

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2009 Phase 1 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

LCCMR ID: B14.10

Project Title: HCP - Prairie Management (2k)

Total Project Budget: \$ \$150,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: July 2009 - June 2010 (1 yr)

Other Non-State Funds: \$

First Name: Jason

Last Name: Garms

Sponsoring Organization: DNR

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Region:

Statewide

County Name:

Statewide

City / Township:

Summary: This project addresses prairie management needs on public and private lands. Focus is placed on prairies identified by the MCBS program. At least 950 acres of prairie will be benefited.

Main Proposal: 0808-1-050-proposal-2k main proposal.doc

Project Budget: 0808-1-050-budget-2k project budget.xls

Qualifications: 0808-1-050-qualifications-Program Manager Qualifications_08.doc

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: 2K – Prairie Management, MN DNR

Minnesota’s Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI

www.mnhabitatcorridors.org

I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

The mission of the Habitat Conservation Partnership is to restore, enhance and conserve habitat for the purpose of sustaining fish, wildlife and plant communities for all generations. Minnesota’s Habitat Conservation Partnership (Partnership), formerly the Habitat Corridors Partnership, was formed in 2000 to provide a framework for statewide land conservation in partnership with the Environmental Trust Fund. The work of the Partnership has three main objectives: 1) **Partnership:** working together to accelerate existing programs and identify new opportunities that build upon our existing investments in habitat. 2) **Focus:** The Phase V proposal will work in nine project areas encompassing 27,442 mi². All work proposed will occur within the identified project areas. These areas were identified as focus areas where resource conservation priorities and opportunity overlap 3) **Leverage:** the objective of this partnership is to bring more resources to bear on Minnesota’s conservation need by identifying non-state contributions to accelerate habitat conservation by maximizing the results from limited funding through the Environmental Trust Fund.

This project will continue the initiative to tackle the ‘backlog’ of prairie and grassland management needs in priority prairie landscapes, such as woody encroachment removal, prescribed burning, exotic species control, and restoration. It targets areas of native prairie and grassland on public and private land within Project Areas 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, & 11. Focus will be placed on the highest quality prairies identified by the MN County Biological Survey program. Habitat management activities will be implemented through contracts and cost-effective use of existing seasonal staff and crews experienced and equipped in prairie management. There will be a minimum of 950 acres of native prairie and adjacent grasslands benefited from this project. Roughly half of these acres will be private lands, such as those enrolled in the Prairie Bank Program.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Prairie Management and Restoration

Budget: \$150,000

Woody encroachment – (\$48,000/up to 400 acres of surrounding grassland/prairie benefited). A significant amount of woody encroachment has occurred on native prairie tracts over the past 50+ years and is accelerating. Cutting scattered trees, fencerows, or small groves in prairies and grasslands can improve substantial areas of habitat. For example, removing trees along a ¼ mile long fencerow (~½ acre of trees) can benefit up to 60 acres of habitat for grassland nesting birds.

Prescribed burning – (\$48,000/up to 450 acres burned). The importance of fire for keeping prairies healthy is widely recognized. However, a limited spring and fall burn season makes it challenging to accomplish prescribed burning needs given current resources. This activity builds on the success of past LCCMR accelerated prairie burning projects.

Invasive species control – (\$24,000/up to 75 acres treated) Harmful invasive species threaten many of the few remaining native prairies. Herbaceous species such as Spotted Knapweed, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Leafy Spurge, and Crown Vetch can quickly invade a grassland, reducing diversity and habitat quality. Funds will be used to implement ‘best management practices’ for control and elimination of exotic species on remnant prairies and other priority grasslands.

Restoration/reconstruction – (\$30,000/up to 25 acres reconstructed) Today prairie remnants and other grasslands existing as fragments, reconstruction efforts are needed to expand functionality of existing habitat, and buffer lands from surrounding activities. Funds will be used to harvest, process seed, and plant native prairie species. Restoration projects will use only local ecotype seeds and plants.

Deliverable	Completion Date	Budget
1. 400 acres of grassland benefited from woody encroachment removal	June 30, 2010	\$48,000
2. 450 acres of prairie benefited from prescribed burning	June 30, 2010	\$48,000
3. 75 acres of prairie benefited from exotic species control	June 30, 2010	\$24,000
4. 25 acres of prairie benefited from reconstruction	June 30, 2010	\$30,000

III. PROJECT STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

A. Project Partners

This proposal is part of the Habitat Conservation Partnership Phase VI Proposal. Please see the main proposal for a complete list of partners involved.

