



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2023 Approved Work Plan

## General Information

**ID Number:** 2023-032

**Staff Lead:** Corrie Layfield

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** June 16, 2023

**Project Title:** Wannigan Regional Park Land Acquisition

**Project Budget:** \$727,000

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Stephanie Poegel

**Organization:** City of Frazee

**Office Telephone:** (218) 334-4991

**Email:** cityadmin@frazeecity.com

**Web Address:** www.frazeecity.com

## Project Reporting

**Date Work Plan Approved by LCCMR:** June 22, 2023

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

**Project Completion:** December 31, 2024

**Final Report Due Date:** February 14, 2025

## Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2023, Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b

**Appropriation Language:** \$727,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the city of Frazee to acquire land for protecting and enhancing natural resources and for future development as Wannigan Regional Park, where the Heartland State, North Country National, and Otter Tail River Water Trails will meet. Initial site development or restoration work may be conducted with this appropriation.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2026

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** Acquire 157.75 acres for river corridor conservation and future development of Wannigan Regional Park, where the Heartland State, North Country National, and Otter Tail River Water Trails will meet.

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

The Frazee/Becker County area lacks sufficient public parks. The Otter Tail River State Water Trail passes by Frazee, but public access to it is limited. The North Country National Scenic Trail, a natural surface hiking-only trail, passes through the area, but uses roads in this section of the state, detracting from the visitor experience. The Heartland State Trail is scheduled to pass through Frazee within the next few years. These factors combine to provide an opportunity for Frazee to capitalize on its location as the meeting point of two State and one National Trails, and increase the provision of parks and trails for local residents while creating an attraction for tourists. In addition, vacant land is being subdivided for residential housing in the Frazee and Detroit Lakes area, so wildlife habitat is losing connectivity and prairies and forests are diminishing. The Wannigan Park parcels include .69 miles of shoreline along the Otter Tail River, a State Water Trail. The current landowner has proposed to subdivide the property into residential lots if it is not purchased for park land, so there is an urgent need to preserve this land and river corridor before it is too late.

**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.**

The project will purchase fee title to two land parcels along the Otter Tail River, totaling 157.75 acres, for recreation and conservation, to be owned by the City of Frazee and operated as a regional park by the Frazee Community Development Corporation. After acquisition, Wannigan Regional Park will be developed on the parcels in a future project phase. The highlight of the park will be the intersection of three trails: the Heartland State Trail, the North Country National Scenic Trail, and the Otter Tail River State Water Trail. The park will include campgrounds for RVs, tents and groups, natural surface trails, hard surface ADA-accessible trails, an interpretive center, an amphitheater, picnic shelters and tables, and a canoe/kayak launch. The park will preserve a fifty foot corridor on each side of the river, all wetlands and all forested areas on site. Former pasture and row crop lands on the site will be restored into oak savannah habitat. The park concept plan gives natural resource conservation top priority, placing park development in the disturbed areas, using sustainable design principles. Interpretive signs and the interpretive center will inform visitors and school classes about the area's natural resources, history and culture.

**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?**

Preserve 157.75 acres along the Otter Tail River, in the 2000 square mile Otter Tail River watershed, in a region where three biomes meet. Preserve:

- 3,651 linear feet of Otter Tail River corridor
- 25.7 acres of wetlands
- 26.0 acres of woodlands

In future project phases:

- Restore disturbed lands into oak savanna habitat
- Provide public access to three major trails for both land and water based recreation
- Provide for outdoor recreation through the development of campgrounds, trails, picnic shelters, an accessible canoe/kayak dock and launch, an interpretive center, an amphitheater, interpretive signs and shore fishing.

## Project Location

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

Region(s): NW

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

Region(s): NW

**When will the work impact occur?**

In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Property Acquisition

**Activity Budget:** \$600,000

**Activity Description:**

The city will work to acquire the land from the the current private landowner according to the LCCMR and DNR appraisal and land acquisition procedures. The landowner has held this property in a trust for the park project for the past 5 years. He is anxious to complete the acquisition within a relatively short period of time or he has stated he will sell parcels for residential development.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Contract with attorney to handle legal aspects of acquisition	August 31, 2023
Work with the DNR grants unit on the appraisal instructions letter	August 31, 2023
Finalize purchase price and terms of purchase with the landowner	March 31, 2024
Complete the land purchase through closing, title transfer and recording	October 31, 2024
Complete any closeout reports and accounting for LCCMR/ENTRF	December 31, 2024
Conduct due diligence on the property (appraisal,survey,title,environmental review);provide appraiser relevant findings	December 31, 2024

