

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2012-2013 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 059-D**

Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

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**Topic Area:** D. Land Acquisition & Restoration

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ 1,080,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 yrs, July 2013 - June 2015

**Other Non-State Funds:** \$ 0

**Summary:**

This project will protect 225-acres of native prairie with Prairie Bank easements, apply management to 890-acres of prairie, and landowner stewardship will be encouraged through workshops, technical assistance and planning.

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**Sponsoring Organization:** MN DNR

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**Location**

**Region:** NW, Central, Metro, SW, SE

**County Name:** , Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Pipestone, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Rock, Roseau, Stearns, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Watonman, Wilkin, Yellow Medicine

**City / Township:**

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



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

## 2012-2013 Main Proposal

**PROJECT TITLE: Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition**

### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

About half of Minnesota’s 225,000 acres of remaining native prairie is not formally protected, meaning it’s in the hands of private landowners. This project aims to work with landowners of native prairie sites identified by the MN County Biological Survey (MCBS) and provide them protection options and support their conservation efforts through a suite of tools offered by the DNR Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program. About 225 acres of high quality native prairie will be acquired by the DNR and permanently protected as Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements. Native habitat restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on about 890 acres of NPBs and high priority private prairie lands threatened by human impacts, invasive species, and lack of natural disturbance regimes. Private landowners will also receive incentives to protect and enhance their native prairie.

### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

#### **Activity 1: NPB Acquisition of Prairie of Biodiversity Significance      Budget: \$744,525**

The SNA Program will protect and buffer native prairie sites of biodiversity significance by acquisition of NPB conservation easements on 225 acres. NPB conservation easement baseline reports and monitoring would be completed on about 15 sites; including those sites acquired through these funds (~1-5 sites) and up to 10 existing NPB easement sites. As of March 2012, the SNA Program manages 102 NPB conservation easements of which 27 have baseline property reports; creating a backlog of 75 baseline reports to complete. Priority sites are identified by MCBS and target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, and key habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). Any buffers, or lands needing restoration, will be completed using a combination of funds from Activity 2 below and/or bonding appropriations. It is anticipated that only 10 of the 225 acquired will need restoration.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1a. acquisition of NPB conservation easement 225 acres of native prairie	FY14-15; 6/30/15
1b. baseline property reports & monitoring for 15 NPB easements	FY14-15; 6/30/15

#### **Activity 2: Native Prairie Restoration & Enhancement      Budget: \$213,000**

Restoration and enhancement activities would be completed on about 890 acres at up to about 15 NPBs and 5 native prairie stewardship sites. Management practices at 5 NPB sites would be measured to evaluate if objectives were met as part of adaptive management. This project will contribute towards implementation of the SWAP through restoration of native prairie needed to support SGCN (also Habitat Recommendation 5 of the SCPP). Restoration and enhancement activities – including bringing sites acquired up to minimum standards – would be carried out through landowner agreements, DNR staff, Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC), Sentence to Service (STS), volunteers, and/or contractors. Activities include seed collection, planting, exotics control, woody encroachment removal, boundary signing, prescribed burns, and monitoring. All restorations will use seeds/plants of a local ecotype, collected from onsite or within 25 miles. This activity and its funding would include all work needed to bring up to the Department’s minimum standards those NPB easements acquired through this funding.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
2a. 20 acres of prairie reconstruction (restoration)	FY15; 6/30/15
2b. 120 acres of woody removal & exotics species treatment	FY14-15; 6/30/15
2c. 750 acres of prescribed burns	FY14-15; 5/30/15
2d. NPB easement boundary signs & development work to meet minimum standards on 3-5 NPB sites (including those acquired with this funding)	FY15; 6/30/15

2e. adaptive management monitoring on 5 NPB sites	FY15; 6/30/15
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**Activity 3: Native Prairie Landowner Assistance & Incentives**

**Budget: \$122,475**

Private landowners will increase their stewardship of native prairie through a suite of strategies. Four prairie management workshops/field days for private landowners and other practitioners will be held. DNR staff will meet with 20 landowners to provide technical consultation on how to best manage their prairie. At least 10 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan including an evaluation their prairie’s condition, identification of management needs, and recommendations for management action.