B. Project Impact

This project will approach prairie conservation at landscape level and be able to target both public and private lands within the corridors. Private land sites will be largely properties enrolled in the Prairie Bank Program. Information from the MN County Biological Survey (ETF funded project) will be used to prioritize and select project sites. Management activities will focus on biologically significant prairies with the great potential to provide habitat for Minnesota's Species in Greatest Conservation Need. The MN DNR's Scientific & Natural Area program has a proven track record for implementing the most current and effective ecological practices to land stewardship. Restoration projects will use only local ecotype seeds and plants.

C. Time We propose a twelve month grant beginning July 1, 2009 and ending on June 30, 2010.

D. Long-Term Strategy

This unique Partnership exists as a result of the desire of LCCMR to encourage conservation partners to work together as a statewide collaboration to focus resources and bring additional funds to Minnesota's wildlife habitat resources. We are 18 formal partner agencies and organizations recognized for an ability to achieve the mission of restoring, enhancing and conserving habitat for the purpose of sustaining fish, wildlife and native plant communities for all generations.

Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET

Minnesota's Habitat Conservation Partnership, 2K – Prairie Management

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>% FTE</u>
Personnel:		%
NR Specialist (5) - project design	\$ 25,000	10%
NR Technician (3) - project implementation, contractor oversight	\$ 25,000	15%
NR Seasonal laborer (6) - on the ground project support, burn crews	\$ 25,000	20%
Contracts:		
Private sector land management companies - rxburn contracts, seed installation, weed mowing, etc., Cost-share agreements/contracts with landowners	\$ 60,000	
Equipment/Tools: Fleet costs (road vehicles, ASV track vehicle), disposable safety equipment (pesticide appl, gloves, etc), and specialized tools (weed wicks, buckthorn wrench, etc)	\$ 15,000	
Restoration:		
Woody encroachment (400 ac), costs included in Personnel, Contracts, and Equipment/Tools	\$ -	
Prescribed burning (450 ac), costs included in Personnel, Contracts, and Equipment/Tools	\$ -	
Invasive species control (75 ac), costs included in Personnel, Contracts, and Equipment/Tools	\$ -	
Prairie restoration/reconstruction (25 ac), costs included in Personnel, Contracts, and Equipment/Tools	\$ -	
Other:	\$ -	
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET REQUEST TO LCCMR	\$ 150,000	

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
		ETF funds appropriated in Habitat Conservation Partnership Phases IV (2007) & V (2008) will be spent prior to July 1, 2009
Remaining \$ From Previous Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable):	\$ -	
Other Non-State \$ Being Leveraged During Project Period:	\$ -	
Other State \$ Being Spent During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period:	\$ -	
Past Spending:	2K - Prairie Mgmt Phase IV = \$100,000 Phase V = \$75,000	

Program Manager Qualifications

Project Manager: Jason Garms, Prairie Biologist
Affiliation Department of Natural Resources, Scientific and Natural Areas
Mailing Address 500 Lafayette Rd Box 25, Saint Paul, MN 55155
Telephone No.: 651-259-5130 Fax: 651-296-1811
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Jason Garms is the Scientific and Natural Area's Prairie Biologist. Mr. Garms is responsible for coordinating and administrating programs designed to improve native prairie conservation and management on private lands. He provides programmatic direction and management for the MN Prairie Bank easement program, MN Prairie Tax Exemption program, and Prairie Stewardship Planning Assistance program.. He has involved with the implementation of several previous LCMR projects, including:

- 2005, 2007 Prairie Stewardship of Private Lands
- 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007 Habitat Corridors Partnership
- 2003 Forest & Prairie Stewardship on Public and Private Lands

Mr. Garms has served as the Prairie Biologist with the SNA program since 2007. Other related experiences include:

Prairie Stewardship Specialist, MN DNR (2001-2007) Lead the design and implementation of prairie protection and management activities for the southern region of Minnesota.

Land Protection Assistant, The Nature Conservancy (2001) Lead for the evaluation, delineation, and enrollment of USFWS Dakota Tallgrass Prairie Projects.

Biological Science Technician, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1998-2000) Performed prairie habitat work on USFWS lands in Western Minnesota and Eastern South Dakota.

Education: Graduated from the South Dakota State University in 1997 with a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences.

Mr. Garms will provide overall management to this proposed LCCMR project. He has effectively demonstrated his capacity to manage programs and budgets, maintain accurate records, and direct staff. Mr. Garms has experience and demonstrated an ability to collaborate with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders in addressing complicated and contentious prairie management issues. He knows how to get work done on the ground.