Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)

LCCMR ID: 067-C1+2

Project Title: Declining, At-Risk Native Species: A Recovery Project

Category: C1+2. Protection, Restoration, and Enhancement

Total Project Budget: $ $147,800

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2011 - June 2014

Other Non-State Funds: $ 0

Summary:

Martin SWCD will collect, propagate, and plant declining, at-risk native species on protected habitat. Provide a commercially feasible path for seed growers to market source identified local ecotype native seed.

Name: Rich Perrine

Sponsoring Organization: Martin County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Location

Region: SW

Ecological Section: North Central Glaciated Plains (251B)

County Name: Martin

City / Township: and adjacent areas

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL _____%

2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: Declining, At-Risk Native Species: A Recovery Project

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Martin SWCD collected the seed of 104 local ecotype native plants from 19 prairie remnants through the Prairie Ecosystem Restoration Project. Plant materials collected in sufficient quantities are being planted on permanent easements. Less abundant, under-collected species are being planted in a controlled environment until plant materials are increased enough to establish a population. The Minnesota Biological Survey (MCBS) of 2009 indicated over 500 species could be found in Martin County. We currently have 238 documented species of which we have compiled a list of 90 species that we consider to be at-risk of further decline. At-risk species are species of conservation concern, rarely seen on native remnants, are declining in numbers of plants or species due to habitat fragmentation, and land conversion.

This three year project will have a dual purpose. First, we will expand our inventory of at-risk species by locating 20 more prairie remnants, surveying for at-risk plant populations, collecting seed and establishing the plants on protected sites. Second, we will partner with local seed growers and nurseries through competitive RFPs to get these at-risk plant materials to market more quickly.

If we are to preserve the gene pool and multiply the less common, declining and at-risk species still to be found in Martin County, we need to create feasible grower involvement. Seed growers and nurseries tell us it is cost prohibitive for them to hunt down populations of native plants and propagate them to the point of establishing plots or fields. A DNR permit allows us to work with 3 endangered or threatened species and we will request additions as necessary.

This recovery project will enhance environmental conditions across the ecosystem by improving soil and water quality, habitat for pollinators and increasing species diversity. We intend to partner with BWSR funded Native Buffer Cost-Share and Cooperative Weed Management programs to get seed production plots established quickly and efficiently so seed can be provided to local growers.

Net proceeds of the sale of any plant materials collected or propagated using funds from this project will be used for continued project work or returned to the Trust Fund.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Locate and collect at-risk local ecotype native plants. **Budget:** $ 104,500

Locate additional native prairie remnants, get permission from landowners, and identify and collect at-risk species. Pay landowners for plant materials collected from their property. Train seasonal workers and volunteers to identify and enter waypoints into GPS units for documentation and plant re-location. Employ a bidding process for greenhouse space and/or open space on private land for seed germination and propagation from plant cuttings for species which rarely produce seed, to maximize survivability of at-risk species.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Use GPS and GIS to track species, share data with DNR and U of MN. Fill large data gaps in MCBS of known native species in Martin County.	*06-30-14*
2. Concentrate collection efforts on at-risk species and obtain additional permits from DNR for threatened and endangered species thus ensuring	*06-30-14*

long-term protection of local ecotype plant genetics.	
3. Maintain Yellow Tag eligibility through MN Crop Improvement Assn.	*06-30-14*
4. Maximize propagation of species with low seed production through lease of greenhouse space and/or open space.	*06-30-14*

Activity 2: Increase local ecotype native species on easements and increase market opportunities. **Budget:** $ 43,300

Identify eligible landowners and enroll them in the Native Buffer Program. Propagate and plant at-risk species on permanent easements to increase seed amount. Create a self-sustaining activity by making production of local ecotype seed and plants commercially feasible for seed growers and nurseries. Bridging the gap between prairie remnants and seed producers is our strategy to create a profitable venture for retailers.

Outcome	**Completion Date**
1. Increase local awareness of the Native Buffer Program.	*12-31-13*
2. Propagate and plant at-risk species in groupings will strengthen plant genetics to maximize sustainable seed production each year for 3 years.	*06-30-14*
3. Create new opportunities for local seed grower partners to efficiently harvest 100% of plant materials and establish plots for re-sale.	*06-30-14*
4. Educate landowners on proper management of their native prairie and forest lands to improve the ecological quality and value of native lands.	*06-30-14*

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Prairie remnant owners, local nurseries, private landowners, Minnesota Crop Improvement Association will receive funding through this project.
Local concerned citizens, school environmental groups, 4-H clubs, local FFA, Boy Scouts, Conservation Clubs and Members, DNR staff, Local Seed Growers, Martin County Board of Commissioners, and Martin County Parks will be providing time and services to the project.

B. Timeline Requirements

This is a 3 year project within 25 miles of the center of Martin County. It will take 1-3 years for many species to reach reproductive maturity; other species will take up to 5 years. Location and identification will be continuous and seed production will have to be conducted May through early winter, with inspections done as each species matures.

