



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2022 Approved Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2022-158

Staff Lead: Corrie Layfield

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: June 17, 2022

Project Title: SNA Habitat Restoration and Public Engagement

Project Budget: \$5,000,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Molly Roske

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Project Reporting

Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR: June 27, 2022

Reporting Schedule: March 1 / September 1 of each year.

Project Completion: June 30, 2026

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2026

Legal Information

Legal Citation: M.L. 2022, Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 09h

Appropriation Language: \$5,000,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the scientific and natural areas (SNA) program to restore and enhance exceptional habitat on SNAs and increase public involvement and outreach.

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2025

Narrative

Project Summary: Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) habitat restoration/enhancement (1600+ acres) and increased public involvement will conserve Minnesota’s most unique and rare features 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 ecological protection of public land 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: as impacts to native ecosystems from development, agricultural conversion, fragmentation, and invasive species accelerate, compounded by climate change, natural area protection and ecologically sound stewardship become ever more urgent.

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

To safeguard Minnesota'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 Program must continue to protect the “gaps” in the protected area system of lands, and it must likewise lift up the critically important land management and stewardship work taken on by its committed staff, partners, and volunteer base. 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 pressures. The SNA Program continues to chart new territory in meeting these challenges with innovative solutions, partnering with the broader conservation community and ramping up Minnesotans’ appreciation and support for protected, pristine, public 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 activities, as well as public involvement via outreach and community science initiatives. About 1600 acres of habitat restoration, enhancement, and site improvement activities will target SNAs threatened by invasive species, lack of natural disturbance regimes, and other pressures on native ecosystems. Outreach and community science efforts will enhance public participation and awareness for natural areas and nature-based recreation through ~50 SNA events, sustaining the network of volunteer stewards at ~135 SNAs and further developing volunteer opportunities.

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

Activity Budget: \$4,224,445

Activity Description:

Native habitat restoration and site improvement activities will be completed on about 1600 acres at approximately 50 SNAs. Management plans will be completed for 8 or more SNAs, for sites that currently lack one and for sites with older, expiring plans in need of major revision/updating. Around 70 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 5 projects implemented by partners on SNAs. Restoration and improvement activities will be carried out by DNR staff (including specialists, technicians, coordinators, laborers, and crews), as well as Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), Sentence to Service, volunteers, and 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, signage, interpretive kiosks, access, and fencing; and prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance, such as prescribed haying, mowing or grazing, necessary where use of fire is limited).

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Monitoring (including adaptive management, ecological, and-or conservation easement monitoring) carried out on ~70 SNA sites	June 30, 2026
Adaptive Management Plans completed or updated for 8+ SNAs	June 30, 2026
Ecological and/or technical guidance for ~5 partnership projects	June 30, 2026
~5 SNA interpretive kiosks installed AND development work completed on ~30 SNA sites	June 30, 2026
~1075 acres of prescribed disturbance	June 30, 2026
~650 acres of invasive species treatment and removal of encroaching woody vegetation	June 30, 2026
~30 acres of forest, prairie, and/or wetland restoration	June 30, 2026

Activity 2: Public Engagement, Outreach and Community Science in Natural Areas

Activity Budget: \$719,884

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 ~135 SNA volunteer site stewards who help care for SNAs will be sustained, and 30+ events will be organized and executed (volunteer stewardship work days, recreation-educational events, guided nature hikes, community-based 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. In September 2022 Minnesota hosts the Natural Areas Conference in Duluth, bringing together natural resource professionals of national & international renown to share new research, evaluate best management practices, and develop ongoing connections. The Natural Areas Association (NAA), a national nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of the community of natural areas practitioners, is the fiscal agent and coordinates logistics (DNR generates no income). These funds allow DNR staff to contribute expertise on Minnesota’s natural areas to conference planning (field trips, workshops, presentations, etc.)

