

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2015 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 118-F

Thirteen Counties Propagating Native Plants, Restoring Diverse Habitats

Category: F. Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat

Total Project Budget: \$ 495,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 5 years, July 2015 - June 2020

Summary:

A thirteen county educational outreach effort across four regions of the state, will propagate local ecotype native plants, replace invasive species and restore habitat for "species in greatest conservation need."

Name: Rich Perrine

Sponsoring Organization: Martin SWCD

Address: 923 State St N, Ste 110
Fairmont MN 56031

Telephone Number: (507) 235-6680

Email richard.perrine@mn.nacdnet.net

Web Address martinswcd.net

Location

Region: Central, NE, SW, SE

County Name: Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Crow Wing, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, Lake, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Waseca, Watonman

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

The map shows the thirteen counties in which this project will occur and contains pictures representing three focus areas.

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



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

2015 Main Proposal

Project Title: Thirteen Counties Propagating Native Plants, Restoring Diverse Habitats

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I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Providing habitat for “species in greatest conservation need” will be accomplished by protecting and expanding diverse native forest and prairie habitats in 13 counties touching 4 regions of the state. Project partners will use local ecotype native plants that are aggressive enough to compete with and overtake invasive species, in order to reclaim areas where non-native species have started. Project focus includes:

- Restoring uncommon/rare at-risk native plant species to provide habitat for other at-risk species.
- Education, outreach and transfer of propagation techniques across 13 counties.
- Adding the less common milkweed species, providing continuous bloom for quality pollinator habitat.
- Filling every niche in the native landscape to increase resistance to invasion by non-native species.
- Using plant materials with origins near the restoration sites.
- Using seed from sites certified by the MN Crop Improvement Assn. or local source Yellow Tag Seed.
- Partnering with the Greater Blue Earth Cooperative Weed Management Area, replacing invasive species with local ecotype natives.
- Partnering with The Prairie Enthusiasts - Many Rivers, which adds Nicollet County to the project area.
- Providing the food base diversity to meet the needs of many species of concern on up the food chain.
- Building local capabilities and passing the expertise on to the next generation of conservationists.
- Provides multiple ecological services, historically correct habitat restoration, considering climate change.
- Working across political boundaries to preserve and enhance native habitats across the state.

This project meets/exceeds requirements of DNR 2013 Operation Order 124 and related Op. Order 113 “Invasive Species”. Propagating local ecotypes locally prevents the introduction of new invasive species from other areas.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Collect and propagate plant materials from Rare/difficult to start species. **Budget: \$220,000**

Plant materials will be collected from species that have little or no presence in plantings or restorations. These species will be propagated and planted into protected sites. Species that have not produced seed will continue to be monitored to catch “their year” when seed and/or vegetative growth is produced for use in the project.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Research available propagation information for each new species.	June 30, 2019
2. Develop a strategy to increase the plant materials for each species.	June 30, 2019
3. Collect seed/plant material as appropriate for each species, and prepare for planting.	November 30, 2019
4. Plant seed/plant materials in trays, plots and directly into restoration sites.	June 1, 2020
5. Monitor plantings, provide species specific care and weed control as needed.	June 30, 2020
6. Transplant or seed protected sites with propagated plant materials.	June 1, 2020

Activity 2: Planting local source native species into habitats to replace invasive species. **Budget: \$175,000**

This activity focuses on new restoration sites primarily where invasive species are being removed and replaced with competitive native species. Both prairie and forest habitats are included in this initiative.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Remove invasive species from project sites where present.	October 31, 2019
2. Plant and/or transplant local source native plants into project sites.	June 1, 2020
3. Monitor sites, providing appropriate maintenance including weed control.	June 30, 2020



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Activity 3: Education, outreach and technology transfer. Facilitate starting new projects. **Budget: \$100,000**

This 13 county initiative provides sharing of propagation methods, planting techniques and partnerships with others who have an interest in protecting native habitats and expanding the use of local source native species into suitable locations on habitat restorations. This project will help new partners get projects on the ground.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Provide outreach to new potential users of project strategies and methods.	December 31, 2017
2. Work with identified project partners, train new individuals and expand capabilities.	October 31, 2018
3. Develop projects in new locations, expanding expertise to meet local needs.	June 30, 2018
4. Hold workshops to train the trainers for project implementation.	June 30, 2018
5. Hold workshops to educate and train the public as part of each local project kickoff.	October 31, 2019
6. Install projects in new areas, in counties where projects have not been done yet.	December 31, 2019

