

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2016 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 157-F

Pollinator & Habitat Enhancement Program

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

Total Project Budget: \$ 1,767,950

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 4 years, July 2016 to June 2020

Summary:

Enhance 2,550-acres of permanently protected habitat for pollinators, monarchs and grassland birds. Engage RIM easement holders to upgrade grassland habitat by completing pollinator plots, invasive tree removal & diversity seeding.

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Sponsoring Organization: Pheasants Forever

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Location

Region: Central, Metro, NW, SW, SE

County Name: Anoka, Becker, Benton, Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Chippewa, Chisago, Clay, Cottonwood, Dakota, Dodge, Douglas, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Grant, Hennepin, Houston, Isanti, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Mahnomon, Marshall, Martin, McLeod, Meeker, Morrison, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pennington, Pipestone, Polk, Pope, Ramsey, Red Lake, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Rock.

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

63-county project area including the agricultural region of Minnesota

_____ 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)
2016 Main Proposal
Project Title: Pollinator & Habitat Enhancement Program

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I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The plight of native and domestic pollinators, the monarch, and grassland birds is well documented. The *Pollinator & Habitat Enhancement Program* directly enhances 2,550-acres of permanently protected private land habitat (e.g. Re-Invest in Minnesota (RIM) easements) in the agricultural region of Minnesota by completing 800-acres of highly diverse pollinator habitat and 1,750-acres of associated diversity seeding & invasive tree removal. Projects will be solicited, selected and designed to maximize benefits to pollinators, monarch butterflies, and grassland birds. Existing sites will be enhanced by seeding diverse mixes to provide high quality pollinator foraging habitat, provide important host plants (e.g. milkweed species for monarchs), and allow for native pollinator nesting sites (e.g. bare ground). The University of Minnesota proposes to hire a graduate student funded under this proposal to assess both plant establishment and insect response to enhancement activities. The latest science and the results of this work will be published and shared with landowners and practitioners at six tours/workshops. Grassland habitat loss and fragmentation continue to be major factors in the decline of monarchs, pollinators & grassland birds. In Minnesota, 99% of the original prairie has been converted. And while we have restored hundreds of thousands of acres of grasslands through USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and our Re-Invest in Minnesota (RIM) program, our early restorations often did not fully consider or appreciate the needs of pollinators, the value of milkweed species to the monarch, or the structural & species diversity required by many species of grassland dependent wildlife now in decline.

Permanently protected lands in Minnesota provide a tremendous opportunity to be part of a solution for our pollinators, the monarch, and grassland birds. With 250,000+ acres of RIM lands across the state (mostly in the prairie/agricultural region), upgrades to these lands can be achieved through outreach, incentives and technical assistance to the private landowners enrolled in the program. Partners will work hand in hand with private landowners and farmers (who will be asked to contribute 5% of project costs) to provide options and opportunity to upgrade their site to quality pollinator habitat. It is the intent of partners and the project team to fund additional habitat enhancements desired by participating landowners through partnerships with other funding (e.g. Partners for Wildlife – Monarch Habitat Initiative, USDA-Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Pheasants Forever) as well as provide long-term management plans and guidance to landowners. Projects will be solicited by PF through a sign-up period and project request to SWCD's, the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership, and other private land partners in the agricultural region of Minnesota (please see map for 63-county project area). The solicitation of projects, the evaluation criteria and scoring will be developed by the project team and disseminated by PF and partners. To be eligible, landowners must agree to meet program standards, which include adding appropriate species of milkweed to seed mixes that maximize pollinator benefit. Projects will be funded based on a ranking which will evaluate factors that include: location, size, proximity to other permanently protected habitat, diversity, grassland bird conservation areas, landowner concurrence with program BMPs. Once projects are selected, enhancement activities will be contracted & followed to fulfillment.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Work with landowners interested in Habitat Enhancement for pollinators, monarchs, and grassland birds. **Budget: \$55,725**

Reach out to landowners who own RIM or other permanently protected private land habitat to gauge interest, engage in the plight of grassland wildlife including monarch butterfly, native pollinators and grassland birds and provide opportunity to enhance habitat. Engage partners at SWCDs to assist in the development of quality pollinator plot enhancement project proposals for consideration.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Develop and distribute project solicitation, including pollinator project requirements, eligibility, scoring factors, and information about project implementation.	8/1/2016 & 2017
2. Outreach to landowners through SWCDs, Farm Bill Assistance Partnership, MN	9/1/2016 & 2017



