

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**

# M.L. 2021 Approved Work Plan

## **General Information**

**ID Number:** 2021-151

**Staff Lead:** Corrie Layfield

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** July 21, 2021

**Project Title:** SNA Acquisition, Restoration, Citizen-Science and Outreach

**Project Budget:** $3,336,000

## **Project Manager Information**

**Name:** Molly Roske

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

**Office Telephone:** (651) 259-5094

**Email:** molly.roske@state.mn.us

**Web Address:** https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ewr/index.html

## **Project Reporting**

**Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR:** July 20, 2021

**Reporting Schedule:** April 1 / November 1 of each year.

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2024

**Final Report Due Date:** August 14, 2024

## **Legal Information**

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

**Appropriation Language:** $3,336,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the scientific and natural areas (SNA) program to restore, improve, and enhance wildlife habitat on SNAs; increase public involvement and outreach; and strategically acquire lands that meet criteria for SNAs under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.05, from willing sellers.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2024

## **Narrative**

**Project Summary:** Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) habitat restoration/enhancement (850+ acres), increased public involvement, and strategic acquisition (165+ acres) will conserve Minnesota’s most unique and rare resources for everyone's benefit.

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

Minnesota’s Scientific & Natural Areas (SNAs) are established to protect and perpetuate natural features possessing exceptional scientific or educational value, in an undisturbed natural condition. SNA designation represents the highest form of nature protection in the state; accordingly, these are the sites that meet the highest standards of quality: ratings by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) of high to outstanding biodiversity significance, key habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species, and presenting Minnesota’s flagship geologic features.
Ensuring that Minnesota’s natural heritage is not lost from any of its ecological regions, however, is a race against time: to protect just five occurrences of every native plant community (NPC) in each of the state’s ecological subsections, and three viable populations of every animal and plant species native to Minnesota, the SNA Program currently still falls short by an estimated 130,000 acres (2014 SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan). As impacts to native ecosystems from development, agricultural conversion, fragmentation, human disturbance, and invasive species accelerate, compounded by climate change, natural area protection and stewardship are increasingly urgent.

**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.**

To safeguard the state’s natural heritage for future generations, both the designation of currently unprotected areas and the attentive land stewardship of acres already under SNA protection, will be critical actions. The SNA land base must continue to proactively seek out, acquire, and protect the “gaps” in the protected area system, but it must likewise lift up the critically-important land management and stewardship work taken on by its talented staff, partners, and volunteer base with every new acre protected. Their work is needed in order to revitalize the native plant communities and habitats protected on SNAs that sometimes need prescribed disturbance, invasive species treatment or removal, and other actions to reduce or remove human-exacerbated degradation. The SNA Program continues to chart new territory in meeting these challenges with innovative solutions through partnering with the broader conservation community and by ramping up Minnesotans’ appreciation and support for protected natural spaces.

**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?**

The vital mission of Minnesota’s SNAs will be furthered through restoration and enhancement, public involvement, and strategic acquisition. About 850 acres of habitat restoration, enhancement, and site improvement activities will target SNAs threatened by invasive species and lack of natural disturbance regimes. Outreach and community science efforts will enhance public participation and nature-based recreation through ~70 SNA events, sustaining the network of volunteer stewards at ~130 SNAs. Around 165 acres will be strategically acquired from willing sellers and designated as SNAs to protect at-risk native plant communities and wildlife habitat of state significance.

## **Project Location**

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

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

**When will the work impact occur?** During the Project and In the Future

## **Activities and Milestones**

### **Activity 1: Native Habitat Restoration, Enhancements and Improvements on 850+ acres**

**Activity Budget:** $1,434,314

**Activity Description:**Native habitat restoration and site improvement activities will be completed on about 850 acres at approximately 35 SNAs. Management plans will be completed for about 4 SNAs (including sites acquired through these funds). Around 43 SNAs will be monitored to improve management and track changes to rare species, imperiled plant communities and other important protected features. SNA staff will provide ecological/technical guidance and on-site verification for 6 projects implemented by partners on SNAs. Restoration and improvement activities will be carried out by DNR staff, Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), Sentence to Service, volunteers, and/or contractors, and will be tracked in the Adaptive Management Spatial Database (AMSD). Activities include seed collection; site preparation, planting and aftercare; invasive species early detection, control and removal; site clean-up, signing, interpretive kiosks, and fencing; and prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance, such prescribed haying, mowing or grazing, necessary where use of fire is limited). This activity includes work to bring acquired parcels up to DNR’s minimum standards for SNAs, and includes restoration and improvements of acquired sites if ecologically advisable and feasible within the appropriation period. Also includes funding for ongoing AMSD maintenance and upgrade needs.

