



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

## M.L. 2020 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

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**Today's Date:** August 15, 2019

**Date of Next Status Update Report:** April 1, 2021

**Date of Work Plan Approval:**

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2023

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

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**PROJECT TITLE:** Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte

**Organization:** Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

**College, Department, or Division:** Division of Ecological & Water Resources

**Mailing Address:** 1241 East Bridge Street

**City, State, Zip Code:** Redwood Falls, MN 56283

**Project Manager Direct Telephone Number:** (507) 637-6016

**Email Address:** [judy.schulte@state.mn.us](mailto:judy.schulte@state.mn.us)

**Web Address:** <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/prairierestoration/index.html>

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**Location:** Statewide

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**Total Project Budget:** \$2,000,000

**Amount Spent:** \$0

**Balance:** \$2,000,000

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2020, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

**Appropriation Language:**

## **PROJECT STATEMENT:**

Established in 1987 through Minnesota Statute 84.96, Native Prairie Bank (NPB) has a proven track record of working with landowners to enhance and protect remnant native prairie while leaving the land in private ownership. Through this appropriation, prairie technical assistance will be provided to landowners, practitioners, youth and the general public. Native prairie restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on about 700 acres of NPBs. Permanent protection of about 130 acres will take place through the acquisition of NPB conservation easements with priority given to high quality prairie identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS). Native prairie is a fragile, unique natural ecosystem that consists of thousands of different organisms, plants, animals, bacteria and soil fungi. Their complex interactions provide the food, water and shelter required by many of Minnesota's rare, threatened and endangered species. Native prairie provides a multitude of benefits to the citizens of the state, such as water filtration and recharge, pollinator and wildlife habitat, soil health, erosion control, outdoor recreation, etc. Threats to native prairie are widespread including cropland conversion, mining, development, invasive species, woody encroachment and non-prairie focused land use/management. Based on the most recent statistics compiled for the 5-year update of the MN Prairie Conservation Plan, MBS has identified about 249,000 acres of remaining native prairie in Minnesota including approximately 115,000 acres that has no formal protection.

## **II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**First Update April 1, 2021**

**Second Update October 1, 2021**

**Third Update April 1, 2022**

**Fourth Update October 1, 2022**

**Fifth Update April 1, 2022**

**Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2023**

## **III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

### **ACTIVITY 1 Title: Prairie Landowner Assistance, Outreach and Existing NPB Stewardship**

**Description:** Private landowners and other practitioners will increase their stewardship of native prairie as a result of this project's workshops, field days, one-on-one technical assistance, online resource development, etc. The Prairie Landowner Network established through the ML18 appropriation in cooperation with Conservation Corps of Minnesota (CCM) will continue to use innovative ways to connect prairie landowners through social media, email, newsletters, training opportunities, etc. This network is aimed at improving prairie quality on private lands by keeping landowners up-to-date on the best management strategies. At least 17 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan that will provide specific prairie management expertise for their property. Landowner enrollment in Native Prairie Tax Exemption will be increased to conserve and improve management of native prairie which may not be protected through other means. About 5 baseline property reports and 28 monitoring visits will be completed on existing NPBs to evaluate current conditions and insure easement compliance.

**ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$467,513**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1a. ~9 workshops/field days for prairie landowners & practitioners (~700 people)	06/30/2023
1b. consultations, guidance, mgmt. asst., etc. to ~70 landowners	06/30/2023
1c. ~40 prairie stewards participating in the Prairie Landowner Network	06/30/2023
1d. ~17 prairie stewardship plans provided to prairie landowners (~1400 acres)	06/30/2023
1e. ~5 baseline property reports for NPB easements	06/30/2023
1f. monitoring and stewardship of ~ 28 NPB easements	06/30/2023

**First Update April 1, 2021****Second Update October 1, 2021****Third Update April 1, 2022****Fourth Update October 1, 2022****Fifth Update April 1, 2022****Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2023****ACTIVITY 2 Title: Native Prairie Habitat Enhancement & Restoration**

