



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

Date of Submission: January 25,2017
Date of Next Status Update Report: January 31, 2018
Date of Work Plan Approval: 06/07/2017
Project Completion Date: June 30, 2020
Does this submission include an amendment request?

PROJECT TITLE: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Outreach and Implementation.

Project Manager: Tabor Hoek
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Location: 54 county CREP project area. (see map attached)

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation:	\$6,000,000
	Amount Spent:	\$0
	Balance:	\$6,000,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 08k

Appropriation Language:

\$6,000,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the Board of Water and Soil Resources to fund staff at soil and water conservation districts to assist landowners participating in the federal Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This appropriation is contingent upon receipt of federal funds for implementation. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2020, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Outreach and Implementation.
CREP Implementation Phase 1

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

- Minnesota CREP: upon final agreement between the State of MN and the United States Dept. of Agriculture, MN conservation agencies and partners will embark on a 7-year effort to implement a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to benefit water quality (nutrient and sediment load reductions) and wildlife habitat in 54 counties. CREP will add an estimated 60,000 acres of new water quality protection and wildlife habitat development in environmentally sensitive areas through three key conservation practices: riparian buffers, wetlands, and wellhead protection for drinking water. CREP is a partnership between the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) administered by USDA - Farm Service Agency and the MN RIM program administered by BWSR. Enrollment in the Minnesota CREP will require both a 15 year CRP contract and a permanent RIM easement on the enrolled property. In addition to permanent protection all sites will be restored with native vegetation.
- Leverage: This project will require a state commitment of \$150 million that will leverage \$350 million in USDA CRP payments to landowners. State funding sources are expected to include: Clean Water Fund, Outdoor Heritage Fund, Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and Capital Investment (bonding) funds.
- Water Quality and Wildlife Benefits: Water Quality benefits will be realized by reducing pollutant load reductions through targeting acres for each of the eligible practices to best locations identified in the MN sediment and nutrient reduction strategies, Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy's and other local and state plans and strategies. Wildlife benefits will come from increased grassland and wetland acres providing nesting, brood rearing cover and overall habitat improvement as prescribed in the MN Prairie Plan, MN Pheasant Action Plan, pollinator initiatives and other local and state plans and strategies. BWSR has designed a scoring and ranking process to assure the greatest impact will be achieved with each acre enrolled.
- Delivery: We need a local, trusted, technically competent field presence to provide the very critical work of finding and working with landowners through the process of what conservation is best for their land. This is not simple and we know that local governments are best positioned to establish and maintain important local relationships to achieve success. This ENTRF project will provide critical funding for increased local capacity for the first 3 years of this 7 year effort by adding approximately 26 FTE's/year of CREP technicians employed by SWCDs or under contract with SWCDs (i.e. Pheasants Forever Biologists). This staffing need was determined after a comprehensive workload analysis was completed that identified key CREP tasks to be conducted, from application to restoration, including planning and implementation of the CRP contract and RIM easement. The ENRTF recommendation is a small but significant part of the projected \$300 million that will be utilized in the first three years of the project. This portion of the CREP is essential to secure local staff to fully assist landowners and achieve the water quality and habitat outcomes of the CREP.
- ENTRF Outcomes: When the CREP is completed, a target of 5,000 landowner contacts will be made and 3,000 CREP contracts will be enrolled during the 3 year project. Often it takes numerous contacts with a landowner in order to achieve desired conservation outcomes. This critical local support and landowners assisted, through this ENTRF project, is an important part of the overall state contribution that will enable RIM to protect tens of thousands of new acres for water quality and wildlife habitat on private lands.

CREP will provide permanent protection on an estimated 60,000 thousand acres over the next 7 years to protect water quality, and develop wildlife habitat in environmentally sensitive areas through three key

conservation practices: riparian buffers, wetlands, and wellhead protection for drinking water within the 54 county target area. Distribution of acres between the eligible practices is planned at 50% buffers, 45% wetlands and 5% wellhead protection.

III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of January 31, 2018:

Project Status as of July 31, 2018:

Project Status as of January 31, 2019:

Project Status as of July 31, 2019:

Project Status as of January 31, 2020:

Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Employ approximately 26 SWCD CREP Technicians, Hire Coordinator, and implement the first three years of the CREP

Description: Employment of approximately 26 CREP Technicians to facilitate the enrollment of an estimated 3,000 landowners in CREP. This request is for three years of work. CREP will provide permanent protection on an estimated 60,000 thousand acres during the next 7 years to protect water quality, and develop wildlife habitat in environmentally sensitive areas through three key conservation practices: riparian buffers, wetlands, and wellhead protection for drinking water within the 54 county target area. Distribution of acres between the eligible practices is planned at 50% buffers, 45% wetlands and 5% wellhead protection. Implementation at the local level will use average SWCD costs of \$40/billable hour for wage, benefits, space, vehicle, computer, and other associated overhead costs. $2080\text{hr.} \times \$40/\text{hr.} = \$83,200/\text{yr.} \times 26 \text{fte's} \times 3 \text{ year period}$ is approximately \$6,416,667 of which 90% or \$5,775,000 is funded from LCCMR and the rest is funded locally. The SWCD 10% will be provided through space, vehicle, computers and other associated overhead costs. ENTRF funding will not be used to pay for space and other associated overhead costs. In addition, \$225,000 is for Project Coordination.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 6,000,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 6,000,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Employ approximately 26 FTE/year with SWCD's to process a target of 5,000 CREP contacts prioritized and targeted for water quality and wildlife habitat benefits that will facilitate the enrollment of an estimated 3,000 CREP contracts. This should enroll an estimated 40,000 acres of the 60,000 ac. goal. The costs of landowner payments for CRP and RIM will be paid from funding not directly tied to this project, including the	June 30, 2020

following sources – USDA- FSA CRP, and RIM from - Bonding, ENTRF, Clean Water Fund and Outdoor Heritage Fund.	
2. Employ 1.0 FTE/year Coordinator. Staff will be based in the field and provide leadership at the field level in hiring, training, tracking and reporting all project activities.	June 30, 2020
3. BWSR will develop and conduct workshops and participate in existing training opportunities in order to train, update and inform the CREP Technicians and others.	June 30,2020

