

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2020 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 262-G

Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank

Category: G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Sub-Category:

Total Project Budget: \$ 2,280,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: June 30, 2023 (3 yrs)

Summary:

Native Prairie Bank will help landowners conserve native prairie through multiple outreach methods, restoration and enhancement of 770 acres, and protection of 150 acres through conservation easements.

Name: Judy Schulte

Sponsoring Organization: MN DNR

Job Title: _____

Department: Division of Ecological and Water Resources

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Redwood Falls MN 56283

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Web Address: mndnr.gov/prairiebank

Location:

Region: Central, Northwest, Southwest, Southeast

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

Alternate Text for Visual:

Protect 150 acres of high-quality native prairie within Prairie Plan and Southeast priority areas. Photo-1: Diverse prairie protected through Native Prairie Bank. Photo-2: Unprotected prairie degraded by intensive use/rock removal.

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



PROJECT TITLE: Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Established in 1987 through Minnesota Statute 84.96, Native Prairie Bank (NPB) has a proven track record of working with landowners to enhance and protect remnant native prairie while leaving the land in private ownership. Through this proposal, prairie technical assistance will be provided to landowners, practitioners, youth and the general public. Native prairie restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on about 770 acres of NPBs. Permanent protection of about 150 acres will take place through the acquisition of NPB conservation easements with priority given to high quality prairie identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS). Native prairie is a fragile, unique natural ecosystem that consists of thousands of different organisms, plants, animals, bacteria and soil fungi. Their complex interactions provide the food, water and shelter required by many of Minnesota’s rare, threatened and endangered species. Native prairie provides a multitude of benefits to the citizens of the state, such as water filtration and recharge, pollinator and wildlife habitat, soil health, erosion control, outdoor recreation, etc. Threats to native prairie are widespread including cropland conversion, mining, development, invasive species, woody encroachment and non-prairie focused land use/management. Based on the most recent statistics compiled for the 5-year update of the MN Prairie Conservation Plan, MBS has identified about 249,000 acres of remaining native prairie in Minnesota including approximately 115,000 acres that has no formal protection.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Prairie Landowner Assistance, Outreach and Existing NPB Stewardship

Private landowners and other practitioners will increase their stewardship of native prairie as a result of this project’s workshops, field days, one-on-one technical assistance, online resource development, etc. The Prairie Landowner Network established through the ML18 appropriation in cooperation with Conservation Corps of Minnesota (CCM) will continue to use innovative ways to connect prairie landowners through social media, email, newsletters, training opportunities, etc. This network is aimed at improving prairie quality on private lands by keeping landowners up-to-date on the best management strategies. At least 20 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan that will provide specific prairie management expertise for their property. Landowner enrollment in Native Prairie Tax Exemption will be increased to conserve and improve management of native prairie which may not be protected through other means. About 5 baseline property reports and 30 monitoring visits will be completed on existing NPBs to evaluate current conditions and insure easement compliance.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$523,669

Outcome	Completion Date
1a. ~10 workshops/field days for prairie landowners & practitioners (~700 people)	06/30/2023
1b. consultations, guidance, mgmt. asst., etc. to ~80 landowners	06/30/2023
1c. ~50 prairie stewards participating in the Prairie Landowner Network	06/30/2023
1d. ~20 prairie stewardship plans provided to prairie landowners (~1400 acres)	06/30/2023
1e. ~5 baseline property reports for NPB easements	06/30/2023
1f. monitoring and stewardship of ~ 30 NPB easements	06/30/2023

Activity 2: 770 Acres of Native Prairie Habitat Enhancement & Restoration

Restoration and enhancement activities will be completed on about 770 acres. Activities include seed collection, site preparation, planting, invasive species prevention and control, woody species removal, boundary signing, site cleanup, prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance, such as haying, mowing or grazing, where appropriate) and monitoring. All restorations will use seeds/plants of local ecotypes, collected from onsite or within 30 miles. Ecological Monitoring will occur at 40 NPB sites to collect ecological



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
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Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank

data in order to evaluate whether the objectives of management were met, to analyze ecological changes over time and to contribute to future management decisions. Restoration and enhancement activities will be carried out via landowner agreements, DNR staff, CCM, volunteers, and/or contractors.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$1,013,673