**Description:** Restoration and enhancement activities will be completed on about 700 acres. Activities include seed collection, site preparation, planting, invasive species prevention and control, woody species removal, boundary signing, site cleanup, prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance, such as haying, mowing or grazing, where appropriate) and monitoring. All restorations will use seeds/plants of local ecotypes, collected from onsite or within 30 miles. Ecological Monitoring will occur at 35 NPB sites to collect ecological data in order to evaluate whether the objectives of management were met, to analyze ecological changes over time and to contribute to future management decisions. Restoration and enhancement activities will be carried out via landowner agreements, DNR staff, CCM, volunteers, and/or contractors.

**ACTIVITY 2 ENRTF BUDGET: \$889,552**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
2a. ~18 acres of prairie reconstruction (restoration)	06/30/2023
2b. ~220 acres of woody removal & invasive species treatment	06/30/2023
2c. ~ 462 acres of prescribed burns	06/30/2023
2d. NPB easement boundary signs & development work on ~3 NPB sites	06/30/2023
2e. Ecological monitoring on ~35 NPB sites	06/30/2023

**First Update April 1, 2021****Second Update October 1, 2021****Third Update April 1, 2022**

**Fourth Update October 1, 2022**

**Fifth Update April 1, 2022**

**Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2023**

**ACTIVITY 3 Title: Acquisition and Stewardship of Native Prairie Bank Easements**

**Description:** DNR-administered permanent NPB conservation easements will be acquired on about 130 acres of high quality native prairie, which will include no more than 30% non-prairie as necessary to improve prairie management. Payment rates are determined by authorizing law, M.S. 84.96, as applied according to policies of the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Water and Soils Resources. Conservation easement baseline reports will be completed on all approximately 3 NPBs acquired. Priority sites are identified by MBS which target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, key habitats for Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and parcels within larger habitat complexes to reduce impacts from habitat fragmentation. If needed, restoration will be completed using a combination of funds from Activity 2 above and/or other state appropriations. Only about 10 of the 130 acres acquired are expected to need restoration. Funding will be deposited into a conservation easement stewardship account dedicated to perpetual monitoring and enforcement on NPB easements acquired with this proposal.

**ACTIVITY 3 ENRTF BUDGET: \$642,935**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
3a. acquisition of about 130 acres NPB conservation easements	6/30/2023
3b. ~3 baseline property reports for NPB easements	6/30/2023
3c. dollars deposited into conservation easement stewardship account (~3 easements)	6/30/2023

**First Update April 1, 2021**

**Second Update October 1, 2021**

**Third Update April 1, 2022**

**Fourth Update October 1, 2022**

**Fifth Update April 1, 2022**

**Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2023**

**IV. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** Copies of Stewardship Plans are provided to local DNR managers and used by the landowner with other agencies and programs. Workshops and field days will be listed on the SNA Website, and advertised locally via mailings and flyer postings. U.S. mailings, social media, email, and newsletters will be created and distributed to prairie landowners as part of the Prairie Landowner Network.

The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the [ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines](#).

**First Update April 1, 2021**

**Second Update October 1, 2021**

**Third Update April 1, 2022**

**Fourth Update October 1, 2022**

**Fifth Update April 1, 2022**

**Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2023**

## **V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION:**

### **A. Personnel and Capital Expenditures**

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

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the SNA program, this funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. These positions would not exist, but for special project funding received through the ENRTF and other funds. Each year these positions are assigned work based on the particular combination of soft funding available to address priority SNA Program activities.

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

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 22,404	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 10.8 FTE
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**Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:** How many employees a future contractor will use, the hours they will work, or what salary they may pay their employees is not known. What is known is that \$480,300 in contracts will be executed. If approximately 75% of those dollars go towards employees at the same average cost of DNR staff working on this project, below would be a rough estimate of FTEs.

