



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

## 2021 Request for Proposal

### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2021-151

**Proposal Title:** SNA Acquisition, Restoration, Citizen-Science and Outreach

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Molly Roske

**Organization:** MN DNR - Ecological and Water Resources Division

**Office Telephone:** (651) 259-5094

**Email:** molly.roske@state.us.mn

### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) habitat restoration/enhancement (1000+ acres), increased public involvement, and strategic acquisition (250+ acres) will conserve Minnesota's most unique and rare resources for everyone's benefit.

**Funds Requested:** \$4,760,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** 2024-06-30

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation (G)

### Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Statewide

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Statewide

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Narrative

### **Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

Minnesota's Scientific & Natural Areas (SNAs) are established to protect and perpetuate natural features possessing exceptional scientific or educational value, in an undisturbed natural condition. SNA designation represents the highest form of nature protection in the state; accordingly, these are the sites that meet the highest standards of quality: ratings by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) of high to outstanding biodiversity significance, key habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species, and presenting Minnesota's flagship geologic features.

Ensuring that Minnesota's natural heritage is not lost from any of its ecological regions, however, is a race against time: to protect just five occurrences of every native plant community (NPC) in each of the state's ecological subsections, and three viable populations of every animal and plant species native to Minnesota, the SNA Program currently still falls short by an estimated 130,000 acres (2014 SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan). As impacts to native ecosystems from development, agricultural conversion, fragmentation, human disturbance, and invasive species accelerate, compounded by climate change, natural area protection and stewardship are increasingly urgent.

### **What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.**

To safeguard the state's natural heritage for future generations, both the designation of currently unprotected areas and the attentive land stewardship of acres already under SNA protection, will be critical actions. The SNA land base must continue to proactively seek out, acquire, and protect the "gaps" in the protected area system, but it must likewise lift up the critically-important land management and stewardship work taken on by its talented staff, partners, and volunteer base with every new acre protected. Their work is needed in order to revitalize the native plant communities and habitats protected on SNAs that sometimes need prescribed disturbance, invasive species treatment or removal, and other actions to reduce or remove human-exacerbated degradation. The SNA Program continues to chart new territory in meeting these challenges with innovative solutions through partnering with the broader conservation community and by ramping up Minnesotans' appreciation and support for protected natural spaces.

### **What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

The vital mission of Minnesota's SNAs will be furthered through restoration and enhancement, public involvement, and strategic acquisition. About 1000 acres of habitat restoration, enhancement, and site improvement activities will target SNAs threatened by invasive species and lack of natural disturbance regimes. Outreach and citizen science efforts will enhance public participation and nature-based recreation through ~80 SNA events, sustaining the network of volunteer stewards at 135 SNAs. Around 250 acres will be strategically acquired from willing sellers and designated as SNAs to protect at-risk native plant communities and wildlife habitat of state significance.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Native Habitat Restoration, Enhancements and Improvements on 1000+ acres

**Activity Budget:** \$1,961,140

**Activity Description:**

Native habitat restoration and site improvement activities will be completed on about 1000 acres at approximately 50 SNAs. Management plans will be completed for about 10 SNAs (including sites acquired through these funds). Around 60 SNAs will be monitored to improve management and track changes to rare species, imperiled plant communities and other important protected features. SNA staff will provide ecological/technical guidance and on-site verification for 6 projects implemented by partners on SNAs. Restoration and improvement activities will be carried out by DNR staff, Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), Sentence to Service, volunteers, and/or contractors, and will be tracked in the Adaptive Management Spatial Database (AMSD). Activities include seed collection, site preparation, planting and aftercare, invasive species early detection, control and removal, site clean-up, signing, interpretive kiosks, fencing, and prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance, such as prescribed haying, mowing or grazing, necessary where use of fire is limited). This activity includes work to bring acquired parcels up to DNR's minimum standards for SNAs, and includes restoration and improvements of acquired sites if ecologically advisable and feasible within the appropriation period. Also includes funding for ongoing AMSD maintenance and upgrade needs.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Adaptive management, ecological & conservation easement monitoring on ~60 SNAs	2024-06-30
Management plans completed for ~10 SNAs	2024-06-30
Ecological/technical guidance for ~6 partnership projects	2024-06-30
~10 SNA interpretive kiosks installed AND development work on ~20 sites	2024-06-30
~625 acres of prescribed burns	2024-06-30
~410 acres of woody removal & invasive species treatment	2024-06-30
~30 acres of restoration of forest, prairie, & outcrop sites	2024-06-30