Outcome	Completion Date
2a. ~20 acres of prairie reconstruction (restoration)	06/30/2023
2b. ~250 acres of woody removal & invasive species treatment	06/30/2023
2c. ~ 500 acres of prescribed burns	06/30/2023
2d. NPB easement boundary signs & development work on ~4 NPB sites	06/30/2023
2e. Ecological monitoring on ~40 NPB sites	06/30/2023

Activity 3: Acquisition and Stewardship of 150 acres of Native Prairie Bank Easements

DNR-administered permanent NPB conservation easements will be acquired on about 150 acres of high quality native prairie, which will include no more than 30% non-prairie as necessary to improve prairie management. Payment rates are determined by authorizing law, M.S. 84.96, as applied according to policies of the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Water and Soils Resources. Conservation easement baseline reports will be completed on all approximately 4 NPBs acquired. Priority sites are identified by MBS which target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, key habitats for Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and parcels within larger habitat complexes to reduce impacts from habitat fragmentation. If needed, restoration will be completed using a combination of funds from Activity 2 above and/or other state appropriations. Only about 10 of the 150 acres acquired are expected to need restoration. Funding will be deposited into a conservation easement stewardship account dedicated to perpetual monitoring and enforcement on NPB easements acquired with this proposal.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$742,659

Outcome	Completion Date
3a. acquisition of about 150 acres NPB conservation easements	6/30/2023
3b. ~4 baseline property reports for NPB easements	6/30/2023
3c. dollars deposited into conservation easement stewardship account (~4 easements)	6/30/2023

III. PROJECT PARTNERS:

Landowner outreach will be coordinated with Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan partners and Local Technical Teams. The teams of staff from SWCD's, NRCS, DNR, USFWS, TNC, Pheasants Forever, etc., cultivate relationships with prairie landowners and bring new potential NPB parcels to DNR prairie staff for further evaluation. This appropriation will not be used to fund activities of partners.

IV. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

Currently, DNR holds 12,600 acres of NPB easements, which accounts for 40% of the MBS mapped native prairie protected through conservation easements statewide. If NPB aimed to protect 40% of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan native prairie easement protection goals, NPB would need to acquire an additional 44,000 acres. At the same time, without active natural resource management prairie values will be lost. Thus Native Prairie Bank could utilize ENRTF support of about \$5M per year to sustain and protect native prairie.

V. SEE ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL COMPONENTS:

A. Project Budget Spreadsheet, B. Map, C. Parcel List Spreadsheet, D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements, E. Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Attachment A: Project Budget Spreadsheet
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2020 Budget Spreadsheet



Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Judy Schulte

Project Title: Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank

Organization: DNR-Division of Ecological and Water Resources

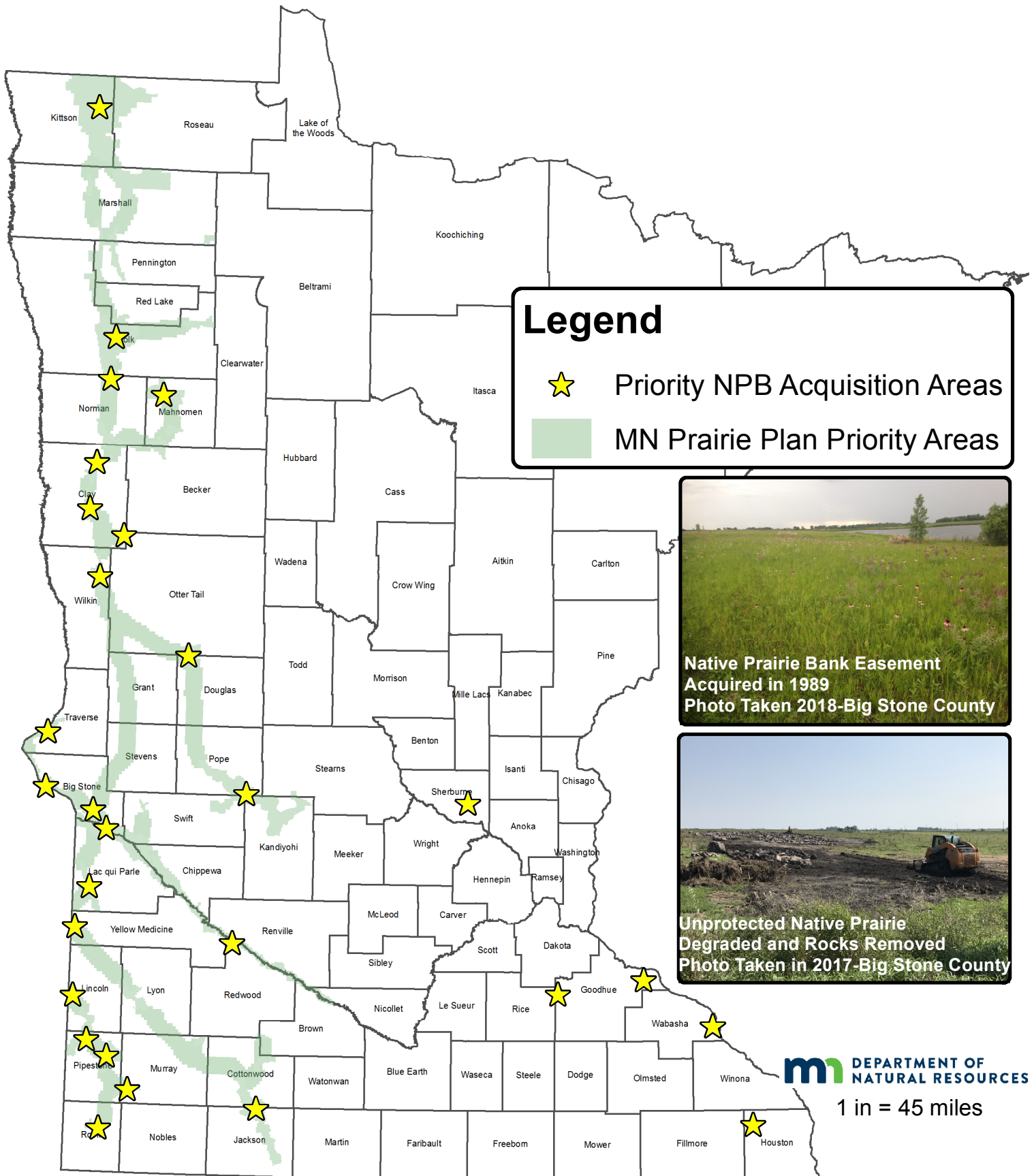
Project Budget: \$2,280,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years, July 2020 – June 2023

Today's Date: April 15, 2019

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET		Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)				
6.3 FTE (for 2 years) for direct project activities spread across ~13 classified & unclassified staff paid almost exclusively through grants (e.g. LCCMR, LSOHC, etc.), including ~15-25% fringe benefits as per state union contracts: 0.2 FTE (for 2 years) acquisition & management coordinators and prairie biologist (~\$34,140) 4.1 FTE (for 2 years) specialists & technicians (~\$564,300) 2.0 FTE (for 2 years) laborers & seasonal crews (~\$150,500)		\$ 748,940	\$ -	\$ 748,940
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts				
<i>Professional/technical:</i> ecological monitoring & private prairie stewardship plans . <i>Conservation Corp of MN:</i> Prairie Landowner Network (1 individual placement), prescribed burning, invasives, woody removal and seed harvest (crew contracts) <i>Service contracts:</i> prescribed burning, invasives, woody removal, seed harvest For all contracts, priority is given to CCM and contractors will be selected following state procurement & bidding processes		\$ 546,000	\$ -	\$ 546,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies				
Activity 1: Outreach materials, baseline property report printing (\$3,100) Activity 2: herbicide, posts, signs, safety supplies, equipment repair/parts, seed cleaning/testing, field tools, enclosure fence for monitoring (\$24,950) Activity 3: Deed & baseline property report printing, field tools (\$600)		\$ 28,650	\$ -	\$ 28,650
Easement Acquisition				
DNR Native Prairie Bank conservation easement acquisition (150 acres)		\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000
Professional Services for Acquisition				
Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an		\$ 88,000	\$ -	\$ 88,000
Travel expenses in Minnesota				
DNR fleet charges (for operation of trucks, cars, & special fieldwork equipment) & instate travel costs (as per state contracts)		\$ 194,296	\$ -	\$ 194,296
Other				
Long-Term Easement Stewardship Funding		\$ 80,000		\$ 80,000
DNR's direct and necessary costs (~\$94,114 total) pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. Direct and necessary costs cover HR Support (~\$19,249), Safety Support (~\$3,484), Financial Support (~\$15,491), Communication Support (~\$5,551), IT Support (~\$45,786), and Planning Support (~\$4,553) that are necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects.		\$ 94,114	\$ -	\$ 94,114
COLUMN TOTAL		\$ 2,280,000	\$ -	\$ 2,280,000
SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT				
	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Non-State: Potential: partial landowner & partner donations; any actual \$s would be reported & accomplishments pro-rated.		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State: Some NPB acquisition and management projects are funded with a combination of state appropriations (e.g. OHF and RIM). If any activities are split funded their accomplishment acres will be pro-rated.		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
In kind: DNR office facilities, supervisor-manager time & other support will be provided (but contributions not tracked)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS				
	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
ML13, Ch 52, Sec 2, Subd 4c Prairie Stewardship and NPB Acquisition		\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ -
ML15, Ch76, Sec 2, Subd 9d Prairie Stewardship and NPB Acquisition	\$ 543,001	\$ 3,325,000	\$ 2,547,236	\$ 777,764
ML17, Ch 96, Sec 2, Subd 9e Prairie Stewardship and NPB Acquisition	\$ 19,586	\$ 2,675,000	\$ 212,692	\$ 2,462,308
ML18, Ch 214, Art 4, Sec 2, Subd 9i Private Native Prairie Conservation through NPB	\$ 16,702	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 13,783	\$ 1,986,217