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
SNAs and rare features highlighted in 2022 Natural Areas Conference-Duluth's field trips, presentations, displays	October 31, 2022
Network of volunteer site stewards at ~135 SNAs sustained (or expanded)	June 30, 2026
SNA website, social media, maps, and other interpretive information maintained and regularly updated	June 30, 2026
~50 volunteer & community science events held (stewardship workdays and interpretive & educational events, including online)	June 30, 2026

Activity 3: Enhancing Identification of Sites with Biodiversity Significance

Activity Budget: \$55,671

Activity Description:

To protect and buffer the most important sites in the state for rare features and high biodiversity significance, the SNA Program will continue to refine its geospatial gap analysis represented in the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan (SLPP). Worthy lands must be recommended through an Ecological Evaluation report and quantitatively rank-evaluated to ensure prioritization of sites identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) and Nongame Wildlife Program as habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species (T&E) and Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SCGN). Funding will provide support for the completion of ~3+ new Ecological Evaluations of potential candidate SNA sites. Proactive landowner contacts will target priority areas, including those identified in the SLPP's Conservation Opportunity Areas, the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, and the Conservation Focus Areas stemming from the State Wildlife Action Plan. New data from MBS and other scientific sources will be incorporated into the SNA SLPP gap analysis, along with climate change risk/resilience assessment factors, so as to generate ever more robust tools for identifying and prioritizing lands critical to sustaining Minnesota's biodiversity.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Completion of ~3+ Ecological Evaluations, and incorporation of MBS data into the gap analysis	June 30, 2026
Proactive landowner contacts for ~5 target areas/sites	June 30, 2026

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.

Information about the work funded by this appropriation and its value to Minnesotans will be disseminated and publicized in a variety of ways: on the SNA webpage on the DNR website (mndnr.gov/snass), through the SNA Facebook page, via the SNA Program e-newsletter "Nature Notes" distributed through GovDelivery.com to subscribers, on the DNR Instagram channel, on the SNA Events Calendar (viewable online and distributed to subscribers via [GovDelivery](http://GovDelivery.com)), and potentially through Tweets on the DNR Twitter channel. The DNR website will be updated whenever site development work enhances the public's access to these lands, and occasional announcements of enhancement-related activities will be posted on the SNA/DNR Facebook and other social media channels.

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 work 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. The SNA Program has cultivated a variety of grant and project funding sources to dramatically scale up the results achievable with agency base funds, and as such, 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 restoration, enhancement, and site development results are tracked in DNR databases including the Adaptive Management Spatial Database.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
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. 09I	\$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. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Laborers, seasonals, & crews		On the ground project implementation			20%	11.4	X	\$852,900
Specialists & technicians		On the ground project implementation & tracking, partner coordination			25%	9.18	X	\$1,282,900
Coordinators & planners		Coordinate acquisition, restoration, contract execution, & partnership work; Track spending; Lead strategic plan update / climate risk assessment			25%	1.98	X	\$356,800
Crew supervisor		On-the-ground project implementation and oversight of DNR staff crew; this position is a hands-on member and necessary component of a resource management crew (comprised of one supervisor, one technician, and four laborers) to support and amplify the work of SNA staff based in local (area) offices.			25%	1.28	X	\$230,000
							Sub Total	\$2,722,600
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 planning & monitoring; contracted volunteer events; CCMI individual placements.				4		\$1,525,500
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), and the development of other platforms or applications to enhance outreach and public engagement.				0.1		\$35,000
							Sub Total	\$1,560,500
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Materials & supplies: Parts, tools, repair costs, and related supplies for restoration, invasives treatment,	These tools, materials and supplies are necessary for the habitat					\$125,730

		prescribed burning, etc. (primarily tools, such as chainsaws, pump cans, drip torches, fire racks, pulaskis, other handtools, backpack sprayers, portable pumps & hose, personal protective equipment, herbicides, spreading oils, flagging, stakes, etc.); signage (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/PPE, handtools, training materials excluding printing, temporary signs, etc).	enhancement and site development aspects of Activity 1, as well as for the volunteer stewardship work contributed by members of the public under Activity 2.					
							Sub Total	\$125,730
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 0 Parcels: 0						-
							Sub Total	-
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					\$376,450
							Sub Total	\$376,450
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	Printing of interpretive signs, brochures, maps, pocket cards; printed materials/resources for educational, community science, & volunteer events	To achieve improved public awareness and management efficiency of SNAs, and enhance outreach & community science experiences.					\$8,900