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Department of Agriculture, MN Honey Producer's Association, US Fish & Wildlife Service, MN BWSR, MN DNR, Pheasants Forever, University of Minnesota and other partners.	
3. Develop requests for proposal to implement habitat enhancement deliverables following procurement policy.	10/1/2016 & 2017
4. Rank & award projects, determine if another sign-up is required. This will be done in collaboration with the project team.	10/1/2016 & 2017

Activity 2: Enhance 2,550-acres of permanently protected habitat

Budget: \$1,605,725

Release RFP's to accomplish the habitat enhancements. This includes all site preparation (mechanical, herbicide, packing), seed, seeding, clipping, or other professional services required to achieve the habitat enhancement objective. Estimated average cost for the establishment of 4-acre pollinator plots is \$800/acre. Associated enhancement activities include 250-acres of invasive tree removal at an estimated average cost of \$1,000/acre and 1,500-acres of diversity seeding (e.g. brome conversion) at an estimated average cost of \$400/acre. Award contracts, communicate with landowners and partners, & ensure project fulfillment.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Develop work specific RFPs & award contracts to complete pollinator plots (800-acres) & associated diversity seeding (1,500-acres) and invasive tree removal (250-acres) projects.	2/1/2017 & 2018
2. Monitor and document fulfillment, complete contract obligations and payment for work successfully completed. Coordinate projects with University of Minnesota to facilitate efficient assessment of establishment and insect response to enhancement activities.	6/30/2019

Activity 3: Assess, monitor, and disseminate results, findings, and best practices

Budget: \$106,500

Hire a graduate student at the University of Minnesota to assess enhancements for insect and plant responses under the direction of Dr. Karen Oberhauser. Conduct six habitat tours/workshops that highlight Pollinator & Habitat Enhancement program projects, provide the latest and best science, & best practices for enhancements

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Assess plant establishment and insect responses to enhancement activities	6/30/2020
2. Conduct six habitat tours/workshops	6/30/2020

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners: This proposal has been developed in partnership with the Minnesota BWSR, MN Department of Agriculture, MN Honey Producers Association, US Fish Wildlife Service and in consultation with MN Association of Soil & Water Districts, Minnesota DNR, and the University of Minnesota. A project team responsible for the delivery of this proposal would include Dan Shaw, MN BWSR; Eran Sandquist, PF; Dr. Karen Oberhauser, University of Minnesota; Sheldon Myerchin, USFWS; and Greg Hoch, MN DNR. SWCD's, MN Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Farm Bill Assistance Partnership, MN Honey Producer's Association and other partners will conduct outreach to landowners. SWCDs will update easement plans to include proposed activities and develop a long-range management plan for landowners. BWSR will assist SWCD's and the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership in providing RIM program support and guidance throughout the project. Minnesota DNR will serve in an advisory role. The University of Minnesota would receive \$97,500 from the ENRTF for a graduate student to assess plant establishment and insect response to enhancements.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy: This proposal catalyzes a program to enhance existing investments in long-term habitat conservation (e.g. RIM) as part of a solution to declines of at-risk species (e.g. monarch butterfly). The intent is to provide active technical assistance to perpetual easement holders in developing long-range management plans that benefit our natural resources. Also, this program integrates our past investments in habitat protection into long-term strategies to address species declines and provide public benefits.

C. Timeline Requirements: 4 years. This is deemed adequate time to demonstrate the program from start to finish, share lessons learned, & rally landowners to engage & share in being a solution to pollinator, monarch and grassland bird declines across MN. Tours and workshops will be scheduled when we can make the greatest impact for sharing information (years 3 & 4).