**Activity Milestones:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Completion Date** |
| Adaptive management, ecological & conservation easement monitoring on ~43 SNAs | June 30, 2024 |
| Management plans completed for ~4 SNAs | June 30, 2024 |
| Ecological/technical guidance for ~6 partnership projects | June 30, 2024 |
| ~7 SNA interpretive kiosks installed AND development work on ~20 sites | June 30, 2024 |
| ~535 acres of prescribed burns | June 30, 2024 |
| ~300 acres of woody removal & invasive species treatment | June 30, 2024 |
| ~15 acres of restoration of forest, prairie, & outcrop sites | June 30, 2024 |

### **Activity 2: Public Engagement, Outreach & Citizen Science in Natural Areas**

**Activity Budget:** $551,927

**Activity Description:**Minnesotans will be involved in volunteer habitat conservation and education activities at SNAs, and in the conservation of other key natural areas in the state. A network of ~130 SNA volunteer site stewards who help care for SNAs will be sustained, and 70+ events will be organized and executed (volunteer work days, recreation-educational events, guided nature hikes, citizen science monitoring, bio-blitzes, etc.) to further engage the Minnesota public – in-person as well as via enhanced virtual platforms when possible. New and refined electronic/social media communications tools, maps, and interpretive information will be developed and disseminated to advance the public’s understanding of Minnesota’s wild places and biodiversity, and to enhance nature-based recreational use of SNAs. Natural Area Registry agreements will be established on about 2 sites of high biodiversity significance, to promote conservation of natural areas owned by others.

**Activity Milestones:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Completion Date** |
| Network of volunteer site stewards at ~130 SNAs sustained | June 30, 2024 |
| SNA website, e-book, social media, maps & other interpretive info | June 30, 2024 |
| ~70 volunteer & community science events (management work days & educational events, including online events) | June 30, 2024 |

### **Activity 3: Strategic Acquisition of Sites with Biodiversity Significance – 165 acres**

**Activity Budget:** $1,349,759

**Activity Description:**Acquisition and designation of ~165 acres as state Scientific & Natural Areas will protect and buffer the most important sites in the state for high biodiversity significance and rare features. Proactive landowner contacts will target SNA Strategic Plan priority areas, including those identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. Acquired sites must be recommended through an Ecological Evaluation report and rank-evaluated (numerically) to ensure prioritization of sites identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) as habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species (T&E) and Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SCGN). Most acquisition will be of fee-title, but if more appropriate, acquisition could be via SNA-administered conservation easement with SNA designation. New data from MBS and other scientific sources will be incorporated into a periodic update of the SNA Strategic Plan, along with climate change risk/resilience assessment factors, to refine and increase strategic prioritization of SNA acquisition.

**Activity Milestones:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Completion Date** |
| Strategic prioritization and climate change risk assessment complete | June 30, 2024 |
| Proactive landowner contacts for ~10 target areas | June 30, 2024 |
| Acquisition & designation as SNA of ~165 acres of high-quality habitat & native plant communities | June 30, 2024 |

## **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.**Dissemination of project achievement announcements, as well as volunteer & event participant recruitment, will primarily be achieved through the SNA webpage on the DNR website (<mndnr.gov/snas>), through SNA social media outlets (e.g. the SNA Facebook page or the DNR Instagram channel), 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 new or expanded SNAs. Announcements of the acquisitions and some enhancement-related activities will be posted on the SNA/DNR Facebook page.

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.

## **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?**The Minnesota DNR has designated around 192,500 acres in its system of ~170 SNAs, and provides resource management to conserve the features these SNAs protect for future generations. To meet the goals set in the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan of averting biodiversity loss in the state, an average 1,600 additional, targeted acres would need to come under SNA protection annually by end-of-21st century. The support of the public of Minnesota, and of key funding like ENRTF of $3-5M per annum, among others, are critical to long-term success. All results are tracked in DNR's Adaptive Management Spatial Database.