### Activity 2: Planning Park Development

**Activity Budget:** \$127,000

**Activity Description:**

Using non-ENRTF funds, the City of Frazee and FCDC will begin planning park development. A design firm/design services will be hired to help lead these efforts. One component that has already begun is working with White Earth Tribe to identify key partnership opportunities, while following guidance on a culturally appropriate approach. Our first step is to identify via dog team, any burial grounds to ensure we manage the land with honor. Tribal leadership ideas include inclusive park signage, medicine gardens, and history/culture partnership opportunities. FCDC has worked with Becker County Soil and Water and tribal leadership to develop a border planting plan to restore ag land to native plants. After parcel acquisition we will explore using remaining ENRTF funds for items such as design and construction of Development Phase 1 elements, possibly including trails, campsites, parking, trailheads, picnic shelters or working with the DNR to plant a river buffer to prevent erosion, conserve water quality, and protect wildlife habitat.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Hire a consulting firm to lead landscape and building design	April 30, 2023
Assemble a park design committee to work with consulting firm	April 30, 2023
Bring dogs to the park to search for burial grounds	June 30, 2023
Specific park development use for remaining ENRTF funds identified:work plan updated & LCCMR approval secured	December 31, 2023
Develop DNR signage to show park plans and credit ENRTF	December 31, 2024

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Stephanie Poegel	City of Frazee	City of Frazee Administrator. The City of Frazee Council will obtain ownership of the proposed property and over see the Frazee Community Development Corporation actions during acquisition, development and management of the project.	Yes
Holly Larson	National Park Service	Advisor for the Wannigan Park Project	No
Steve Skoog	Becker County Economic Development Authority	Provides Becker County's direction and support of project	No
Samantha VanWechel-Meyer	West Central Initiative	Will collect and distribute private donations contributed before, during and after our Capital Campaign drives. Also will submit Frazee Community Development Corporation's yearly State reports.	No
Patrick Hollister	Minnesota Partnership for Health	Advisor for project developments to promote safe and healthy outdoor activities for groups of all ages.	No
Hank Ludtke	City of Frazee Economic Development Authority	Provide direction, management and approval of development phases	No
Marsha Wateland	Becker County Soil and Water Conversation	Has developed an extensive soil and water conservation plan for the project. Will direct and implement natural grassland vegetation plants, shrubs, reforestation and management of the proposed project.	No
Kris Carlson	Ulteig Engineering	Project Engineering Consultant to ensure proper development of infrastructure and roadways to substain the project for years.	No
Karen Mulary	Becker County Recreational Advisory Committee	Provide County support, direction and advise for best use practice's for the project	No
Matt Davis	North Country National Scenic Trail	Will partner with the construction and maintenance of hiking trail and camping area for North Country National Scenic Trail users.	No
Chuck Turcotte	Frazee Sportman's Club	Will partner and provide volunteer support for the project.	No
Jerry Bellefuelle	Frazee Lion's Club	Will partner and provide volunteer support for the project.	No
Brikker Ware	Frazee Area Community Club	Will provide support and volunteer help for the project.	No
Terry Karger	Frazee Vergas Independent School District #23	Will provide support and direction to enable the students of the District to receive outdoor classroom education of conservation and recreation.	No
Chandler Esslinger	Essentia Health	Will partner, support and advise on best use practices	No
David Schotzko	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Support and provide guidance for waterway development	No
Matthew Kirkwood, Professor	North Dakota State	Partner for planning camp ground locations, sites and park amenities	No

	University Team		
Dan McLaughlin	Becker County Land Commissioner	Support and advise for land use activities	No
Tom Winters	Ramstad, Skoyles & Winters Attorney's at Law	Support and consultation for legal advise during acquisition and future development.	No
Heather Perrine	Frazee HS Indian Educator Coordinator & Native Club Advisor	Provide education and history of native culture and preservation for students of ISD 23 and the public.	No
Stephanie Poegel City of Frazee City Administrator	City of Frazee	Project Collaborator	Yes
Denise Anderson	Frazee Community Development Corp.	Our mission is to create healthy opportunities for everyone to make the Frazee area a premiere place to live, work and visit. FCDC will lead the establishment, funding and development of Wannigan Park. FCDC will operate it in consult with the City and other partners.	No

## 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.**

FCDC and the City of Frazee will ensure that every effort is made to acknowledge the ENRTF in all project communications and outreach – including press releases, media interactions, signs, publications, event advertisements & invitations, websites, newsletters, printed materials, presentations, and social media. FCDC will lead ongoing presentations with the Frazee City Council, Frazee Finance Committee and the Frazee Parks and Rec Committee to keep the community updated on plans. In co-leadership between FCDC and the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, regular monthly Wannigan Park Committee meetings are held and the ENRTF is recognized. LCCMR staff will be consulted to ensure compliance on recognizing the ENRTF. We will emphasize that ENRTF is a source of funding for Phase I and we will educate the press on how important it is to acknowledge this unique funding source made possible by citizens of Minnesota. Under DNR guidance, signs will be placed at the park to provide information on the future plans for Wannigan Park. All signs will include the ENRTF logo.