Activity 1 Status as of January 31, 2018:

Activity 1 Status as of July 31, 2018:

Activity 1 Status as of January 31, 2019:

Activity 1 Status as of July 31, 2019:

Activity 1 Status as of January 31, 2020:

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: Data is collected on staff time spent, acres impacted and landowners contacted on a quarterly basis and is available to project partners and participants. There will be numerous publications, landowner outreach materials, success articles and media events throughout the course of the project. LCCMR and the ENTRF will be noted in all materials.

Tracking of the MN conservation estate can be found at http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/COENROL_2016.pdf. This document is updated each year in August and reflects the acres of conservation lands enrolled in programs in MN.

Status as of January 31, 2018:

Status as of July 31, 2018:

Status as of January 31, 2019:

Status as of July 31, 2019:

Status as of January 31, 2020:

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:

*This section represents an overview of the preliminary budget at the start of the project. It will be reconciled with actual expenditures at the time of the final report.

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Overview Explanation
Personnel:	\$ 225,000	Coordinator position for 3 years (1.0 FTE BWSR position)
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$5,775,000	Approximately 26 FTE's of SWCD or SWCD contracted (i.e. Pheasants Forever Biologists) field staff
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$6,000,000	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff: N/A

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: N/A

Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: 3.0

Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: approximately 78

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state			
SWCD-10% cash match	\$641,667	\$0	Direct and/or indirect expense of employee.
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	641,667	\$0	

Note: See attachment for CREP financial plan.

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

Partners receiving ENRTF funding

- Name, Title, Affiliation, \$ Amount, Role

Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding

- Natural Resources Conservatoin Service (NRCS) technical assistance provider for CRP contracts.
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) enrollment, administrator and fiscal agent for CRP contracts.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:

Provide the means to implement the new MN CREP upon final agreement being signed. An estimated target of 5,000 landowner contacts will be made and 3,000 CREP contracts will be enrolled during the project. Often it can take a few to numerous contacts with a landowner in order to achieve desired conservation outcomes. This critical local support and landowners assisted, through this ENRTF project, is an important part of the overall State contribution.

The MN CREP has been structured to implement the many water quality initiatives such as the MN Nutrient Reduction Strategy, MN Sediment Strategy, Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) as well as landscape and habitat plans as found in the MN Prairie Plan and Pheasant Action Plan. Implementation of the

CREP will build upon the existing holdings of the RIM program which currently protects over 271,000 ac. of sensitive lands on nearly 6,500 sites. Water quality protection as well as wildlife habitat are not short term goals and require long term permanent protection afforded by CREP.

C. Funding History:

Funding Source and Use of Funds	Funding Timeframe	\$ Amount
No ENTRF funds have been allocated to this new CREP Implementation effort		
The following listing shows Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP) project funding history which is a model for the CREP Implementation effort. However, please note that these funds are not tied to this CREP and occurred before this CREP is approved.		
ENRTF-Conservation Program Technical Assistance Grants ML 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04f.	July 1, 2013-June 30, 2016	\$3,000,000
ENRTF-Conservation Assistance Acceleration Project ML 2015, Chp.76, Sec.2, Subd. 08d.	July 1, 2015-June 30, 2018	\$1,000,000
DNR-Section of Wildlife Funds-FY2015	July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015	\$145,000
DNR-Section of Wildlife Funds-FY2016	July 1, 2015-June 30,2016	\$250,000
DNR-Section of Wildlife Funds-FY2017	July 1, 2016-June 30,2017	\$455,000
BWSR-Clean Water Fund-FY2016	July 1, 2015-June 30,2016	\$200,000
BWSR-Clean Water Fund, Outdoor Heritage Fund-FY2017	July 1, 2016-June 30,2017	\$1,195,000

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- The project is for 3 years, will begin on 07/01/17, and end on 06/30/20.
- Project status update reports will be submitted January 31 and July 31 of each year, per LCCMR requirements.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2020.

IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S):

See attached map of project area indicating the 54 county CREP project area.

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



Project Title: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Outreach and Implementation

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 08k

Project Manager: Tabor Hoek

Organization: MN Board of Water and Soil Resources

M.L. 2017 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 6,000,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years, *June 30, 2020*

Date of Report:

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Activity 1 Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	<i>Fill in your activity title here.</i>				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)	\$225,000			\$225,000	\$225,000
<i>New unclassified position at an estimated cost of \$75,000/year for salary and benefits. 100% for 3 years=\$225,000</i>					
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts	\$5,775,000			\$5,775,000	\$5,775,000
<i>Contracts with SWCD offices to employ or contract approximately 26 FTE's/year over the 3 year project. 90% of the contract amount will be paid by ENTRF with 10% local match required.</i>					
COLUMN TOTAL	\$6,000,000			\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000