2020 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank Proposed Conservation Easement Acquisition Sites



Legend

- ★ Priority NPB Acquisition Areas
- MN Prairie Plan Priority Areas



mn DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

1 in = 45 miles

Attachment C: Template

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2020 Acquisition/Restoration Parcel List Spreadsheet

Project Title: Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank

Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Judy Schulte

Organization: MN DNR-SNA

College/Department/Division: Division of Ecological & Water Resources

M.L. 2020 ENRTF Appropriation: \$2,280,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years, June 30, 2023

Today's Date: April 15, 2019



Instructions: Please include on the following list all targeted parcels that you are currently considering for acquisition (fee title or easement) or restoration (all phases) using the appropriation. The list may include more parcels than you will ultimately acquire or conduct restoration work on with the funds. To be eligible as part of your project, however, a parcel must be included on the list. Changes may be requested through the amendment process. Please update the status column and submit with your periodic workplan updates. Include any significant issues related to any particular parcel in your activity and project status sections of your Main Workplan Document.

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates (preferably from the center of the parcel) Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	County	Site Significance (please include what ecosystem (e.g., prairie, forest, wetland, savanna) is represented as well as the ecological significance, site importance, conservation value, and public benefits)	Activity Description (e.g. fee title acquisition, conservation easement acquisition, site preparation, restoration)	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner (private individual or trust, non-profit organization, for-profit entity)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status of work (e.g. engaged in landowner negotiations, no longer in consideration, restoration activities underway)
		Latitude	Longitude										
1	Chanarambie Creek Prairies	43° 55' 12.9"	96° 1' 8.0"	\$2800/ac	NA	Murray, Pipestone	Dry gravel, mesic & wet prairies in biggest grassland complex with the highest quality prairie parcels in SW MN	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
2	Lac Qui Parle Prairies	45° 13' 37.8"	96° 14' 8.9"	\$2300/ac	NA	Big Stone, Lac Que Parle	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, as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
3	Antelope Hills Prairie	44° 56' 0.5"	96° 20' 29.8"	\$2300/ac	NA	Lac Qui Parle	Mixture of dry hill, sand-gravel, mesic and wet prairies. Expands habitat for many rare plant and bird species	Conservation easement acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
4	Glacial Lakes & Moraine Prairie	45° 25' 20.0"	95° 14' 34.5"	\$2500/ac	NA	Pope, Kandiyohi, Swift, Stearns	Dry sand-gravel prairies of the Alexandria Moraine, provides habitat for the Threatened Dakota Skipper as well as the Poweshiek Skipper and Regal Fritillary	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
5	Prairie Coteau/Rock River Prairies	44° 4' 59"	96° 10' 23.8"	\$2600/ac	NA	Pipestone	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat around the Prairie Coteau SNA	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed

6	Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairies	44° 9' 46.8"	96° 19' 6.1"	\$2600/ac	NA	Pipestone, Lincoln	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat around existing TNC and DNR lands	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
7	Shakotan Prairies	44° 23' 1.9"	96° 25' 25.4"	\$2600/ac	NA	Lincoln	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
8	Upper MN River Prairies	44° 40' 21.2"	95° 19' 2.0"	\$2900/ac	NA	Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville,	MN River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
9	Yellow Medicine Coteau Prairie	44° 43' 42.7"	96° 25' 47.0"	\$2500/ac	NA	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	Conservation easement acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
10	Des Moines River Valley	43° 50' 31.2"	95° 7' 7.6"	\$3000/ac	NA	Cottonwood, Jackson	Des Moines River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, dry hill prairie; expands habitat for many, butterflies, birds and rare plants - including Prairie Bush Clover.	Conservation easement acquisition	100		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
11	Blue Mounds/Touch-The-Sky Prairies	43° 43' 16.2"	96° 12' 43.3"	\$4000/Ac	NA	Rock	Mesic to wet prairie with rock outcrops; provides habitat for many rare rock outcrop plants	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
12	Big Stone Moraines	45° 19' 7.5"	96° 20' 2.4"	\$1800/ac	NA	Big Stone	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
13	Big Stone Lake Prairie (north & south)	45° 25' 33.7"	96° 40' 41.0"	\$1800/Ac	NA	Big Stone	Dry Hill, mesic and wet prairies along Big Stone Lake next to DNR state park and SNA parcels	Conservation easement acquisition	80	0.25	Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
14	Rothsay Prairies	46° 29' 27.0"	96° 21' 23.4"	\$1600/ac	NA	Wilkin	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
15	Glacial Ridge Prairies	47° 41' 46.9"	96° 18' 43.9"	\$1600/ac	NA	Polk	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
16	Felton Prairies	47° 3' 48.0"	96° 24' 53.7"	\$1800/ac	NA	Clay	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	100		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
17	Lake Christina Hills Prairies	46° 6' 33.3"	95° 41' 33.8"	\$1800/ac	NA	Ottertail, Douglas, Grant	Dry Hill to wet prairies; part of the rolling topography of the Alexandria moraine	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed

18	Sherburne Sands Prairies	45° 23' 40.7"	93° 39' 49.8"	\$1600/ac	NA	Sherburne	A mosaic of prairie, wetlands and oak savanna set in an important transition zone	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
19	Frontenac Hay Creek Bluffs	44° 30' 20.5"	92° 25' 6.1"	\$2600/ac	NA	Goodhue	Southern dry bedrock bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
20	Kellogg-Weaver Dunes Prairies	44° 16' 10.6"	91° 56' 2.8"	\$2500/ac	NA	Wabasha, Winona	Rolling sand dune topography, mature dunes with dry, mesic, or wet prairie as well as oak savanna	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
21	Root River Valley Prairies	43° 46' 14.6"	91° 39' 51.8"	\$2400/ac	NA	Houston, Filmore, Winona	Southern Dry Bedrock Bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams; habitat for timber rattlesnakes	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
22	Lake Bronson and Aspen Parkland Prairies	48° 50' 39.1"	96° 30' 53.5"	\$1000/ac	NA	Kittson, Roseau, Marshall	Aspen parkland complex-many prairie dominated aspen complexes are succeeding to woodland in absence of fire	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
23	Agassiz Dunes	47° 29' 8.3"	96° 20' 14.3"	\$1,800/ac	NA	Polk, Norman	Dry barrens oak savanna-rare prairie plant community in northern MN	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
24	Wambach Santee Prairie	47° 24' 55.7"	95° 56' 36.3"	\$1,000/ac	NA	Mahnomen	Prairie meadow complexes, prairie rich fens and other rare northern plant communities	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
25	Blanket Flower Prairies	46° 42' 5.4"	96° 11' 37.1"	\$1500/ac	NA	Clay, Becker, Otter Tail	Dry Sand-gravel prairie in Alexandria Moraine and Hardwood Hills subsection	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
26	Blue Stem Prairie	46° 49' 50.0"	96° 26' 56.0"	\$1800/ac	NA	Clay	Mesic, wet meadow/carr, & wet prairie parcels intermixed with DNR SNA and Audobon preserves	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
27	Lake Traverse Prairies	45° 42' 2.0"	96° 40' 48.2"	\$2000/ac	NA	Traverse	Dry prairie and prairie- woodland complex	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed

NOTES: This proposal will target these locations and enroll 300 acres into permanent NPB conservation easements; not all sites on the list will be enrolled. Parcel Names are named Prairie Core Areas identified in the 2010 MN Prairie Conservation P

Attachment D. Additional Work Plan Information for Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration

Acquisition/Restoration Information:

Conservation Easement Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

Eligibility for Native Prairie Bank (NPB) is established in both M.S. 84.96 and MN Rule 6136.09. To qualify, land must be covered by native prairie vegetation and have never been plowed. Eligible lands are prioritized based on factors including: size, quality and diversity of the native prairie habitat; occurrence of, or suitable habitat for rare species; location relative to other native prairie and/or public land; and potential for long-term habitat management and enhancement. MBS data is the foundation for many of these evaluation factors. Native Prairie Bank uses the "Native Prairie Bank Evaluation Form" to evaluate and score individual projects.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.

[Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan](#)
[Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025](#)
[Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda](#)
[Minnesota's Statewide Conservation Plan](#)

3. For any conservation easement acquired, a restoration and management must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.

Each parcel acquired as a new NPB will have a Prairie Stewardship Plan. Prairie Stewardship Plans include, 1) a resource inventory and assessment of all the lands native plant communities or restored to plant communities that would have been native to the site, 2) landowner and DNR's goals, and 3) prairie management alternatives/recommendations. The goals for the NPB's management are based upon soils, topography, geology, and other factors necessary to sustain the plant community. Each plan includes an implementation timetable which summarizes ongoing management needs and a statement on funding. Long-term management costs (e.g. invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and ecological monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including, but not limited to, the landowner, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated. Each Prairie Stewardship Plan is kept in a DNR internal shared electronic filing system accessible to all SNA staff along with a copy given to the landowner.

4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.

DNR policy is to notify the county assessor prior to easement closing, however county board approval is not requested.

5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction. A copy of the written approval should be provided to LCCMR.

As part of the DNR acquisition process, all NPB acquisitions are required to have approval of the Ecological and Water Resources Division Director and land conveyances are accepted by the Director or Deputy Director of the Division of Lands and Minerals who have delegated authority to approve this for the Commissioner.

6. Provide a statement addressing how conservation easements will address specific water quality protection activities, such as keeping water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, protecting groundwater, and not permitting artificial hydrological modifications.

Native Prairie Bank's goal is to protect existing high quality, high functioning native prairie that currently is providing multiple water quality benefits. In addition, the easement terms and the Prairie Stewardship Plan they are required to follow assures that the prairie health is sustained, thus they inherently do an excellent job of keeping the water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, and protecting groundwater. In addition, use of pesticides on the easement is prohibited without approval of the DNR. The easement terms also prohibit artificial hydrological modifications by prohibiting excavation, cultivations, drainage, filling, and irrigation.

7. Describe the long-term monitoring and enforcement program for conservation easements acquired on parcels by your organization, including explanations of the process used for calculating conservation easement monitoring and enforcements costs, the process used for annual inspection and reporting on monitoring and enforcement activities, and the process used to ensure perpetual funding and implementation of monitoring and enforcement activities.

The policy of the DNR is to protect both the conservation values of the property protected by these easements and the investment of the state in those interests. Elements of this stewardship include the creation of baseline property reports, enforcement protocols, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and reporting, and maintaining effective working relationships with the owners of these easement properties. Native Prairie Bank implements this policy by following DNR Operational Order #128 "Conservation Easement Stewardship" in addition to the "Ecological and Water Resources Division Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines". This operational order and supporting division guidance calls for annual landowner contacts as well as on-the-ground site evaluations once every three years if no violations are found. If a violation is found, monitoring would occur annually until the violation is corrected.

Budgeted into this work plan is funding to be deposited into the DNR's Conservation Easement Stewardship Account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements. The dedicated stewardship funds will provide the support needed for long-term, ongoing monitoring and minor enforcement activities of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal. For each specific Native Prairie Bank easement, initial investment dollars are determined by using a DNR approved Conservation Easement Stewardship Calculator, which estimates the annual expenses and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity.

Funds for this activity will be deposited into the established conservation easement stewardship account and Minnesota Management & Budget protocols will be adhered to. After the closing of each Native Prairie Bank easement acquired with this appropriation, the calculated easement stewardship funds will be deposited into this account. Once funds are deposited and interest begins to accrue, this accrued interest will be applied towards actual expenses tied to annual landowner contact, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and minor enforcement protocols.