## 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 property will be purchased and held by the City of Frazee while management will be done by FCDC. We are working to obtain park establishment dollars through grant funding and a capital campaign drive. The site will be developed as a park with many areas for conservation. In the first development phase, campgrounds and picnic shelters will be built. A business plan has determined that revenues from these fees will be ample to support the management and operations of the park and the natural resources restoration. See the implementation portion of the Master Plan ([link](#))



## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
Ramstad, Skoyles and Winters Attorneys at Law	Acquisition costs	Attorney to process legal documents for purchase of property				0		\$5,000
Tinjim Appraisal Company	Acquisition costs	Update to appraisal obtained Jan 31 2022				0		\$10,000
Local Survey Company	Acquisition costs	Survey the land and identify easements				0		\$3,000
Local Environmental Review Company	Acquisition costs	Environmental Study Phase I				0		\$2,500
Minnesota Title and Closing Company	Acquisition costs	Titling and Closing				0		\$500
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								



	Fee Title Acquisition	157.75 Parcels: 2						\$585,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$585,000</b>
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		Miscellaneous to be Determined	We are determining if there is project trail work or restoration to this application. Funding will not be spent until an amendment request to describe spending plans has been reviewed and approved by LCCMR staff.					\$121,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$121,000</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$727,000</b>

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	-
			<b>Funds Total</b>	-

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Main Parcel 030237003	Becker	Parcel includes 3,651 linear feet of river corridor, 26 acres of wetlands and 22 acres of forest, which will be preserved. The river corridor and wetlands are habitat for waterfowl, birds, and mammals, possibly from three biomes, because the Coniferous Forest, Deciduous Forest and Prairie Grassland biomes are closer together here in Becker County than anywhere else in the State. Disturbed areas will be developed for the canoe/kayak access, trails, an amphitheater on a natural hill, picnicking, and an interpretive center. Remaining disturbed areas will be restored to Oak Savannah habitat.	Fee Title	126.9	0.69	\$468,400	Private	City of Frazee	Negotiations In Progress
Northwest Parcel 030239001	Becker	Parcel includes public access from 120th St. (Township Road) via a private gravel road, two wetlands totaling 1.08 acres surrounded by 3.2 acres of woodland, and high ground formerly used as pasture and now partially cultivated for row crops. The disturbed high ground is ideal for the proposed tent and group camping areas and hard and natural surface trails due to the views it affords of the river corridor, planned park, and City beyond. The disturbed land not used for camping or trails will be restored to Oak Savannah habitat, and the wetlands and woods will be preserved.	Fee Title	30.85	-	\$117,100	Private	City of Frazee	Negotiations In Progress
<b>Totals</b>				<b>157.75</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>\$585,500</b>			

## Fee Acquisition

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

The idea for a park on this land was formed about fifteen years ago and was publicly addressed in the City of Frazee's 2018-19 comprehensive planning process, which included many public meetings and a formal City adoption process. The parcels were identified during the public comprehensive planning process because of their location on both sides of the Otter Tail River, encompassing .69 river miles, and the large number of wetlands, and forest that were not cultivated. The parcels were also chosen because two major trails already pass through Frazee, and a third will be built soon, so the site can be a scenic park where the three major trails meet, and long distance trail visitors can start or end their trips. For the State Water Trail, the parcels are at river mile 145, making the site an ideal location for a take out for day trips from the start of the water trail at river mile 159, and for the planned campground for multi day trail users. There is only one primitive launch site between the start of the water trail and the site, so the launch is needed. The parcels have a flat shoreline area ideal for a launch site with space for a parking lot and other amenities. The site will allow the existing on road segment of the North Country Trail near Frazee to move to a scenic, riverside location in the planned park, and the Heartland State Trail will pass by only a few blocks away and will be accessible via a spur trail. The site's location adjacent to the public elementary and high schools, within four blocks the residential section of Frazee, and about one-half mile from downtown Frazee makes it walkable and bikeable for most Frazee residents and school classes. In addition, the former owner had been allowing school classes from the adjacent high school and elementary school to use the site for outdoor education for years, so public use was already a tradition. A covered bridge over the river at the site is a local landmark treasured by the community. Locals eagerly await its opening to the public for trail use, and it will be an icon for the new regional park.

