**ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION: Minnesota Zoological Garden**

The Minnesota Zoo, a state agency established in 1978 to provide Minnesota residents and guests with a unique opportunity to experience animals from the exotic to the familiar, is today one of the State’s premier cultural, educational, and conservation institutions.

The Zoo’s mission is ***to connect people, animals and the natural world to save wildlife.*** With over 1.2 million guests a year and state-wide outreach programs, the Zoo is in a unique position to strengthen Minnesotans’ awareness and understanding of our State’s cultural commitment to wildlife, science and conservation. The Zoo is, in fact, the State’s largest environmental educator.

The Minnesota Zoo has also become a worldwide leader in conservation – conducting breeding programs and field efforts at the Zoo, in Minnesota, and across the globe. The Zoo has recently enhanced its efforts to focus on Minnesota wildlife and habitats, including efforts to conserve Minnesota’s moose, bison, prairie butterfly, freshwater mussel, and turtle populations. It is also working to restore undeveloped areas on its own 485 acre site to native conditions, and exploring ways to provide educational opportunities to interpret those efforts.

The Zoo has a proven record of using its resources efficiently and effectively, ***matching*** the State’s investment with private funds and earned income.

**ZOO PROJECT MANAGER: Erik Runquist, PhD**

Erik Runquist is the Butterfly Conservation Biologist at the Minnesota Zoo where he has coordinated the Prairie Butterfly Conservation Program since its inception in 2012. He manages research, personnel, and budgets for the Program. Erik holds a PhD in Ecology with an emphasis in Conservation Biology from the University of California, Davis and studied butterflies for his doctoral degree.

**ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION:  Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks & Trails**

The Department of Natural Resources-Division of Parks and Trails operates 67 state parks, 9 state recreation areas, 25 state trail segments, 1,496 water access sites, 33 water trails and 8 state waysides throughout Minnesota.  The Division is responsible for protecting, managing & restoring natural and cultural resources and providing outstanding park, trail and water recreation experiences for visitors.

**DNR PROJECT MANAGER: Edward Quinn**

Ed Quinn oversees the natural/cultural resource management program for the Division of Parks & Trails.  He provides direction for and coordination of 17 Parks & Trails resource management specialists and technicians. The program is responsible for protecting, managing and restoring natural/cultural resources on division-administered lands.  Annually the division restores approximately 840 acres of prairie, forest & wetlands, conducts prescribed burns on about 5,800 acres and manages invasive species on approximately 10,000 acres.

Ed has worked in the natural resource field for 35 years (20 with MNDNR).  He has been employed as a naturalist, wildlife biologist and natural areas manager.  He has overseen the MNDNR Parks & Trails resource program since 1998.  He holds a bachelor’s degree in Fish & Wildlife from Michigan State University and a master’s degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Minnesota.  He has been a certified wildlife biologist since 1994.