2016 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Pollinator & Habitat Enhancement Proposal

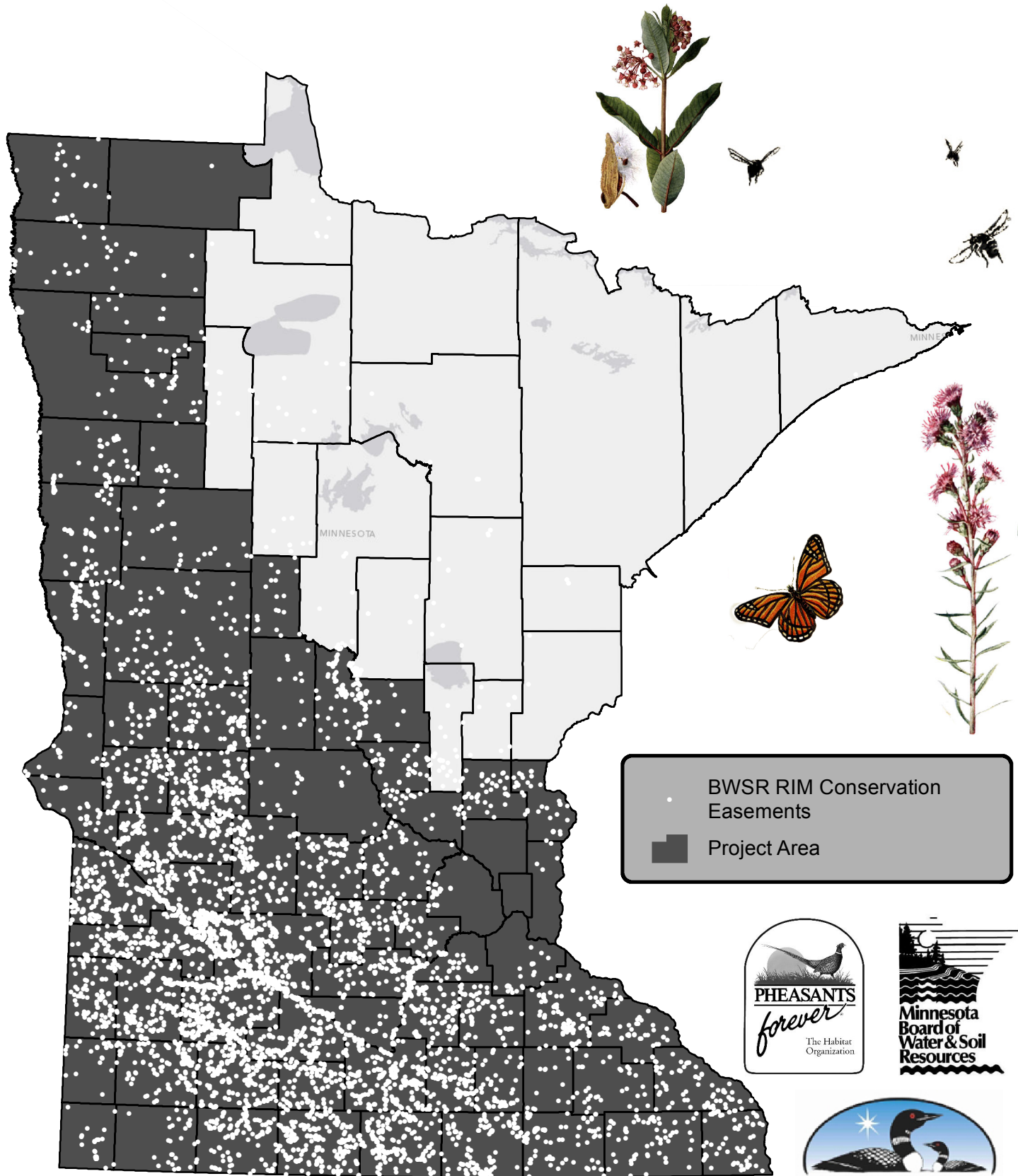
IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET: 4 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel:	
Project Manager; 0.1 FTE (74% salary, 26% benefits) for three years, new position to manage project at Pheasants Forever as well as coordinate outreach deliverables with partners. Direct to project hours will be tracked.	\$ 20,250
PF Habitat Restoration Specialist 0.4 FTE(74% salary, 26% benefit) for three years to develop, implement and fulfill pollinator and habitat enhancements. Additional duties will include coordination with University of Minnesota graduate student and advisor to assist with research.	\$ 81,000
Graduate Student (56% salary, 44% benefits) at the University of Minnesota under the supervision of Karen Oberhauser. Student will work closely with project manager, restoration specialist and project team to assess both plant and insect response to enhancement activities.	\$ 97,500
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	
Pollinator Plot Enhancements. 200 plots X 4 acre average X \$800/acre; includes all items for establishment: site preparation (e.g. tillage, packing), herbicide, seed, seeding and clipping	\$ 640,000
Grassland Enhancements. Contract 1,500 acres of grassland enhancement @ \$400/acre for diversity seeding. This includes all items for establishment: site preparation (e.g. tillage, packing), herbicide, seed, seeding, clipping. Also contract for 250 acres of grassland enhancement completing invasive tree removal @ \$1000/acre. Cost will vary depending on the site, so these estimates are based upon experience & best available information	\$ 850,000
RIM conservation plans & updates. 200 plans @ \$300 for participating SWCDs. Each landowner will require an updated RIM long-term management plan to provide guidance to RIM landowners on how to maintain grassland and pollinator habitats, suggested management regimes, and other techniques for keeping RIM easements highly productive for pollinators, monarchs and grassland birds.	\$ 60,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Seed included in contracts above	NA
Travel:	
In-state travel for Habitat Restoration Specialist for project design, procurement, fulfillment, 200 projects @ 100 mile average round trip @ \$0.51/mile	\$ 10,200
Additional Budget Items:	
Landowner/Practitioner tours and workshops; 6 @ \$1500; costs include facility rental, bus transportation	\$ 9,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 1,767,950