## **Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Appropriation** | **Amount Awarded** |
| Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition, Restoration, Improvement and Citizen Engagement | M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 07a | $2,540,000 |
| SNA Acquisition, Restoration, Enhancement and Public Engagement | M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 09c | $4,000,000 |
| Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition and Restoration | M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a | $1,386,000 |
| Minnesota Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition | M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b | $500,000 |
| Scientific and Natural Areas Acquisition, Restoration, Citizen Science and Engagement | M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b | $2,500,000 |
| Scientific and Natural Areas Program | M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09l | $3,250,000 |
| Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas | M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a | $3,500,000 |

## **Budget Summary**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category / Name** | **Subcategory or Type** | **Description** | **Purpose** | **Gen. Ineli gible** | **% Bene fits** | **# FTE** | **Class ified Staff?** | **$ Amount** |
| **Personnel** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Seasonal Laborers & crews |  | On the ground project implementation |  |  | 20% | 4.02 | X | $150,500 |
| Specialists & Technicians |  | On the ground project implementation |  |  | 25% | 13.22 | X | $869,839 |
| Coordinators & planner |  | Coordinate acquisition, restoration, and budget implementation, contract execution, partner coordination, strategic plan update / climate risk assessment |  |  | 25% | 2.88 | X | $257,000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **$1,277,339** |
| **Contracts and Services** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| TBD & Conservation Corps of MN & IA (CCMI) | Professional or Technical Service Contract | Restoration of forest, prairie, & outcrop sites; invasives removal & treatment; prescribed disturbance; site development; adaptive management planing & monitoring; contracted volunteer events; CCMI individual placements. |  |  |  | 4 |  | $388,500 |
| State of Minnesota | Acquisition costs | Professional Services for Acquisition: Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition |  |  |  | 0.46 |  | $60,000 |
| State of Minnesota | Professional or Technical Service Contract | MNIT contract to provide ongoing upgrades and maintenance to the SNA Program's spatial outcomes tracking system, the Adaptive Management Spatial Database (AMSD) |  |  |  | 0.06 |  | $16,000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **$464,500** |
| **Equipment, Tools, and Supplies** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Tools and Supplies | Materials & supplies | Parts, tools, repair costs, and 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.); signs (entry, boundary, interpretive & rules signs), posts/hardware, fencing, gravel, & other site development tools & supplies. Includes supplies for citizen science, volunteer events & site steward work (including safety items, hand tools, training materials, temporary signs, stamps, envelopes, etc). |  |  |  |  | $69,152 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **$69,152** |
| **Capital Expenditures** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **-** |
| **Acquisitions and Stewardship** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Fee Title Acquisition |  Acres: 165 Parcels: 2  |  |  |  |  |  | $1,170,000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **$1,170,000** |
| **Travel In Minnesota** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Miles/ Meals/ Lodging | DNR fleet charges (for operation of trucks, cars, & special fieldwork equipment) & in-state travel costs (as per state contracts) | Travel expenses needed to complete direct project work |  |  |  |  | $204,600 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **$204,600** |
| **Travel Outside Minnesota** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **-** |
| **Printing and Publication** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Printing | Printing of interpretive signs, brochures, maps, pocket cards; citizen science, educational & volunteer materials; State Register publication (required to designate acquired parcels) | To achieve improved public awareness and management efficiency of SNAs, enhance outreach & community science experiences, and transparently disclose additions of new SNA parcels. |  |  |  |  | $6,900 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **$6,900** |
| **Other Expenses** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | DNR's Direct and Necessary Costs | Pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated projects. Direct and necessary costs cover HR (~44,185), Safety (~8,207), Financial (~29,894), Communication (~7,945), IT (~89,066), and Planning Support (~6,893) |  |  |  |  | $143,509 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sub Total** | **$143,509** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Grand Total** | **$3,336,000** |