Enter Total Estimated Contract Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 12,220	Divide total contract hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 5.8 FTE
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## **VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

A. Partners outside of project manager's organization receiving ENRTF funding: N/A

B. Partners outside of project manager's organization NOT receiving ENRTF funding:

Landowner outreach will be coordinated with Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan partners and Local Technical Teams. The teams of staff from SWCD's, NRCS, DNR, USFWS, TNC, Pheasants Forever, etc., cultivate relationships with prairie landowners and bring new potential NPB parcels to DNR prairie staff for further evaluation. This appropriation will not be used to fund activities of partners.

## **VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

Currently, DNR holds 12,600 acres of NPB easements, which accounts for 40% of the MBS mapped native prairie protected through conservation easements statewide. If NPB aimed to protect 40% of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan native prairie easement protection goals, NPB would need to acquire an additional 44,000 acres. At the same time, without active natural resource management prairie values will be lost. Thus Native Prairie Bank could utilize ENRTF support of about \$5M per year to sustain and protect native prairie.

## **VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- Project status update reports will be submitted April 1 and October 1 each year of the project
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2023

## **IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:**

**A. Budget Spreadsheet**

**B. Visual Component or Map**

**C. Parcel List Spreadsheet**

**D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements**

**Attachment A: Project Budget Spreadsheet**  
**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**  
**M.L. 2020 Budget Spreadsheet**

**Legal Citation:**

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte

**Project Title:** Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank

**Organization:** DNR-Division of Ecological and Water Resources

**Project Budget:** \$2,000,000

**Project Length and Completion Date:** 3 years, July 2020 – June 2023

**Today's Date:** August 15, 2019



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET		Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)				
5.4 FTE (for 2 years) for direct project activities spread across ~13 classified & unclassified staff paid almost exclusively through grants (e.g. LCCMR, LSOHC, etc.), including ~15-25% fringe benefits as per state union contracts: 0.2 FTE(for 2 years) acquisition & management coordinators and prairie biologist (~\$31,500) 3.76 FTE (for 2 years) specialists & technicians (~\$520,400) 1.4 FTE (for 2 years) laborers & seasonal crews (~\$108,500)		\$ 660,400	\$ -	\$ 660,400
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts				
Professional/technical: ecological monitoring & private prairie stewardship plans . Conservation Corp of MN: Prairie Landowner Network (1 individual placement), prescribed burning, invasives, woody removal and seed harvest (crew contracts) Service contracts: prescribed burning, invasives, woody removal, seed harvest For all contracts, priority is given to CCM and contractors will be selected following state procurement & bidding processes		\$ 480,300	\$ -	\$ 480,300
Equipment/Tools/Supplies				
Activity 1: Outreach materials, baseline property report printing (\$3,100) Activity 2: herbicide, posts, signs, safety supplies, equipment repair/parts, seed cleaning/testing, field tools, exclosure fence for monitoring (\$20,833) Activity 3: Deed & baseline property report printing, field tools (\$550)		\$ 24,483	\$ -	\$ 24,483
Easement Acquisition				
DNR Native Prairie Bank conservation easement acquisition (130 acres)		\$ 440,000	\$ -	\$ 440,000
Professional Services for Acquisition				
Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition		\$ 80,000	\$ -	\$ 80,000
Travel expenses in Minnesota				
DNR fleet charges (for operation of trucks, cars, & special fieldwork equipment) & instate travel costs (as per state contracts)		\$ 172,442	\$ -	\$ 172,442
Other				
Long-Term Easement Stewardship Funding		\$ 60,000		\$ 60,000
DNR's direct and necessary costs (~\$82,375 total) pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. Direct and necessary costs cover HR Support (~\$16,521), Safety Support (~\$2,990), Financial Support (~\$13,463), Communication Support (~\$5,551), IT Support (~\$39,297), and Planning Support (~\$4,553) that are necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects.		\$ 82,375	\$ -	\$ 82,375
COLUMN TOTAL		\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000
SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State: Potential: partial landowner & partner donations; any actual \$s would be reported & accomplishments pro-rated.		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State: Some NPB acquisition and management projects are funded with a combination of state appropriations (e.g. OHF and RIM). If any activities are split funded their accomplishment acres will be pro-rated		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
In kind: DNR office facilities, supervisor-manager time & other support will be provided (but contributions not tracked)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
ML13, Ch 52, Sec 2, Subd 4c Prairie Stewardship and NPB Acquisition		\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ -
ML15, Ch76, Sec 2, Subd 9d Prairie Stewardship and NPB Acquisition	\$ 543,001	\$ 3,325,000	\$ 2,547,236	\$ 777,764
ML17, Ch 96, Sec 2, Subd 9e Prairie Stewardship and NPB Acquisition	\$ 19,586	\$ 2,675,000	\$ 212,692	\$ 2,462,308
ML18, Ch 214, Art 4, Sec 2, Subd 9i Private Native Prairie Conservation through NPB	\$ 16,702	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 13,783	\$ 1,986,217

