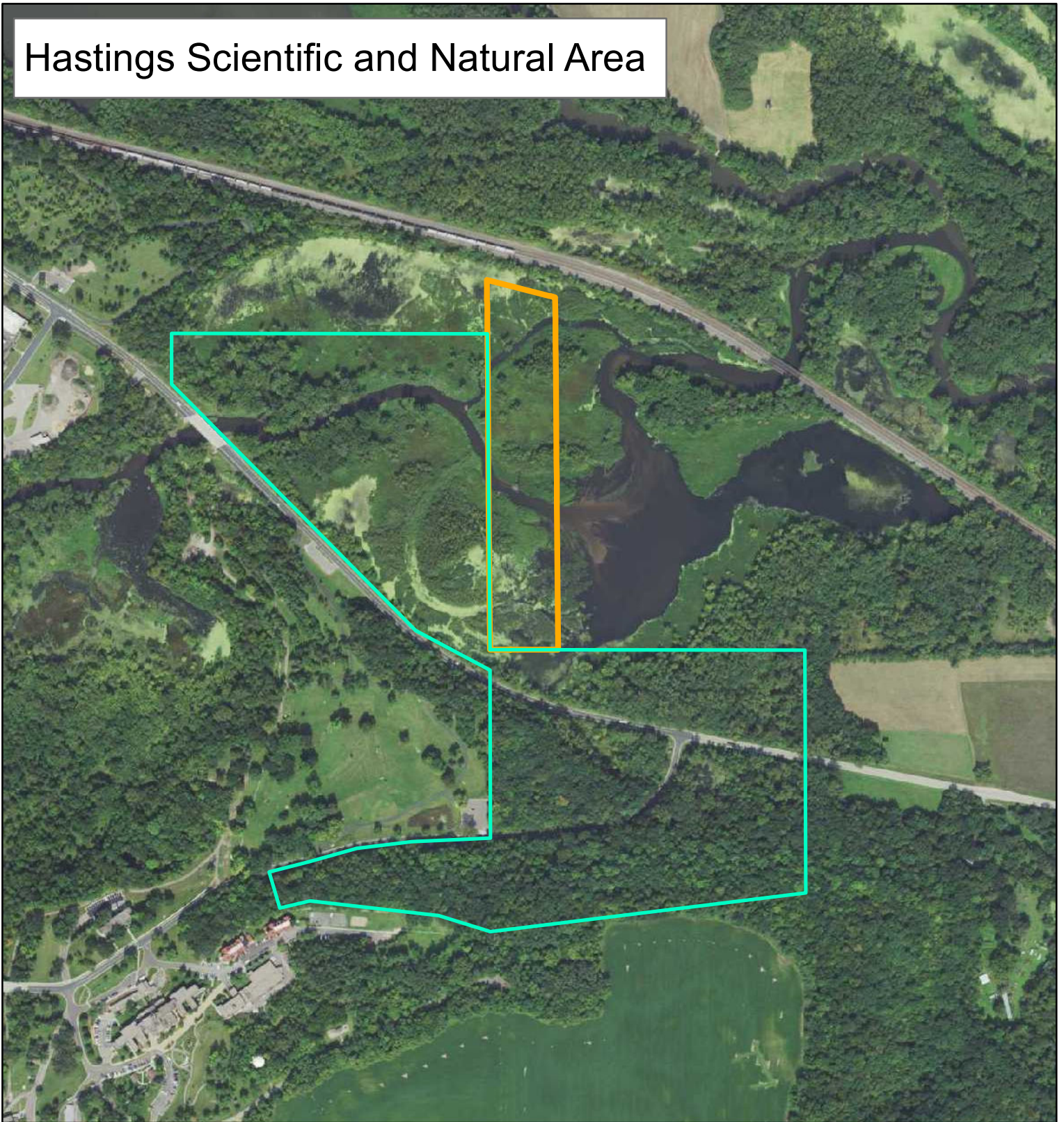


ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	REVISED BUDGET 2022-04-05	TOTAL SPENT	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM			
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)	\$859,095	\$777,281	\$81,814
Position Type 1: Coordinators & Planner - Activity 1: ~0.18 FTE acquisition-related for 2 yrs; Activity 2: ~0.09 FTE resto-related for 2 yrs; Activity 3: ~ 0.62 FTE outreach-related for 2 yrs - all spread over ~5 positions			
Position Type 2: Specialists, Technicians, & Naturalists - Activity 1: ~0.27 FTE acquisition-related for 2 yrs; Activity 2: ~2.59 FTE resto-related for 2 yrs; Activity 3: ~ 1.04 FTE outreach-related for 2 yr - all spread over			
Position Type 3: Laborers, Seasonal Field Crews & Clerical - Activity 2: ~1.29 FTE for 2 yrs; Activity 3: ~0.11 FTE for 2 yrs - spread over ~9-15			
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts	\$344,599	\$337,363	\$7,236
Professional/Technical Contracts			
Act 3. CCM individual placement (1 FTE for 2 yrs = 2.0 FTE total) (\$76K)			
Service Contracts			
Act. 2a. woody encroachment removal & invasives treatment (~\$295K at ~\$1000-\$10,000/ac) - priority given to CCM; contractors to be selected			
Act 2b. prescribed burning, haying, mowing, browsing or grazing (~\$55K at ~\$100-\$1000/ac - priority given to CCM; contractors to be selected following			
Act 2c. site development (fences, signs, etc) (~\$4K) - priority given to CCM; contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding processes			
Equipment/Tools/Supplies Activity 2: parts, tools, repair costs & supplies for restoration, invasives treatment, prescribed burning, etc (this is largely for SNA tools, such as chain saws, pump cans, drip torches, fire racks, pulaskis, other handtools, backpack sprayers, portable pumps & hose, personal protective equipment, etc, & supplies such as herbicides, spreading oils, flagging, stakes, etc) (~\$13.5K); signs (entry,boundary & rules signs), posts/hardware, fencing, gravel, & other site development tools & supplies (~\$10K)). Activity 3: citizen science, volunteer events & site steward supplies (including safety items, hand tools, training materials, temporary signs, stamps, envelops, etc) (~\$14,484).	\$46,045	\$39,931	\$6,114