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Core team partners include the Counties/SWCDs in Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Le Sueur, Jackson, Martin, Waseca, and Watonwan Counties. These counties make up the Greater Blue Earth Cooperative Weed Management Area. Outreach Partners: Crow Wing, Nicollet and Lake Counties/SWCDs. Collaborating partners: University of Minnesota Center for Integrated Natural Resource and Agricultural Management, Dean Current, Program Director; DNR Wildlife Research, The Prairie Enthusiasts - Many Rivers Chapter, Randy Schindle; MN Board of Water and Soil Resources, Dan Shaw, Native Vegetation Specialist; Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Project information sources: Prairie Center, University of Northern Iowa; MN DNR Non-game Wildlife; MN DNR Wildlife; DNR Ecological and Water Resources; County Biological Survey; U of M Extension.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

This project is part of a long term strategy to protect and manage natural landscapes and deal with invasive plant species that are invading and replacing the native species that provide the habitat vital to the survival of the rare and at-risk species that rely on diverse native habitats for survival.

Management strategies developed or modified to meet local conditions and needs through this project are expected to be useful for habitat protection and restoration projects throughout the state. This project will work within the existing Cooperative Weed Management Area and encourage the expansion of CWMA efforts.

Continued efforts to reduce the devastating impacts of invasive species and the protection and restoration of native plant communities will be needed from the LCCMR and many other sources if we are going to protect native habitats for future generations. The need is long term and statewide.

C. Timeline Requirements

Propagation of rare plants is an ongoing effort requiring time to access the plant materials needed to expand populations. Work on this component will require at least five years and may extend beyond this grant period.

Outreach efforts will be made in year one with interested partners being invited to participate in the educational components of the project. Educational efforts - Train the trainer type workshops and hands on experience will extend through year two. Implementation of local projects including public workshops will be ongoing through the end of the third year, with the installation and maintenance of project sites ongoing.

2015 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Thirteen Counties Propagating Native Plants, Restoring Diverse Habitats