Attachment C: Template  
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
M.L. 2020 Acquisition/Restoration Parcel List Spreadsheet  
Project Title: Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank  
Legal Citation:  
Project Manager: Judy Schulte  
Organization: MN DNR-SNA  
College/Department/Division: Division of Ecological & Water Resources  
M.L. 2020 ENRTF Appropriation: \$2,000,000  
Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years, June 30, 2023  
Today’s Date: August 15, 2019



Instructions: Please include on the following list all targeted parcels that you are currently considering for acquisition (fee title or easement) or restoration (all phases) using the appropriation. The list may include more parcels than you will ultimately acquire or conduct restoration work on with the funds. To be eligible as part of your project, however, a parcel must be included on the list. Changes may be requested through the amendment process. Please update the status column and submit with yuour periodic workplan updates. Include any significant issues related to any particular parcel in your activity and project status sections of your Main Workplan Document.

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates (preferably from the center of the parcel) Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	County	Site Significance  (please include what ecosystem (e.g., prairie, forest, wetland, savanna) is represented as well as the ecological significance, site importance, conservation value, and public benefits)	Activity Description  (e.g. fee title acquisition, conservation easement acquisition, site preparation, restoration)	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner  (private individual or trust, non-profit organization, for-profit entity)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder  (if applicable)	Status of work  (e.g. engaged in landowner negotiations, no longer in consideration, restoration activities underway)
		Latitude	Longitude										
1	Chanarambie Creek Prairies	43° 55' 12.9"	96° 1' 8.0"	\$2800/ac	NA	Murray, Pipestone	Dry gravel, mesic & wet prairies in biggest grassland complex with the highest quality prairie parcels in SW MN	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
2	Lac Qui Parle Prairies	45° 13' 37.8"	96° 14' 8.9"	\$2300/ac	NA	Big Stone, Lac Que Parle	Next to existing DNR and TNC protected native prairies, part of a large macro site with many native prairie tracts; expands habitat for many rare butterfly and bird species, as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
3	Antelope Hills Prairie	44° 56' 0.5"	96° 20' 29.8"	\$2300/ac	NA	Lac Qui Parle	Mixture of dry hill, sand-gravel, mesic and wet prairies. Expands habitat for many rare plant and bird species	Conservation easement acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
4	Glacial Lakes & Moraine Prairie	45° 25' 20.0"	95° 14' 34.5"	\$2500/ac	NA	Pope, Kandiyohi, Swift, Stearns	Dry sand-gravel prairies of the Alexandria Moraine, provides habitat for the Threatened Dakota Skipper as well as the Poweshiek Skipper and Regal Fritillary	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
5	Prairie Coteau/Rock River Prairies	44° 4' 59"	96° 10' 23.8"	\$2600/ac	NA	Pipestone	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat around the Prairie Coteau SNA	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed



6	Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairies	44° 9' 46.8"	96° 19' 6.1"	\$2600/ac	NA	Pipestone, Lincoln	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat around existing TNC and DNR lands	Conservation easement acquisition	150			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
7	Shakotan Prairies	44° 23' 1.9"	96° 25' 25.4"	\$2600/ac	NA	Lincoln	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite	Conservation easement acquisition	150			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
8	Upper MN River Prairies	44° 40' 21.2"	95° 19' 2.0"	\$2900/ac	NA	Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville,	MN River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation easement acquisition	200			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
9	Yellow Medicine Coteau Prairie	44° 43' 42.7"	96° 25' 47.0"	\$2500/ac	NA	Yellow Medicine	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for Western White Prairie Clover and Upland Sandpiper	Conservation easement acquisition	160			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
10	Des Moines River Valley	43° 50' 31.2"	95° 7' 7.6"	\$3000/ac	NA	Cottonwood , Jackson	Des Moines River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, dry hill prairie; expands habitat for many, butterflies, birds and rare plants - including Prairie Bush Clover.	Conservation easement acquisition	100			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
11	Blue Mounds/Touch-The-Sky Prairies	43° 43' 16.2"	96° 12' 43.3	\$4000/Ac	NA	Rock	Mesic to wet prairie with rock outcrops; provides habitat for many rare rock outcrop plants	Conservation easement acquisition	80			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
12	Big Stone Moraines	45° 19' 7.5"	96° 20' 2.4"	\$1800/ac	NA	Big Stone	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	200			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
13	Big Stone Lake Prairie (north & south)	45° 25' 33.7"	96° 40' 41.0"	\$1800/Ac	NA	Big Stone	Dry Hill, mesic and wet prairies along Big Stone Lake next to DNR state park and SNA parcels	Conservation easement acquisition	80	0.25		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
14	Rothsay Prairies	46° 29' 27.0"	96° 21' 23.4"	\$1600/ac	NA	Wilkin	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	160			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
15	Glacial Ridge Prairies	47° 41' 46.9"	96° 18' 43.9"	\$1600/ac	NA	Polk	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	160			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
16	Felton Prairies	47° 3' 48.0"	96° 24' 53.7	\$1800/ac	NA	Clay	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	100			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
17	Lake Christina Hills Prairies	46° 6' 33.3"	95° 41' 33.8"	\$1800/ac	NA	Ottertail, Douglas, Grant	Dry Hill to wet prairies; part of the rolling topography of the Alexandria moraine	Conservation easement acquisition	80			Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed

18	Sherburne Sands Prairies	45° 23' 40.7"	93° 39' 49.8"	\$1600/ac	NA	Sherburne	A mosaic of prairie, wetlands and oak savanna set in an important transition zone	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
19	Frontenac Hay Creek Bluffs	44° 30' 20.5"	92° 25' 6.1"	\$2600/ac	NA	Goodhue	Southern dry bedrock bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
20	Kellogg-Weaver Dunes Prairies	44° 16' 10.6"	91° 56' 2.8"	\$2500/ac	NA	Wabasha, Winona	Rolling sand dune topography, mature dunes with dry, mesic, or wet prairie as well as oak savanna	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
21	Root River Valley Prairies	43° 46' 14.6"	91° 39' 51.8"	\$2400/ac	NA	Houston, Filmore, Winona	Southern Dry Bedrock Bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams; habitat for timber rattlesnakes	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
22	Lake Bronson and Aspen Parkland Prairies	48° 50' 39.1"	96° 30' 53.5"	\$1000/ac	NA	Kittson, Roseau, Marshall	Aspen parkland complex-many prairie dominated aspen complexes are succeeding to woodland in absence of fire	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
23	Agassiz Dunes	47° 29' 8.3"	96° 20' 14.3"	\$1,800/ac	NA	Polk, Norman	Dry barrens oak savanna-rare prairie plant community in northern MN	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
24	Wambach Santee Prairie	47° 24' 55.7"	95° 56' 36.3"	\$1,000/ac	NA	Mahnomen	Prairie meadow complexes, prairie rich fens and other rare northern plant communities	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
25	Blanket Flower Prairies	46° 42' 5.4"	96° 11' 37.1"	\$1500/ac	NA	Clay, Becker, Otter Tail	Dry Sand-gravel prairie in Alexandria Moraine and Hardwood Hills subsection	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
26	Blue Stem Prairie	46° 49' 50.0"	96° 26' 56.0"	\$1800/ac	NA	Clay	Mesic, wet meadow/carr, & wet prairie parcels intermixed with DNR SNA and Audobon preserves	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
27	Lake Traverse Prairies	45° 42' 2.0"	96° 40' 48.2"	\$2000/ac	NA	Traverse	Dry prairie and prairie- woodland complex	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
<b>NOTES:</b> This proposal will target these locations and enroll 130 acres into permanent NPB conservation easements; not all sites on the list will be enrolled. Parcel Names are named Prairie Core Areas identified in the 2010 MN Prairie Conservation Plan with the addition of priority SE MN prairies. Restoration parcels are the acquisition parcels listed above and small select restorations on existing NPBs. Specific restoration details will be added once locations are finalized.													