C. Long-term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

Martin County's unique landscape of lakes, wetlands, prairies, and woodland, has been extremely fragmented. This project will reduce effects of fragmentation and will increase habitat area and quality for declining insect, bird, and mammal populations. Introduction of declining species fills under-utilized niches, provides additional cooling and shade, increases the use of solar energy while sequestering and storing more carbon to help mitigate climate change. These prairie and woodland remnants have the potential for housing over 500 native species. This project will increase the native habitats and provide an avenue for further projects that can re-connect these fragmented areas.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

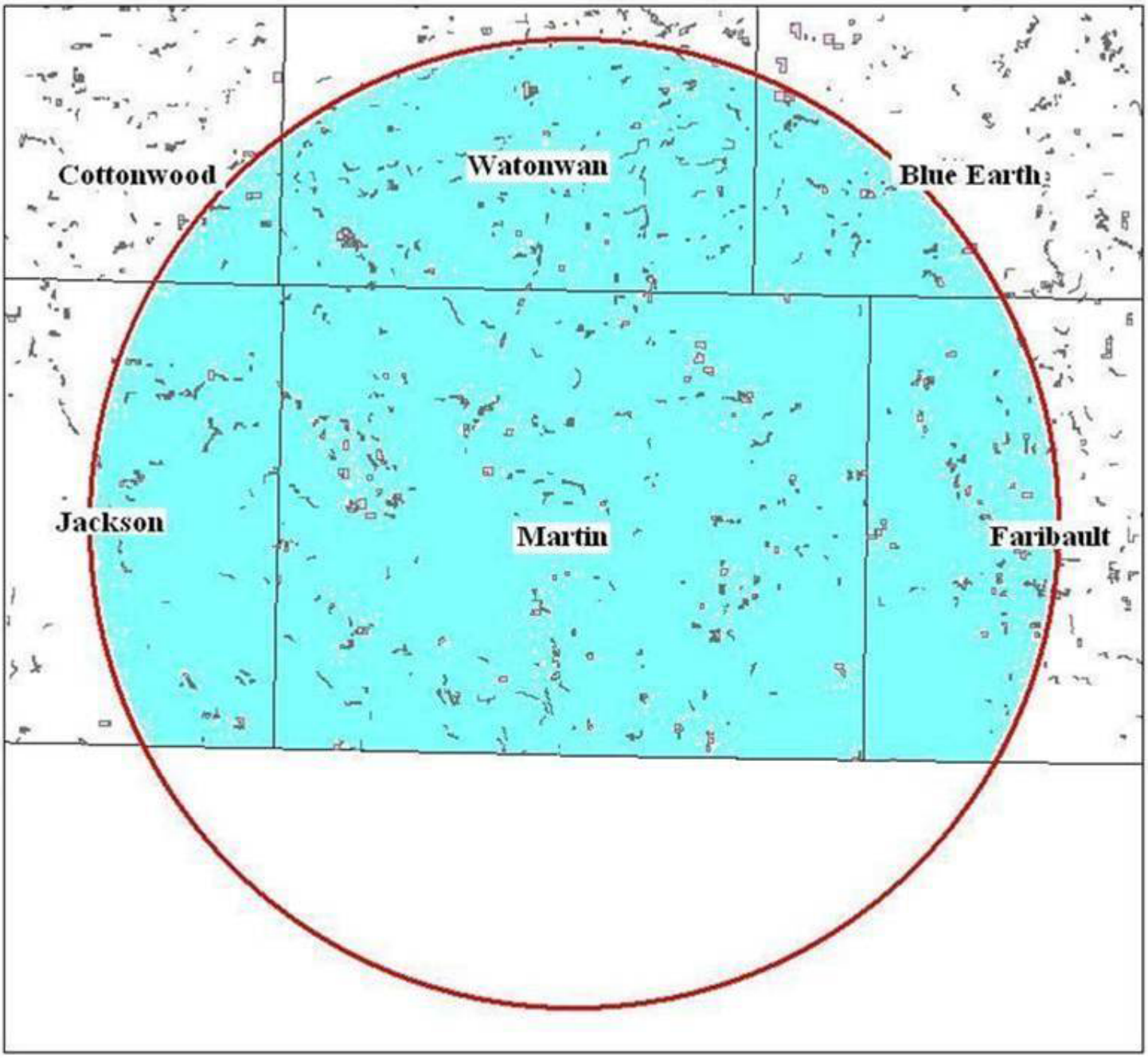
IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET: 3 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: New Lead Personnel,100% Full time employment. Responsible for overseeing day to day operations and reporting. Coordinating training and oversight of other project personnel. 68% dollars toward wages, 32% dollars toward benefits.Time period for position: 7/1/11 to 6/30/14. 1 person in this position.	$ 90,000
Personnel: Unclassifed, intermittent, as needed. Responsible for plant material identification, collection, and propagation. 100% dollars toward wages, 0% benefits. Time period for position 7/1/11 to 6/30/14. Up to 4 persons in this position.	$ 10,000
Contracts: Agreements with prairie remnant owners to donate or receive payment for plant materials collected from their property. Agreements with easement owners outlining their responsibilities and the proccedures for the planting and maintenance of at-risk plants on their property.	$ 21,000
Contracts: Agreements with local nurseries or private landowners to provide space for plants.	$ 4,500
Contracts: Minnesota Crop Improvement Association will provide field certification of prairie remnants. Planting sites will be documented, to allow for the development of "Yellow Tag Seed".	$ 15,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Inoculants, rooting hormone, plant food, collection bags, seed cleaning implements.	$ 1,300
Travel: Back and forth between office, prairie remnant sites, planting sites, and propagation sites.	$ 6,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND $ REQUEST	$ 147,800

