



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2020 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2020-011

Staff Lead: Michael Varien

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: August 27, 2021

Project Title: Crow Wing County Community Natural Area Acquisition

Project Budget: \$400,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Ryan Simonson

Organization: Crow Wing County

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: August 26, 2021

Reporting Schedule: April 1 / October 1 of each year.

Project Completion: July 31, 2023

Final Report Due Date: September 14, 2023

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09o

Appropriation Language: \$400,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Crow Wing County to acquire approximately 65 acres of land adjacent to the historic fire tower property to allow for diverse recreational opportunities while protecting wildlife habitat and preventing forest fragmentation. Any revenue generated from selling products or assets developed or acquired with this appropriation must be repaid to the trust fund unless a plan is approved for reinvestment of income in the project as provided under Minnesota Statutes, section 116P.10.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2024

Narrative

Project Summary: Acquire private land surrounding a historic fire tower to protect and provide a buffer to the tower itself while creating interpretive walking trails on the newly acquired property.

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

The main opportunity/problem here is the chance that someone may develop the land surrounding the fire tower with an incompatible use. Some of the land is zoned commercial. We would prefer to see the land surrounding the historic fire tower be preserved which will also provide a buffer to the fire tower.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

The proposed solution is for the County to acquire this property to ensure it stays protected in it's natural state in public ownership.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

With the addition of 69 surrounding acres of forested land this would become a larger complex to support educational, historic and recreational uses for the community. The timing of the county acquisition and the willingness of neighboring landowners to support this proposal, make this an important window of opportunity to develop on an excellent public asset.

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Central

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Central, NE, NW,

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Acquire adjacent land

Activity Budget: \$399,998

Activity Description:

An appraisal of the approved parcels will be conducted and negotiations with the two private land owners will be conducted. The property will then be transferred to Crow Wing county and within 60 days of the transaction the county will provide a report to the LCCMR.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Completion Date |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Appraise parcels | May 31, 2020 |
| Purchase parcels | November 30, 2021 |
| Report provided to LCCMR | July 31, 2022 |

Activity 2: Forest management

Activity Budget: \$1

Activity Description:

Crow Wing county will conduct a selective timber harvest on newly acquired lands surrounding the Pequot Lakes fire tower for forest management as well as invasive species control if identified.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Completion Date |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Timber harvest | September 30, 2021 |

Activity 3: Develop public use amenities

Activity Budget: \$1

Activity Description:

Create interpretive walking trails and install a kiosk near the fire tower with information on the history of the site and post appropriate signage along trails.

Activity Milestones:

| Description | Completion Date |
|---------------|------------------|
| Create trails | October 31, 2021 |
| Post signage | October 31, 2021 |

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

We will include ENTRF language on future maps we make for the property. The maps will be available in print and on our County website for advertisement to the public.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

This is a fee title acquisition and minimal work will be required after the project is complete. We will create interpretive walking trails on the property. We will also manage the timber resource on the property. Creating trails costs money, and managing the timber brings in revenue. We ask that we be allowed to retain any revenue from timber management to help offset the cost of trail development.

Budget Summary

| Category / Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Purpose | Gen. Ineligible | % Benefits | # FTE | Classified Staff? | \$ Amount |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|-------------------|-----------|
| Personnel | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Contracts and Services | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Equipment, Tools, and Supplies | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Capital Expenditures | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Acquisitions and Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
| | Fee Title Acquisition | Acres: 69 Parcels: 3 | | | | | | \$400,000 |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | \$400,000 |
| Travel In Minnesota | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Travel Outside Minnesota | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| Printing and Publication | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |

8/27/2021

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|----------------|-----------|
| Other Expenses | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Sub Total | - |
| | | | | | | | Grand Total | \$400,000 |

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

| Category/Name | Subcategory or Type | Description | Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--|
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--|

Non ENRTF Funds

| Category | Specific Source | Use | Status | Amount |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------------|------------------|
| State | | | | |
| Cash | MN DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant | We received a grant from the MN DNR to create new trails and install signage and benches on this property. The grant is a 50% match (grant pays \$127,000 and County pays \$127,000). | Secured | \$127,000 |
| | | | State Sub Total | \$127,000 |
| Non-State | | | | |
| Cash | County Resource Development fund (see MS 477A.14) and County Parks fund (see MS 282.08 (4) (ii). | The funds will be used to create new hiking trails, and install new signage and benches. | Secured | \$127,000 |
| In-Kind | County Resource Development fund (see MS 477A.14) and County Parks fund (see MS 282.08 (4) (ii). | Staff time working with contractors to create new trails and install signs and benches. | Secured | \$1,500 |
| Cash | County Resource Development fund (see MS 477A.14) and County Parks fund (see MS 282.08 (4) (ii). | Closing costs and other administrative costs related to the acquisition. | Secured | \$3,000 |
| | | | Non State Sub Total | \$131,500 |
| | | | Funds Total | \$258,500 |

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

| Name | County | Site Significance | Activity | Acres | Miles | Estimated Cost | Type of Landowner | Easement or Title Holder | Status of Work |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Parcel #: 290113100A00009 | Crow Wing | Forest habitat | Fee Title | 18 | - | \$110,000 | Private | Crow Wing County | Negotiations in Progress |
| Parcel #: 290113400A00009 | Crow Wing | Forest habitat | Fee Title | 10 | - | \$130,000 | Private | Crow Wing County | Negotiations in Progress |
| Parcel #: 290114200000009 | Crow Wing | Forest habitat | Fee Title | 41 | - | \$155,000 | Private | Crow Wing County | Negotiations in Progress |
| Totals | | | | 69 | 0 | \$395,000 | | | |

Fee Acquisition

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

The three parcels on the list are adjacent to a historic fire tower that is owned by the county and listed on the national register of historic places. These three parcels are vacant private land and the hope is to protect them from development.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.

Crow Wing County Forest Resources Plan

<https://www.crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/View/8899/Crow-Wing-Forest-Plan-2015-FINAL?bidId=>

3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan 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.

The acquired parcels will be managed the same as the other 105,000 acres of county managed tax forfeited lands, in accordance with the County Forest Resources Plan and the Minnesota Site Level Forest Management Guidelines developed by the MN Forest Resources Council.

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 County Board has approved acquiring this parcel.

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.

Written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [ffd23679-d30.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

The county owned fire tower property is outlined in white, and the 3 private parcels to be acquired are numbered 1, 2, and 3....

Board Resolution or Letter

| Title | File |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| County Board Letter of Support | 8e674b51-b01.pdf |

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

| Title | File |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Background Check | b7b1f963-b37.pdf |

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

There are no substantial changes from the proposal to the work plan. This is a fairly straightforward property acquisition and the landowners are still very interested in selling. If this project is successful we will use the ENRTF funds and purchase the property as soon as possible.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?

N/A

Do you agree travel expenses must follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

Yes

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

Yes

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF? If so, describe here:

Yes, This property will be included as part of the Crow Wing County Paul M. Thiede Fire Tower Park, and the costs to maintain and improve this property will far outweigh any revenues generated from the property. For example, in 2022 we will be spending \$127,000 out of pocket to create new hiking trails and interpretive signage. We have no current plans for a timber harvest on the property, but even if we were to perform a harvest in the future, it would not come close to covering these costs. In addition, we will have ongoing costs related to the general maintenance and upkeep of the property. For these reasons we would prefer to reinvest any revenues generated back into the property. We ask that we be allowed to retain any revenue from timber management to help offset the cost of walking trail development and to ensure the land remains in a natural and conserved state.

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Proposed Crow Wing County Natural Area