Fee Title Acquisition ~250 acres in 3-6 parcels to be designated as SNA & owned in fee by DNR	\$820,000	\$13,000	\$807,000
Professional Services for Acquisition Includes real estate transaction costs & LAM billings; appraisal & review; boundary survey; attorney general; closing costs; recording fees & taxes; etc. ~\$20K/parcel	\$182,300	\$139,620	\$42,680
Printing Activity 1: State Register publication (required to designate acquired parcels) (\$0.6K) ; Activity 3: brochure, maps, pocket cards, citizen science, educational & volunteer materials (\$5.9K).	\$6,800	\$5,759	\$1,041
Travel expenses in Minnesota Fleet charges for trucks, cars, & equipment (e.g. mowers, seeders), mileage,	\$152,045	\$120,641	\$31,404
Other * Computer & phone charges for CCM individual placement (\$2,050)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other * DNR's direct and necessary costs (\$89,116 total) pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. In addition to itemized costs captured in our proposal budget, direct and necessary costs cover HR/People Support (\$18,211), Safety Support (\$5,101), Financial Support (\$16,910), Communication Support	\$89,116	\$89,116	\$0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$2,500,000	\$1,522,712	\$977,288

Date of Report: August 8, 2022

NOTES:

Hastings Scientific and Natural Area



Legend

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles
| | | | | | | |



Hastings SNA



Hastings SNA addition (10 acres)



FACTSHEET

MINNESOTA SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREAS

www.mndnr.gov/snas

Mission and history

Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) are exceptional places where native plants and animals flourish; where rare species are protected; and where we can know, and study, Minnesota's fascinating natural features.