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
USFWS - Partners For Wildlife Monarch Initiative Funding	\$ 100,000	Pending
Landowners @ 5% of habitat enhancement project cost	\$ 74,500	Pending
Pheasants Forever - direct funding support for enhancement activities and outreach	\$ 20,000	Pending
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
Minnesota BWSR - Pending budget	TBD	Pending
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:		
Minnesota BWSR - RIM program personnel in-kind support	\$ 25,920	Secured
Minnesota Honey Producer's Association - TBD In-kind support related to program promotion, program outreach, and support	TBD	Pending
Minnesota Department of Agriculture - In-kind support related to program promotion, program outreach and general support.	\$ 1,750	Pending
Pheasants Forever - Donated indirect support	\$ 20,472	Secured
Funding History: ML 2014, Minnesota Pollinator Partnership, \$40,000 obligated for Spring and Fall 2015 projects, remainder of projects to be completed in 2016 field season	\$ 100,000	In progress
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation: NA	\$ -	NA

Pollinator & Habitat Enhancement Program



Organization Description

Pheasants Forever is a non-profit 501(c)3 conservation organization dedicated to improving pheasant and other wildlife populations through habitat restoration and development, changes in land management policies and public awareness and education. Pheasants Forever was incorporated in 1982 in Minnesota and was established out of concern for the decline in pheasant populations. Today, Pheasants Forever has over 140,000 members and 700 chapters nationwide doing grassroots conservation. In Minnesota, Pheasants Forever has 25,000 members and 76 chapters. Since inception, Pheasants Forever in Minnesota has spent over \$54,000,000 on conservation resulting in the development of almost 63,000 acres of nesting cover, 84,000 acres of food plots, 10,000 acres of wetlands, and 36,000 acres of land acquisition. PF in Minnesota has also planted 3.6 million trees.

Project Manager Qualifications

Matt Holland, Director of Grant Development
Pheasants Forever, Inc.

679 West River Drive, New London, MN 56273

B.A. Biology - Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter Minnesota, 1993

M.S. Wildlife Science - South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD, 1997

National Conservation Leadership Institute, Cohort 5 – 2011



The project manager experience includes the following: LCCMR/LCMR Prairie Heritage Fund grants – Multiple phases, LCMR Critical Lands Conservation Initiative (Habitat Corridors Partnership); LCMR/LCCMR Habitat Corridors Partnership Coordinator – Multiple Phases; LSOHC WPA & WMA Acceleration Partnership grants; multiple large and small NAWCA grants; DNR Heritage Enhancement Grants, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grants; NRCS Contribution Agreements.

The project manager also has participated in: MN WMA Citizen Advisory Committee, MN Pheasant Stamp Oversight Committee, MN Budget Oversight Committee (DNR), Farmland Wildlife Committee (DNR), MN Farm Bill Assistance Partnership, Non-toxic Shot Advisory Committee, MN State Technical Committee (USDA), Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Management Board, Minnesota Farm Bill Assistance Partnership, Minnesota Prairie Plan Working Group, Governor Dayton's Pheasant Technical Team.