### **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.**

1) Wannigan Regional Park Master Plan, adopted by City of Frazee and the Frazee Community Development Corporation in 2022

[https://frazeecity.com/process.php?option=com\\_news&task=detail&id=24](https://frazeecity.com/process.php?option=com_news&task=detail&id=24)

2) Frazee Comprehensive Plan 2035, adopted by the City of Frazee in 2019

[https://issuu.com/njpacoop/docs/frazee\\_comprehensiveplan\\_draft-single](https://issuu.com/njpacoop/docs/frazee_comprehensiveplan_draft-single)

3) Wannigan Park Natural Resource Management Plan (see attachment page)

4) Drone video of project site:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHxmQankO9s>

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

The management plans for Wannigan Park form a portion of the Wannigan Park Master Plan, adopted by the Frazee City Council and Frazee Community Development Corporation's Board of Directors in March 2022 (See link in the Acquisition section #2.) The Natural Resources Plan is included in the Master Plan's Appendix (attached.) Components of the restoration and management plan include:

- Seed wetland areas with natives
- Restore former farm fields and pasture to Oak Savannah and Tallgrass Prairie
- Preserve river corridor, woods and wetlands
- Plant native tree and shrub buffers along edges of property adjacent to residences, and around campsites
- Develop pollinator and butterfly native gardens as demonstration gardens
- Provide short boardwalk sections along two wetlands for bird observation and outdoor education
- Develop an interpretive center and wayside exhibits along trails to educate visitors about natural resources, culture and history.

The City of Frazee will own the property, and the Frazee Community Development Corporation will manage it (see attached agreement.) The park will be acquired and developed using a combination of State, Federal, and local government funding as well as donations and grants from private foundations, corporations, businesses and individuals. A business plan has been developed, documenting that the expected income from the campsites as well as amphitheater and picnic shelter rental will financially sustain the entire park, including long term management and maintenance. The Park will be developed in phases, starting with the trails, water access, picnic shelters and 49 campsites, in order to start generating income to maintain the park. Native restoration will be ongoing as soon as the property is acquired. The larger cost items, the amphitheater and interpretive building, will be later phases.

**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.**

N/A

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

Written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction in accordance with M.S. 116P.17.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### Map

File: [107e6c33-e42.pdf](#)

#### Alternate Text for Map

This map depicts the boundaries of two parcels proposed for acquisition (outlined in red and labeled as "Phase 1") for the planned Wannigan Regional Park in Burlington Township, Becker County along the Otter Tail River. The boundaries are shown on an aerial photo. Adjacent parcels and owners are also....

#### Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Frazee City Approves LCCMR Wannigan Grant Application	<a href="#">106f8176-009.pdf</a>

### Optional Attachments

#### Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Wannigan Regional Park Concept Map Legend Revised 8.24.22 - Visual Component	<a href="#">4fed0f72-44f.pdf</a>
Natural Resources Management Plan - Local and Regional	<a href="#">75a3e9c8-a13.pdf</a>
City of Frazee--Frazee Community Development Corp Agreement--Wannigan Park	<a href="#">9c930801-caf.pdf</a>
Financial Capacity Part 1 of 3	<a href="#">1864349a-4b4.pdf</a>
Financial Capacity Part 2 of 3	<a href="#">2c99f2a9-751.pdf</a>
Financial Capacity Part 3 of 3	<a href="#">6d6079e9-ab1.pdf</a>
Letter of Support Becker County	<a href="#">2af91c2e-240.pdf</a>
Letter of Support Becker County Soil and Water District	<a href="#">29bcb10e-dcc.pdf</a>
Letter of Support City of Frazee	<a href="#">5766cac4-960.pdf</a>
Letter of Support PartnerShip 4 Health State MN Program	<a href="#">c4d102c9-312.pdf</a>
Letter of Support North Country National Scenic Trail	<a href="#">d064ad8f-730.pdf</a>
Letter of Support City of Perham	<a href="#">22528b92-ccb.pdf</a>
Letter of Support CornerStone	<a href="#">6a50121e-94d.pdf</a>
Letter of Support Creating Community Consulting	<a href="#">61d7a577-356.pdf</a>
Letter of Support Frazee Schools	<a href="#">198158e1-1fc.pdf</a>
Letter of Support State Senator Kent Eken	<a href="#">8568923f-bad.pdf</a>
Essentia Health System Letter of Support	<a href="#">7e5aef88-674.pdf</a>
Background Check Certification Form	<a href="#">85582000-a8c.pdf</a>
Financial Capacity Information for Non-profit organizations and Private Entities Form 990 2021 IRS	<a href="#">498e9dbd-5bb.pdf</a>
City resolution to purchase land from Parks and Trails Council of MN	<a href="#">6b4cb0da-802.pdf</a>
MOU City of Frazee and FCDC	<a href="#">268668c6-9b7.pdf</a>

#### Media Links

Title	Link
Wannigan Park Website	<a href="http://www.wanniganpark.com">www.wanniganpark.com</a>
Wannigan Park Drone Video	<a href="https://youtu.be/fHxmQankO9s">https://youtu.be/fHxmQankO9s</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

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

A negotiation to limit the land purchase price to fair market value has been achieved. The value of the park land is estimated to be \$585,000 based on an appraisal obtained in January 2022. We are expecting an updated appraisal before December 31, 2022.



## Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

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

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

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