## Attachment D. Additional Work Plan Information for Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration

### Acquisition/Restoration Information:

#### Conservation Easement Acquisition

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

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

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

[Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan](#)

[Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025](#)

[Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda](#)

[Minnesota's Statewide Conservation Plan](#)

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

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

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.

DNR policy is to notify the county assessor prior to easement closing, however county board approval is not requested.

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

As part of the DNR acquisition process, all NPB 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 the Division of Lands and Minerals who have delegated authority to approve this for the Commissioner.

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

Native Prairie Bank's goal is to protect existing high quality, high functioning native prairie that currently is providing multiple water quality benefits. In addition, the easement terms and the Prairie Stewardship Plan they are required to follow assures that the prairie health is sustained, thus they inherently do an excellent job of keeping the water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, and protecting groundwater. In addition, use of pesticides on the easement is prohibited without approval of the DNR. The easement terms also prohibit artificial hydrological modifications by prohibiting excavation, cultivations, drainage, filling, and irrigation.

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

The policy of the DNR is to protect both the conservation values of the property protected by these easements and the investment of the state in those interests. Elements of this stewardship include the creation of baseline property reports, enforcement protocols, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and reporting, and maintaining effective working relationships with the owners of these easement properties. Native Prairie Bank implements this policy by following DNR Operational Order #128 "Conservation Easement Stewardship" in addition to the "Ecological and Water Resources Division Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines". This operational order and supporting division guidance calls for annual landowner contacts as well as on-the-ground site evaluations once every three years if no violations are found. If a violation is found, monitoring would occur annually until the violation is corrected.

Budgeted into this work plan is funding to be deposited into the DNR's Conservation Easement Stewardship Account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements. The dedicated stewardship funds will provide the support needed for long-term, ongoing monitoring and minor enforcement activities of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal. For each specific Native Prairie Bank easement, initial investment dollars are determined by using a DNR approved Conservation Easement Stewardship Calculator, which estimates the annual expenses and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity.

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

### **Restoration**

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

All restoration activities done with this appropriation are on DNR-owned perpetual Native Prairie Bank conservation easements administered by the SNA Program.

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

Each restoration project will be based upon a Native Prairie Stewardship Plan (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”. NPB restorations typically follow the current BWSR Guidelines, including Project Guidance, Plant Community Restoration, and Temporary Cover. The SNA Program follows the general direction of the BWSR Guidelines for “Recommended Steps for Obtaining Plant Materials”, and has additional and more restrictive requirements for restoration material sources. Specifically, all restorations on Native Prairie Banks use seeds/plants of local ecotypes, collected from onsite or within 30 miles. Restoration and management of DNR lands are governed by DNR Operational Order #124 on “Plant Material Standards for Native Plant Community Restoration” and DNR Operational Order #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, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to, the landowner, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated.

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

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

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

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

# 2020 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

## Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank

### Proposed Conservation Easement Acquisition Sites