Outcome	Completion Date
3a. 4 workshops/field days for prairie landowners & practitioners	FY15; 6/30/15
3b. consultations, guidance, mgmt. asst., etc. to 20 landowners	FY15; 6/30/15
3c. prairie stewardship plans provided to 20 prairie landowners	FY15; 6/30/15

**III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

**A. Project Team/Partners**

This proposal includes the DNR’s work and funding to be used by the SNA program towards partnership project work on NPB’s and other native prairie stewardship lands being submitted as separate, but coordinated LCCMR projects. This includes work with The Nature Conservancy and DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife. These efforts are complementary not redundant; all accomplishments on joint projects would be prorated.

**B. Timeline Requirements**

Two years (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015) is requested to provide multiple field seasons for development work and to take protection projects through basic improvements needed. As specified above, work through this appropriation on Activities 1a and 1b will start immediately upon receiving funds, while work on the other activities will start after comparable funds from the 2011 Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition project funded through the LCCMR are expended or encumbered.

**C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs**

The Division’s long-term goal is to permanently protect an additional 30-35,000 acres of quality native prairie either as NPB or SNA. Thus, the Division could utilize support from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust fund of \$1M to \$10M per biennium for native prairie protection and stewardship over the next 20-25 years. Historically the Scientific and Natural Area program’s capacity to protect lands has paralleled the acquisition funding available (i.e. a significant acceleration of protection efforts requires an increase in acquisition capacity). DNR incurs a number of one-time costs upon acquisition of a conservation easement, including costs for preparation of a baseline report to document the condition of the property, as well as recurring costs for periodic monitoring of the easement. Costs may vary widely by easement and depend on factors such as size, location or specific easement terms. Fiscal requirements for long-term stewardship of DNR’s conservation easements, including an estimate of periodic monitoring costs, are included in reports submitted to LCCMR per the Trust Fund 2008 Work Program for DNR’s Conservation Easement Stewardship and Enforcement Program Plan, ML 2008, Chap. 367, Sec. 2, Subd. 5(h).

## 2012-2013 Proposed Acquisition List

**Project Title:** Native Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition

**Project Manager Name:** Jason Garms

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request:** \$1,080,000

#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee Title or Conservation Easement)	County	Ecological Significance	Proposed # of Acres	Proposed # of Shoreline Miles (if applicable)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)
1	Chanarambie Creek Prairies	Conservation Easement	Murray, Pipestone	Dry gravel, mesic & wet prairies in biggest grassland complex with the highest quality prairie parcels in SW MN	80	NA	DNR - SNA
	Lake Traverse Prairies	Conservation Easement	Traverse	dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species	60	NA	DNR - SNA
2	Lac Qui Parle Prairies	Conservation Easement	Big Stone	Next to existing DNR and TNC protected native prairies, part of a large macro site with many native prairie tracts; expands habitat for many rare butterfly and bird species	80	NA	DNR - SNA
3	Glacial Lakes & Moraine Prairie	Conservation Easement	Pope, Kandiyohi	Dry sand-gravel prairies of the Alexandria Moraine, provides habitat for the Threatened Dakota Skipper as well as the Poweshiek Skipper and Regal Fritillary	120	NA	DNR - SNA
4	Root River Prairies	Conservation Easement	Houston, Fillmore, Winona	Southern Dry Bedrock Bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams; habitat for timber rattlesnakes	30	NA	DNR - SNA
5	Upper MN River Prairies	Conservation Easement	Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville, Redwood	MN River River native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	80	NA	DNR - SNA
6	Yellow Medicine Coteau Prairie	Conservation Easement	Yellow Medicine	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for Western White Prairie Clover and Upland Sandpiper	100	NA	DNR - SNA
7	Rock County Rock Outcrop Prairies	Conservation Easement	Rock	Mesic to wet prairie with rock outcrops; provides habitat for many rare rock outcrop plants	40	NA	DNR - SNA
8	Dakota County Butte Prairies	Conservation Easement	Dakota	dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species	40	NA	DNR - SNA
9	Frontenac-Hay Creek Prairies	Conservation Easement	Goodhue	dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species	40	NA	DNR - SNA
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**NOTES:** The above list represents locations with identified high quality prairies and interested landowners. This proposal will target these locations and enroll 225 acres; not all sites on the list will be enrolled. Parcel Names are named Prairie Core Areas identified in the 2010 MN Prairie Conservation Plan (except: Root River, Rock County