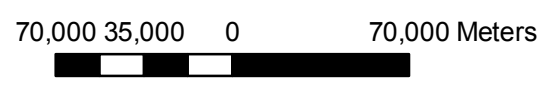
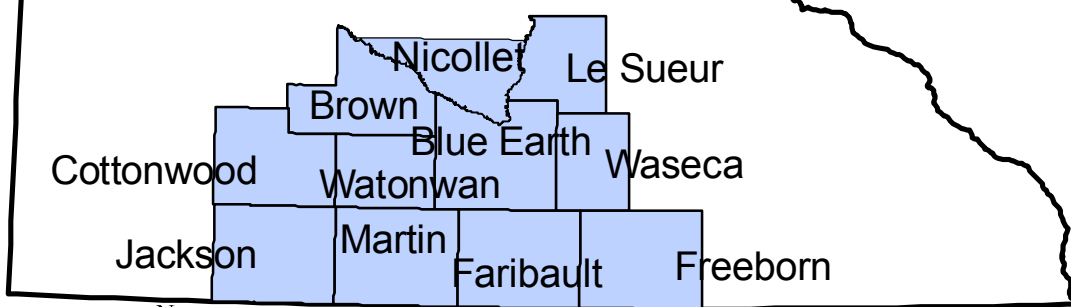
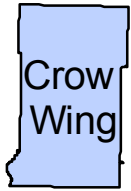
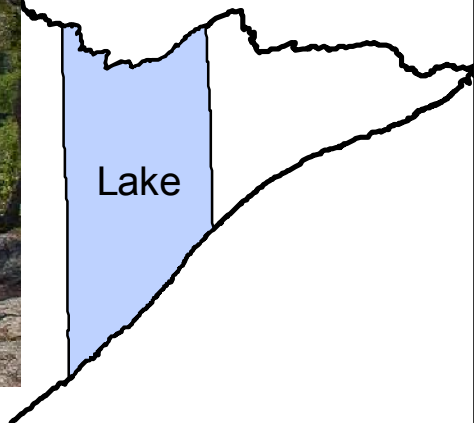
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET: 5 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT	
Personnel:		
Rich Perrine, Project Manager Martin SWCD (70% salary, 30% benefits); 10% FTE for 5 years	\$	41,600
Ashley Brenke, Technician Martin SWCD (70% salary, 30% benefits); 10% FTE for 5 years	\$	35,400
2 Restoration Technicians (70% salary, 30% benefits); 10% FTE for 4 years targeted for Crow Wing and Lake Counties.	\$	58,240
3 Seasonal Staff (90% salary, 10% benefits); 20% FTE for 4 years to be used as needed where project activity is being focused within all participating counties.	\$	74,880
Contracts:		
1 Graduate Assistant, Activity/Field Coordinator, data collection, project tracking (90% salary, 10% benefits); 50% FTE for 4 years through the University of Minnesota Center for Integrated Natural Resource and Agricultural Management, Dean Current, Program Director	\$	80,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:		
Propagation supplies: 200 Trays, inserts - 23 cases, 1 ton growing medium ingredients to blend a "soiless mix", trowels, gloves.	\$	10,000
Plant materials: Approx. 500 lbs of pure live seed @ \$75/lb. ave.; cuttings, roots, rhizomes, bulbs 10,000 @ \$1.00 ea.; plants 10,000 @ \$2.00 ea; trees & shrubs 3,750 @ \$2.00 ea.	\$	75,000
Soils testing: sampling supplies and sample analysis	\$	3,000
Tools for planting and weed control: spades, shovels, saws, shears, sprayers	\$	5,000
Education/outreach supplies: Publications, handouts, visual aids	\$	5,000
Travel:		
Mileage for local travel averaging less than 50 miles per round trip, 335 trips between collection, propagation and planting sites (approx. 15,000 miles)	\$	8,400
19 trips for outreach, education, speakers and project development at distant sites: Mileage for 500 miles average round trip (approx. 9,500 miles), lodging and meals (approx. \$4,680)	\$	10,000
Additional Budget Items:		
Education/outreach expenses: Facility rent for workshops and project kickoff events.	\$	1,000
Project costs: Mechanical debris removal/management, site preparation and mechanical planting, equipment rental and custom work on approximately 55 individual projects	\$	87,480
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$	495,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
Martin County Conservation Club cash match for CWMA project activities @ \$1,000	\$ 3,250	Secured
Fox Lake Conservation League cash match for CWMA project activities @ \$2,250		
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
Greater Blue Earth CWMA grant funding through BWSR @ \$15,000	\$ 15,000	Secured
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
Fox Lake Conservation League and Martin County Conservation Club providing in-kind incentives toward volunteer services working directly on project activities @ \$5,000	\$ 38,500	Pending
Martin SWCD in-kind staff time for working directly on project activities @ \$15,000		
Lake County SWCD in-kind staff for working directly on project activities @ \$15,000		
The City of Brainerd providing in-kind staff and/or equipment toward project work @ \$1,000		
Local Associations/Groups in Crow Wing County 50 hour in-kind project work @ \$750		
Landowner match up to 25% for projects on their property, at least \$1,750		
Funding History:		
\$147,000 - ENRTF for 2011-4n "Recovery of At-Risk Native Prairie Species"	\$ 262,800	
\$80,000 - ENRTF for 2008-3n "Prairie Ecosystem Restoration Project"		
\$35,800 - Private Stewardship Grant		
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation: \$67,316 remaining from ML 2011-4n "Recovery of At-Risk Native Prairie Species" to be spent by June 30, 2014	\$ 67,316	Unspent

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Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Rich Perrine, project manager, has over 30 years of natural resource management experience. After receiving his Associate of Applied Science Degree (forestry/forest ecology focus) from Vermilion he worked for the U. S. Forest Service out of the Gunflint Ranger District in northeast Minnesota. After completing additional coursework in Biology and Chemistry at Mankato State, he worked for Soil and Water Conservation Districts for most of the last 25 years out of the Martin, Watonwan, and Carver offices.

Rich has implemented numerous Master Gardener and Community Tree Workshops. He has written and assisted with Re-leaf Minnesota, DNR Partners, DNR Conservation Partners Legacy grants. 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.

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 has supervised the installation of over 50 wetland restoration projects, 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: Native prairie seedling identification and native prairie propagation workshops at the Iowa Ecotype project headquarters at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls; 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; Pollinator Habitat Training presented by NRCS and U of M Entomology Department

Martin SWCD, the local sponsoring agency, has a long history of efficiently implementing natural resource projects, getting conservation applied to the land. With an annual budget of almost \$500,000 and four 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 several million dollars in water managing habitat to the land through the Minnesota River CREP and CREP II. The SWCD is currently working with DNR Wildlife and Non-game Wildlife on habitat restoration on a 72 acre project in the Perch Creek WMA and adjacent CREP land, funded by RIM Critical Habitat License Plate funds. Local ecotype native species, including at-risk species to provide nesting habitat for Blanding’s Turtles “State Threatened” are being installed to replace invasive brome grass, canary grass and hybrid cattails.

The SWCD has successfully completed one project funded by the ENRTF, and will complete its second this year. The District is assisting the Fox Lake Conservation League with their LCCMR proposal that is at the legislature this year for the protection of the County’s best prairie remnant.