Restoration

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.

All restoration activities done with this appropriation are on DNR-owned perpetual Native Prairie Bank conservation easements administered by the SNA Program.

2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.

Each restoration project will be based upon a Native Prairie Stewardship Plan (ecological restoration and management plan) and/or project plan with goals for reconstructing plant communities that are native to the site that are based upon soils, topography, geology, and other factors necessary to sustain the plant community. Each plan includes an implementation timetable which summarizes ongoing management needs. Each restoration and management plan and project plan is kept in a DNR internal shared electronic filing system accessible to all SNA staff.

3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.

The SNA Program follows or exceeds the recommendations found in the BWSR "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines". NPB restorations typically follow the current BWSR Guidelines, including Project Guidance, Plant Community Restoration, and Temporary Cover. The SNA Program follows the general direction of the BWSR Guidelines for "Recommended Steps for Obtaining Plant Materials", and has additional and more restrictive requirements for restoration material sources. Specifically, all restorations on Native Prairie Banks use seeds/plants of local ecotypes, collected from onsite or within 30 miles. Restoration and management of DNR lands are governed by DNR Operational Order #124 on "Plant Material Standards for Native Plant Community Restoration" and DNR Operational Order #130 on "Pollinator Habitat" (which include BMPs).

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

Long-term management costs (e.g. invasive species treatments, prescribed fire, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to, the landowner, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

DNR has a standing general contract with CCM under which the SNA Program often does project or activity specific agreements. For restoration projects, CCM has been and will continue to be used when appropriate for hand seed harvest, invasive species control and prescribed burning on NPBs.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

Restoration projects will be evaluated and a report submitted to the LCCMR to ascertain how well the native plants have been established and non-natives controlled. The evaluation reports include a summary of management plan outcomes, activities completed through the project, map of the project area, a statement of ongoing management needs and funding, and a summary of the evaluation.

PROGRAM MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS

Project Manager: Judy Schulte, Prairie Biologist
Affiliation: Department of Natural Resources, Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA)
Mailing Address: 1241 East Bridge Street, Redwood Falls, MN 56283
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Judy Schulte is the Scientific and Natural Area Program'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". Judy is responsible for coordinating and administering programs designed to improve native prairie conservation and management on private lands and oversight of conservation easement stewardship. She provides programmatic direction and management for Native Prairie Bank, Native Prairie Tax Exemption, and Prairie Stewardship Planning Assistance. She has been involved with the implementation and management of several previous LCCMR & LSOHC projects, including:

- ML 2010 ENRTF Scientific and Natural Areas & Native Prairie Restoration, Enhancement & Acquisition
- ML 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017-2018 ENRTF Native Prairie Stewardship & Native Prairie Bank Acquisition
- ML 2011, 2013-2019 ENRTF Scientific and Natural Areas Acquisition and Restoration
- ML2010-2019 OHF Accelerated Prairie Restoration & Enhancement of DNR Lands
- ML2011-2019 OHF WMA, SNA & NPB Easement Acquisition
- ML2014-2018 OHF Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection

Judy has served as the Prairie Biologist with the SNA program since March of 2015. She has been officially acting as the interim SNA Unit Supervisor since May 2018. Other related experiences include:

Region 4 Prairie Specialist, MN DNR (2011-2015) regional lead for Native Prairie Bank easement acquisition and enhancement work, Prairie Tax Exemption, Prairie Stewardship Planning Assistance and general private prairie land technical assistance.

District Technician, Redwood Soil & Water Conservation District (2009-2011) Provided outreach, acquisition and management support to landowners and operators in Redwood County for a variety of county, state and federal conservation programs.

Program Technician, USDA Redwood County Farm Service Agency (2007-2009) Program Technician responsible for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) for Redwood County.

Education: Graduated from South Dakota State University in 2007 with a Bachelor of Science in Park Management & Horticulture.

Judy will provide overall management to this proposed LCCMR project. She has effectively demonstrated her capacity to manage programs and budgets, maintain accurate records, and direct staff. Judy has experience and has demonstrated the ability to collaborate with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders in addressing complicated and contentious prairie protection and management issues. She is organizationally driven and has the knowledge and background to get the 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.