## 2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

### IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

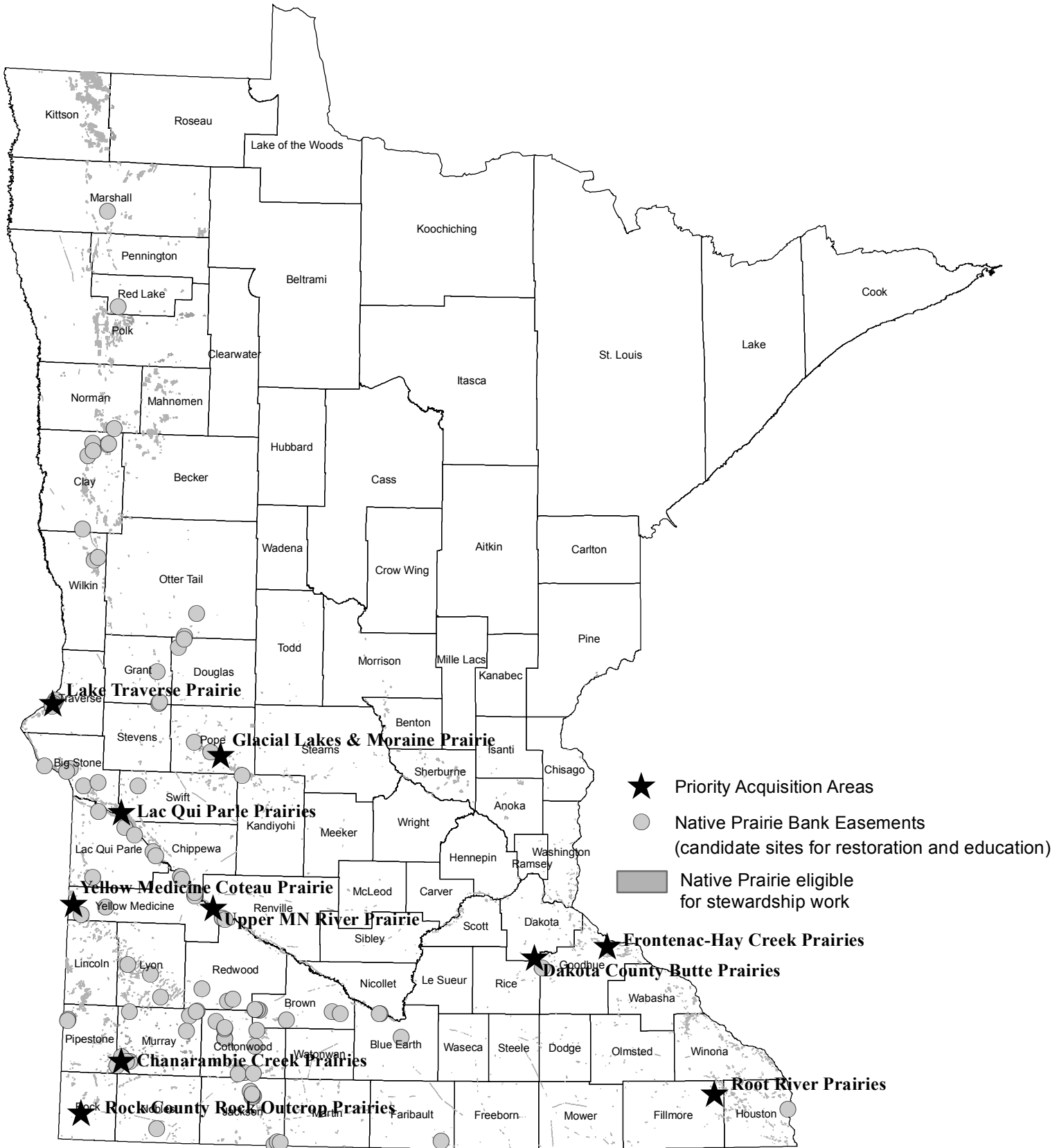
BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
<b>Personnel:</b> ~ 2.5 FTE for direct project activities spread across ~12 classified & unclassified staff paid almost exclusively through special project funds, including ~15-20% fringe benefits as per state union contracts: 0.1 FTE management coordinator (\$14K) 2.0 FTE specialist, technician (\$190K) .35 FTE laborers & seasonal crews (\$20K)	\$ 224,000
<b>Contracts - Professional/technical:</b> (state bid process) for deliverables including NPB easement baseline property reports & monitoring, adaptive management monitoring, and private prairie stewardship plans	\$ 100,000
<b>Contracts - CCM &amp; Other Field Operations:</b> e.g. invasives, woody removal, RxBurn, etc.	\$ 110,500
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> e.g. fencing, signs, PPE, other field tools, etc.	\$ 20,000
<b>Acquisition (Permanent Easements):</b> DNR Native Prairie Bank conservation easement acquisition (225 acres) including real estate transaction costs	\$ 549,360
<b>Travel:</b> DNR fleet charges (for operation of trucks, cars, tractors, and other specialized equipment) & instate travel costs (as per state contracts)	\$ 10,225
<b>Additional Budget Item:</b> DNR uses a rate of 6.5% to calculate costs for direct support services, which are DNR's direct and necessary business services required to support this proposal	\$ 65,915
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST=</b>	<b>\$ 1,080,000</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
<b>Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> Potential: partial landowner	\$ -	
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> No other state funds are proposed; if any activities are split funded their accomplishment acres will be pro-rated.	\$ -	
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> DNR office facilities, supervisor-manager time, & other	\$ -	
<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable):</b> BALANCES AS OF 3/6/12: 2010 SNA & Native Prairie Restoration, Enhancement & Acquisition (including SNA acq and mgmt and other \$s related to public lands) Balance: \$199.3K encumbered, \$610.1K unobligated; 2011 Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition - Balance: \$4K encumbered, \$378.8 unobligated; HCP 6.5 - Balance: \$2K unobligated	\$ 990,900	unobligated - see notes to left
<b>Funding History - 2008-2011</b> ENRTF 2008 Accelerated Prairie (Results 3,4,& 6 only - \$975K) ENTRF 2008 HCP 5 (SNA total=\$75K, NPB/private prairie=\$37.5K) Bonding 2008 Native Prairie (SNA total=\$4M, NPB/private prairie=\$2M) ENRTF 2009 HCP 6 (SNA total=\$75K, NPB/private prairie = \$37.5K) ENRTF 2010 SNA-Native Prairie (SNA total=\$1.175M, NPB/private prairie=\$471.7K) ENRTF 2010 HCP 6.5 (SNA total=\$63K, NPB/private prairie=\$31.7K) ENRTF 2011 Prairie Stewardship and NPB Acq (\$1M) LSOHC 2010 Accelerated Prairie (SNA total=\$929.6K, NPB/private prairie=\$464.8K) LSOHC 2011 Accelerated Prairie (SNA total=\$457.9K, NPB/private prairie=\$228.9K) Federal (available FY08-10) Landowner Incentive Program (\$339.5K) Other (available FY09-10) The Conservation Fund (Doris Duke) (\$50K)	\$ 4,026,611	