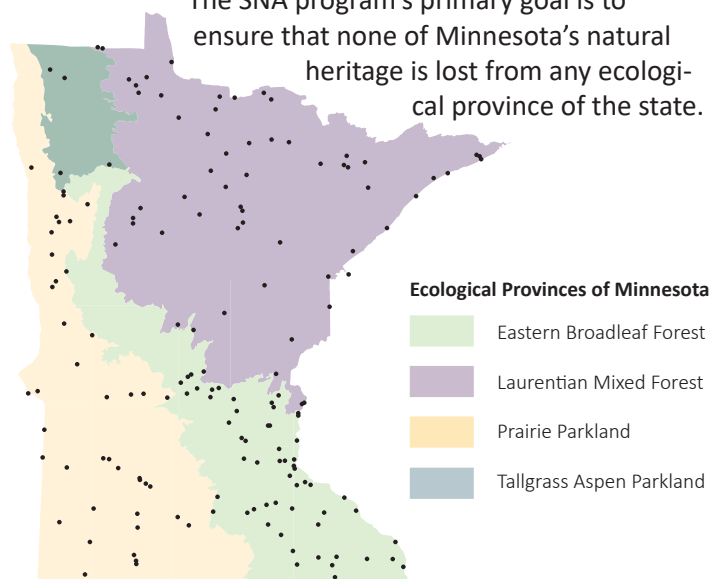
QUICK FACT

Designated SNAs:	168 sites
Total Area Protected:	192,000 acres

SNAs were authorized by the Minnesota Legislature in 1969 (M.S. 84.033) with the first SNA unit acquired in 1974. These sites contain native plant and animal communities, rare species, places of biodiversity significance, and geological formations.

Preserving Minnesota's unique nature

The SNA program's primary goal is to ensure that none of Minnesota's natural heritage is lost from any ecological province of the state.



This requires protection and management of all features in sufficient quantity and distribution across the landscape. Protecting multiple sites in each landscape area is a vital means of capturing the full range of genetic diversity and prevents the loss of rare species, communities, and features.

Natural areas worth knowing

SNAs are public lands open to recreational activities that do not disturb natural conditions, such as birdwatching, nature photography, and hiking. SNAs are established for their outstanding ecological features and for people to enjoy. Several SNAs are open to all hunting, while others are open only to specific types of hunting to help achieve management goals.

QUICK FACT

Hunting:	71 sites (90% of acres)
2019 Outreach:	135 events

The SNA Program and its partners provide a number of interpretive and stewardship events throughout the year.



Learning about skinks — Swede's Forest SNA

The SNA Program encourages research that advances the knowledge of natural systems. A wealth of data has been collected from research conducted on SNAs.

QUICK FACT

2019 Research: 52 Permits issued

Land management techniques

As “islands” of native landscape, SNAs are often isolated in a “sea” of non-native development. Natural processes, such as prairie fires, are missing. Too frequently invasive plants overtake and replace native species.

QUICK FACT

2019 Prescribed Burns: 1357 acres
2019 Invasives Removed: 767 acres

Ecological integrity of many sites can only be maintained with human stewardship. Crews of SNA staff, volunteers, and community service groups work together to maintain or restore sites and their natural processes.



Trained crews conduct prescribed burns



Encroaching woody species removed from native prairie

Stewardship and volunteerism

It takes a village... by building a lasting conservation ethic involving volunteers in stewardship of SNAs for the long-term future. Providing opportunities for service stretches the scope of what can be done manifold.

QUICK FACT

2019 Volunteer Service: 2067 hours
Volunteer Site Stewards: 170 people



Volunteer stewardship event to remove invasive species

Engaging people

Communicating with Minnesotans about SNAs promotes greater support and understanding of the program. Both digital media and on-site programming are important in fostering involvement.

QUICK FACT

2019 SNA Newsletter Subscribers: 7078
2019 Facebook Followers: 6683



Engaging youth in a fun program to learn about SNAs