### **Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category/Name** | **Subcategory or Type** | **Description** | **Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request** |
| **Personnel** - Seasonal Laborers & crews |  | On the ground project implementation | **Classified :** 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. |
| **Personnel** - Specialists & Technicians |  | On the ground project implementation | **Classified :** 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. |
| **Personnel** - Coordinators & planner |  | Coordinate acquisition, restoration, and budget implementation, contract execution, partner coordination, strategic plan update / climate risk assessment | **Classified :** 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. |

### **Non ENRTF Funds**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Specific Source** | **Use** | **Status** | **Amount** |
| **State** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | **State Sub Total** | **-** |
| **Non-State** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Non State Sub Total** | **-** |
|  |  |  | **Funds Total** | **-** |

## **Acquisition and Restoration**

### **Parcel List**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **County** | **Site Significance** | **Activity** | **Acres** | **Miles** | **Estimated Cost** | **Type of Landowner** | **Easement or Title Holder** | **Status of Work** |
| Badoura Jack Pine Woodland SNA | Hubbard | Jack pine (yarrow) woodland | Restoration | 10 | - | $20,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Blanket Flower Prairie SNA | Clay | Dry gravel prairie | Restoration | 40 | - | $30,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Boltuck-Rice Forever Wild SNA addition | Itasca | Provides better public access to the site and protects old growth forest. | Fee Title | 25 | 0.03 | $150,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Butterwort Cliffs SNA | Cook | Project is in Aspen-birch forest adjacent to Lake Superior shoreline with listed species. Project will return long-lived conifers to the forest, provide scarification for birch regeneration, reduce brush, and will be visible to travelers along Hwy 61. | Restoration | 15 | - | $15,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Cannon River Turtle Preserve SNA | Goodhue | Project will convert old agricultural field that abuts bluffs and restored prairie. Restoration of agricultural field to prairie will add continuity between remnant goat prairies and previously restored prairie on the bluffs above the Cannon River | Restoration | 27 | - | $73,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Des Moines River SNA addition | Jackson | Buffer to SNA to aide in mgmt. of native prairie | Fee Title | 50 | - | $200,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Drake Woods | Faribault | Best intact MBS mapped hardwood forest in south central MN | Fee Title | 300 | 1.5 | $2,000,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Falls Creek SNA addition | Washington | One of the most diverse forested natural areas remaining in Washington County. Will add to core SNA habitat, protect St. Criox River frontage, fill a protection gap within the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, and provide better public access. | Fee Title | 120 | 0.5 | $2,400,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Felton Prairie SNA | Clay | Dry gravel prairie | Restoration | 28 | - | $60,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Frenchmans Bluff SNA addition | Norman | Dry Sand-gravel prairie in good condition | Fee Title | 73 | - | $511,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Hemlock Ravine SNA | Carlton | Imperiled boreal hardwood forest: Red oak - Sugar maple - Basswood - (Bluebead lily) forest and White pine - White spruce - Paper birch forest (S2 ranked) with a state-endangered tree (Eastern hemlock). Project will continue an effort to stabilize and re-establish vegetation on eroded slide areas in the ravine. | Restoration | 2 | - | $5,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | In progress |
| Hythecker Prairie SNA addition | Dodge | 200 foot grassland buffer on the east and north sides of the SNA to protect prairie from overspray from agricultural fields. | Fee Title | 40 | - | $320,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Iona’s Beach SNA | Lake | Gravel/cobble beach (Lake Superior) and Dry bedrock shore (Lake Superior) with Special concern species. Project would rehabilitate user-created trails and eroded areas | Restoration | 1 | - | $2,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | In progress |
| Mille Lacs Moraine SNA | Crow Wing | Red oak - Basswood forest (Noncalcareous till) with several listed bird species. Project would rehabilitate a small former building site with debris and invasive species present. | Restoration | 2 | - | $7,500 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Mille Lacs Moraine SNA addition | Crow Wing | MBS-mapped forest communities; Red-shouldered hawk, Cerulean warbler habitat | Fee Title | 265 | 0.5 | $800,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA | St. Louis | Beachgrass dune (Lake Superior), Juniper dune shrubland (Lake Superior), and Sand beach (Lake Superior) (all S1 ranked) with numerous listed species. Project would restore dune and beach communities eroded by storm surge and compliment beach nourishment activities being carried out by the Army Corps of Engineers | Restoration | 2 | - | $10,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Morton Outcrop SNA addition | Renville | Protect additional rock outcrop and mesic prairie along with additional access to site | Fee Title | 3 | - | $24,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Mound Prairie SNA addition | Houston | Protect additional mesic and dry bluff prairie, and provide better management access to the SNA | Fee Title | 40 | - | $200,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Mound Springs Prairie SNA | Yellow Medicine | Dry hill & mesic prairie | Restoration | 5 | - | $13,500 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| North Fork Zumbro SNA addition | Goodhue | Protect additional floodplain forest and improve public access. | Fee Title | 68 | 0.5 | $476,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Rock Ridge SNA addition | Cottonwood | Protect additional rock outcrop prairie | Fee Title | 80 | - | $640,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Roscoe Prairie SNA addition | Stearns | Wet prairie with rare butterfly habitat | Fee Title | 40 | - | $240,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Rose Dell Prairie (NEW) | Rock | MBS-mapped prairie with rare features. May be the biggest population of Western prairie Fringed orchids on private land in the US. | Fee Title | 80 | - | $400,000 | Private | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Sandpiper Prairie SNA | Norman | Wet-mesic prairie | Restoration | 40 | - | $30,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| Zumbro Falls Woods SNA | Wabasha | Project will restore agricultural land edge of SNA back to prairie, increasing prairie acres on-site and regionally | Restoration | 16 | - | $43,000 | Public | DNR-SNA | Has not begun |
| **Totals** |  |  |  | **1,372** | **3.03** | **$8,670,000** |  |  |  |