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
In-kind Services During Project Period: Personnel time donated for project activities valued at: State/Federal Agency Advisory/Technical Support @ $50.00 per hour, Local Technical Assistance @ $25.00 per hour, General Project Work @ $12.50 per hour, Minnesota Valley Action Council @ $12.50 per hour, Volunteers @ $12.50 per hour.	$ 20,000	NA
In-kind Services During Project Period: Equipment/Tools donated: Tractors and implements for seed collection, site prep, planting and maintenance. Vicon Seeder mounted on ATV, Seed Drills, Hand Seeders, Hand Tools. Mowers, Choppers, Sprayers.	$ 10,000	NA
In-kind Services During Project Period: Facilities for plant propagation including: Grow Lights, soil mix and miscellaneous supplies.	$ 5,000	NA
Remaining $ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): ML 2008, [Chap. 367], Sec.[2], Subd. 3(n). Unspent funds are from Prairie Ecosystem Restoration Project. Continuing work required for propagation, early spring seed collection and planting. Work ends 6/30/10.	$ 9,038	unspent
Funding History: Locate funding for gap year to continue priority tasks from 6/30/10 to 6/30/11 in preparation for this proposed project.	$ -	

Declining, At-Risk Native Species: A Recovery Project



Legend

- RIM and CREP easements
- County Boundaries
- Project Area

0 2 4 8 12 16 20 Miles

N

Projection: UTM NAD83 Zone 15

Maps are for graphical purposes only. They do not represent a legal survey. While every effort has been made to ensure that these data are accurate and reliable within the limits of the current state of the art, NRCS cannot assume liability for any damages caused by any errors or omissions in the data, nor as a result of the failure of the data to function on a particular system. NRCS makes no warranty, expressed or implied, nor does the fact of distribution constitute such a warranty.

Declining, At-Risk Species: A Recovery Project

Project Manager Qualifications

Rich Perrine, project manager, has over 25 years of natural resource management experience. He worked for the U. S. Forest Service out of the Gunflint Ranger District in northeast Minnesota in the mid 70's and has worked for Soil and Water Conservation Districts for most of the last 22 years out of the Martin, Watonwan, and Carver offices. He has been back in the Martin SWCD office for the last 12 years, after serving as a DNR CREP Technician for Cottonwood, Watonwan and Martin SWCDs.

He has been a gardener his entire life, winning a state fair trip with his 4-H grand champion weed collection exhibited at the Martin County Fair. He has assisted with and sponsored numerous Master Gardener Workshops and Community Tree workshops.

He has written and assisted with many successful natural resource implementation grants, Re-leaf Minnesota and DNR Partners grants. He has administered several of these and has been a partner for implementing many of them. He has received and effectively administered a private stewardship grant through the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a Metropolitan Council water quality implementation grant project.

While working with Martin SWCD, he has written over one hundred conservation plans for the "Restoration of Rare and Declining Habitats Tallgrass Prairie / Oak Savanna" practice. He provides technical assistance for wetland restoration projects and has supervised the installation of over 50 wetland restoration projects over the last two years, providing recommendations for local ecotype native plant materials for the wetland basins, riparian areas and upland habitats.

He is up to date on current methods by participating in recent trainings. He just attended native prairie seedling identification and native prairie propagation workshops at the Iowa Ecotype project headquarters at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls. He attended a hands-on Lake Habitat Protection and Lakeshore Restoration workshop, sponsored by the Minnesota Chapter of American Fisheries Society which was taught by experienced MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Department of Natural Resources staff and others.

Martin SWCD, the local sponsoring agency, has a long history of efficiently implementing natural resource projects, getting conservation applied to the land. With a $400,000 annual budget and six employees, the SWCD continues to innovate and maximize the impact of conservation efforts. The SWCD served as the fiscal agent for the Blue Earth River Basin Initiative (BERBI) for several years. Besides the millions of conservation practice dollars applied through BERBI, The District has implemented nearly a million dollars worth of projects through the Lily-Center Creek Clean Water Partnership and has nearly a million working dollars in the Ag BMP revolving loan program.

Martin SWCD provided the initial contacts, technical assistance and paperwork processing which applied millions of dollars of conservation to the land through the Minnesota River CREP and CREP II.