**PROJECT TITLE: Cannon Valley Trail Natural Resources Inventory/Management Plan**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

The Cannon Valley Trail (CVT) Natural Resources Inventory and Management Plan proposes to update a 30-year-old Biological Resources Management Plan with a comprehensive inventory of native and rare plant and animal species, and native plant communities found within CVT’s 360 acres. This work will inform the development of effective management strategies for implementation by CVT and partners with the overarching goal of substantially improving ecological conditions over time. To optimize the ecological benefits beyond CVT boundaries, this effort will be coordinated with three adjacent landowners including the MNDNR (six locations), Goodhue County and one non-profit organization.

**Why this Project needs to be done**

CVT is steward to a wide variety of imperiled native plants, animals and plant communities, including the federally endangered Minnesota Dwarf Trout Lily, that if not managed, are at risk of serious degradation. CVT seeks to comprehensively address this degradation through the activities proposed in this Project.

**Specific Direct Outcomes**

1. Comprehensive Natural Resources inventory – Species and native plant community identification and mapping, element occurrence ranking, comprehensive species inventory.
2. Wildlife and Habitat Inventory and Assessment – with a focus on species of special concern, threatened and endangered status, and other species as warranted.
3. Management Plans – with clear priorities, detailed recommendations and effective near- and long-term strategies.
4. Effective joint management with adjacent landowners to optimize ecological benefits.

**How Project will achieve the Goals**

The Project proposes to achieve the goals through;

1. Extensive field work and research for a comprehensive inventory of existing native plant and animal resources which is foundational to successful improvement in ecological condition.
2. Assess the condition, occurrence, distribution, and status of the resources; and determine priorities for management.
3. Developing site-specific management plans and implementation strategies that will improve ecological condition.
4. Close coordination with key adjacent landowners.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1: Comprehensive Native Plant Survey**

This baseline survey will provide foundational information on the occurrence, distribution and ecology of native plants and communities. Extensive field surveys and database research will be accomplished. Outcomes include mapping, documentation of sites and species of interest, and identification of priorities. These outcomes will guide the development of the Management Plan. The work will be performed by qualified consultants from a list developed by the MNDNR for their work. Contract will be awarded on a competitive basis.

ENRTF Budget: $25,000

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| *1. Baseline Field Survey – for a comprehensive survey a minimum of two efforts are required 1) Spring as certain species (e.g. early blooming woodland plants) are most visible and some animal species not active (e.g. reptiles), 2) Summer-Fall for other plant and animal species.* | *September 2021* |
| *2. Mapping, ranking, research, documentation* | *November 2021* |
| *3. Identification of priorities* | *December 2021* |

**Activity 2: Comprehensive Wildlife and Habitat Survey**

This baseline survey will provide foundational information on the occurrence, distribution and ecology of animal species including reptiles and amphibians, with a focus on imperiled species. Extensive field surveys and database research will be accomplished. Outcomes include documentation of sites and species of interest, and identification of priorities. These outcomes will guide the development of the Management Plan. This work will be done by the consultants.

ENRTF Budget: $10,000

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| *1. Baseline field survey* | *September 2021* |
| *2. Mapping, ranking, research, documentation* | *November 2021* |
| *3. Identification of priorities* | *December 2021* |

**Activity 3: Management Plan**

The Management Plan will provide site-specific management direction and implementation strategies that will improve ecological condition, including sites with low value but potential for improvement. The goal is to substantially improve ecological condition over time. The Plan will identify opportunities for coordination with three adjacent landowners to optimize benefits. The outcome will be clear management direction and cost estimates. This work will be done by the consultants.

ENRTF Budget: $15,000

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| *1. Draft Management Plan* | *February 2022* |
| *2. Final Management Plan* | *April 2022* |

**III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS**

**B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Affiliation** | **Role** |
| MNDNR - Russell Smith | MNDNR – SNA Program | Landowner representative |
| MNDNR | MNDNR – Forestry Program | Landowner representative |
| MNDNR | MNDNR – Wildlife Management Area Program | Landowner representative |

**IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING**

The Project proposes to result in a detailed, action-oriented management plan for CVT’s 360 acres and coordination opportunities with key adjacent landowners. Management of natural resources is often labor intensive and requires long term commitment for optimal ecological improvement and maintaining that improvement. CVT will seek to fund the Management Plan recommendations through 1) Annual allocation of a portion of its existing operations budget, 2) Additional funding through grants and donations to accelerate implementation. A cost-effective strategy to secure skilled labor is using Conservation Crews of Minnesota and Iowa and similar programs.

**V. TIME LINE REQUIREMENTS**

CVT will complete all three Activities April 2022.