### **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.**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 for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.**• SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan – http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snap/plan.html
• Minnesota’s State Wildlife Action Plan – http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mnwap/index.html
• Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan – www.dnr.state.mn.us/prairieplan

**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.**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 SNA's Management Plan would 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 that 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 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 Assistant Director of the 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 that 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 BWSR 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, SNA restorations use seeds of a local ecotype, collected from onsite or within 25 miles. 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 CCMI under which the SNA Program often does project or activity specific agreements. For restoration and site improvement projects, CCMI 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.

## **Attachments**

### **Required Attachments**

#### ***Map***

File: [e6ecc735-349.pdf](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/map/e6ecc735-349.pdf)

#### ***Alternate Text for Map***

Minnesota's Scientific & Natural Areas aim to protect and perpetuate in an undisturbed natural condition the state's natural heritage features of exceptional scientific or educational value. This map depicts the highest-priority conservation opportunity areas of Minnesota targeted by the DNR SNA Program's acquisition and protection efforts, shaded in green polygons (which factor in multiple variables such as unprotected or underrepresented Native Plant Communities [NPCs], areas surveyed and d...

### **Optional Attachments**

#### ***Support Letter or Other***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **File** |
| 2021-151-SNA\_Background Check Certification Form | [d8e3f369-753.pdf](https://lccmrprojectmgmt.leg.mn/media/attachments/d8e3f369-753.pdf) |

#### ***Media Links***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Link** |
| SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan | <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snap/plan.html> |
| Minnesota Scienific & Natural Areas | <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/index.html> |

## **Difference between Proposal and Work Plan**

#### ***Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage***

Since the recommended $3,336,000 is 70% of the original $4,670,000 proposal request, the work plan aims to deliver all activity milestones (outputs) at roughly 70% of the proposal request with two primary exceptions. Restoration and enhancement of a land base is difficult to scale down and still address needs on the landscape to enhance site quality and ecological function. The work plan proposes to retain 73% of the originally proposed Activity 1 budget for this reason. Fee-title acquisition, while greatly needed to establish protections on high-quality lands vulnerable to loss or degradation, is more easily scaled to match available funds, and lends the flexibility to propose retaining 67% of Activity 3 funds. The reduction in recommended funds may lead to smaller-scale projects, both in terms of parcels to acquire fee-title and restoration/enhancement projects, which in turn facilitates the completion of projects in-house for greater efficiency. To account for this, the work plan proposes to reduce contracting to 65% of what was included in the original project budget (instead of an across-the-board 70% reduction).

## **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?**
 Yes, I agree to the Commissioner's Plan.

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?**
 No

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

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?**
 N/A

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**
 No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**
 No