							Sub Total	\$8,900
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 (~\$39,692), Safety (~\$6,146), Financial (~\$61,620), Communication (~\$7,866), IT (~\$84,446), and Planning Support (~\$6,050)					\$205,820
							Sub Total	\$205,820
							Grand Total	\$5,000,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Personnel - Laborers, seasonals, & 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 & tracking, partner coordination	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 & planners		Coordinate acquisition, restoration, contract execution, & partnership work; Track spending; Lead 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.
Personnel - Crew supervisor		On-the-ground project implementation and oversight of DNR staff crew; this position is a hands-on member and necessary component of a resource management crew (comprised of one supervisor, one technician, and four laborers) to support and amplify the work of SNA staff based in local (area) offices.	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 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				
In-Kind	Volunteer stewardship hours	SNA long-term Volunteer Site Stewards and volunteers attending SNA stewardship events typically donate a total of 2,500 hours annually (on average), with rates of participation climbing. Past donated hours are not included here; rather this value is based on an in-kind equivalency of \$10/hour over 2 years of the appropriation with volunteer donated hours anticipated to continue at average pace.	Pending	\$50,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$50,000
			Funds Total	\$50,000

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Boot Lake SNA	Anoka	Forest restoration needed in Oak (Red maple) Woodland NPC types	Restoration	13	-	\$37,700	Public	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA	St. Louis	Imperiled beach dune systems with numerous rare species and plant communities, and undeveloped Lake Superior shoreline. Project would restore dune and beach communities eroded by storm surge.	Restoration	2	0.75	\$8,000	Public	DNR-SNA	In Progress
Totals				15	0.75	\$45,700			

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-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 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 based on 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 from within the narrowest distance threshold possible in the range defined by DNR/EWR policy and as scientifically recommended for the preservation of native seed genetic diversity. 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 assessing 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: [27329220-ae0.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 location of parcel list sites prioritized for restorations (stars) and areas of high conservation value in MN (green shading)....

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Background Check certification form	7bedac6e-8f6.pdf

Media Links

Title	Link
SNA Program's Strategic Land Protection Plan website	https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snap/plan.html
MN SNA Volunteering: Events Calendar & information on becoming a Volunteer Site Steward	https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteering/sna/index.html

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

- Fee acquisition was removed from the project budget and from the Activity 3 title, budget, and milestones (as were associated costs e.g. professional services for acquisition, printing of new designation orders in State Register, etc.). Other in-text references and sections such as project narrative, parcel list, and map attachment were also updated to remove fee acquisition.
- Overall project budget and budget categories (account lines) were scaled up to meet the dramatic increase in awarded funds for habitat enhancement and outreach.
- Activity 1 and Activity 2 budgets and milestones were scaled up accordingly to match the increase in awarded funds.
- Non-acquisition Activity 3 milestones were scaled down, and the Activity title and milestone descriptions were updated accordingly.
- Proposed project completion date adjusted to June 2026 to allow adequate time for full scaled-up project execution and completion of all milestones. Contracting, staffing, and other areas will ramp up to meet these outcomes, but it will require additional time to achieve that level of increased capacity. Activity milestone completion dates were updated as well, with most extending to match the overall project completion date.
- To meet the scale-up of this project funding, a new resource management crew has been added to Personnel, with a crew supervisor (new personnel category), technician, and laborers, to enable vastly increased outcomes on this funding in Activity 1 habitat enhancement-related activities. Other state funding is being identified to support this crew's costs that are Generally Ineligible Expenses under ENRTF.
- LCCMR Staff comment addressed: Distinction between expenses for volunteer events in the supplies vs. printing budget categories was clarified.
- LCCMR Staff comment addressed: Volunteers' donated stewardship activity hours (anticipated annual average, for 2 years of the project) were added as a non-state, in-kind dollar-equivalency contribution under Non-ENRTF Funds.

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

ML22 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Work Plan

SNA Habitat Restoration and Public Engagement