# 2012-2013 Target Areas for Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition



- ★ Priority Acquisition Areas
- Native Prairie Bank Easements (candidate sites for restoration and education)
- Native Prairie eligible for stewardship work

### **Program Manager Qualifications**

Project Manager: Jason Garms, Prairie Biologist  
Affiliation Department of Natural Resources, Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA)  
Mailing Address 500 Lafayette Rd Box 25, Saint Paul, MN 55155  
Telephone No.: 651-259-5130 Fax: 651-296-1811  
E-mail: [jason.garms@state.mn.us](mailto:jason.garms@state.mn.us)

Jason Garms is the Scientific and Natural Area's Prairie Biologist. The SNA Program's mission is to "preserve and perpetuate the ecological diversity of Minnesota's natural heritage, including landforms, fossil remains, plant and animal communities, rare and endangered species, or other biotic features and geological formations, for scientific study and public edification as components of a healthy environment". 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 Native Prairie Bank easement program, Native Prairie Tax Exemption program, and Prairie Stewardship Planning Assistance program. He has involved with the implementation of several previous LCMR projects, including:

- 2003 Forest & Prairie Stewardship on Public and Private Lands
- 2005, 2007 Prairie Stewardship of Private Lands
- 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 Habitat Corridors Partnership
- 2008 Accelerated Prairie Management, Survey, Acquisition and Evaluation
- 2011 Native Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition

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 for 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.

### **Organization Description**

#### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Ecological & Water Resources, Scientific & Natural Areas Program**

Charged under MS 86A.05 to protect and perpetuate in and undisturbed natural state those natural features that possess exceptional scientific or education value; and under MS 84.96 and 84.961 to acquire Native Prairie Bank easements and work with landowners in conserving native prairie.