### Activity 2: Public Engagement, Outreach & Citizen Science in Natural Areas

**Activity Budget:** \$782,211

**Activity Description:**

Minnesotans will be involved in volunteer habitat conservation and education activities at SNAs, and in the conservation of other key natural areas in the state. A network of ~135 SNA volunteer site stewards who help care for SNAs will be sustained, and 80+ events will be organized and executed (volunteer work days, recreation-educational events, guided nature hikes, citizen science monitoring, bio-blitzes, etc.) to further engage the Minnesota public – in-person as well as via enhanced virtual platforms when possible. New and refined electronic/social media communications tools, maps, and interpretive information will be developed and disseminated to advance the public's understanding of Minnesota's wild places and biodiversity, and to enhance nature-based recreational use of SNAs. Natural Area Registry agreements will be established on about 2 sites of high biodiversity significance, to promote conservation of natural areas owned by others.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
~2 Natural Area Registry agreements to conserve sites of biodiversity significance	2024-06-30

Network of volunteer site stewards at ~135 SNAs	2024-06-30
SNA website, e-book, social media, maps & other interpretive info	2024-06-30
~80 citizen science & volunteer events (management work days & ed. events, including online events)	2024-06-30

### Activity 3: Strategic Acquisition of Sites with Biodiversity Significance – 250 acres

**Activity Budget:** \$2,016,649

**Activity Description:**

Acquisition and designation of ~250 acres as state Scientific & Natural Areas will protect and buffer the most important sites in the state for high biodiversity significance and rare features. Proactive landowner contacts will target SNA Strategic Plan priority areas, including those identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan. Acquired sites must be recommended through an Ecological Evaluation report and rank-evaluated (numerically) to ensure prioritization of sites identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) as habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species (T&E) and Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SCGN). Most acquisition will be of fee-title, but if more appropriate, acquisition could be via SNA-administered conservation easement with SNA designation. New data from MBS and other scientific sources will be incorporated into a periodic update of the SNA Strategic Plan, along with climate change risk/resilience assessment factors, to refine and increase strategic prioritization of SNA acquisition.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Strategic prioritization and climate change risk assessment complete	2024-06-30
Proactive landowner contacts for ~10 target areas	2024-06-30
Acquisition & designation as SNA of ~250 acres of high quality habitat	2024-06-30

## Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?**

The Minnesota DNR has designated around 192,500 acres in its system of ~170 SNAs, and provides resource management to conserve the features these SNAs protect for future generations. To meet goals set in the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan of averting biodiversity loss in the state, an average 1,600 additional, targeted acres would need to come under SNA protection annually by end-of-21st century. The support of the public of Minnesota, and of key funding like ENRTF of \$3-5M per annum, among others, are critical to long-term success. All results are tracked in DNR's Adaptive Management Spatial Database.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a	\$3,500,000
Scientific and Natural Areas Program	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09I	\$3,250,000
Scientific and Natural Areas Acquisition, Restoration, Citizen Science and Engagement	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b	\$2,500,000
Minnesota Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b	\$500,000
Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition and Restoration	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a	\$1,386,000
SNA Acquisition, Restoration, Enhancement and Public Engagement	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 09c	\$4,000,000
Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition, Restoration, Improvement and Citizen Engagement	M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 07a	\$2,540,000

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Molly Roske

**Job Title:** Scientific & Natural Area Program Senior Supervisor

**Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.**

Molly Roske is the MnDNR's SNA Program Senior Supervisor. The 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." Molly is responsible for coordinating and administrating efforts designed to protect, manage, monitor, interpret, promote research on, and acquire state lands of high biodiversity significance and sensitive or vulnerable resources.

While Molly is relatively new as SNA Program Supervisor, having served in this role since August 2019, she brings project management experience from prior positions:

- Executive Director, Fundación Cordillera Tropical, Ecuador (2017-2019), managing multiple concurrent environmental conservation projects with grants and other funding from local, national, and international sources.
- Research Associate, Colorado State University (2015-2016), coordinating implementation of a nation-wide network of researchers/practitioners across many state and federal agencies and funding types, to advance understanding of climate change impacts to forest ecology & management.
- Research Fellow, University of Minnesota's Cloquet Forestry Center (2014-2015), co-leading planning and

logistics for national advanced forest management certification courses and research networks.

Education:

- BA in Environmental Studies and Spanish from the College of St. Benedict | St. John's University (MN), 2008
- Master of Forest Science (MFS) from Yale University, School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (CT), 2014, concentration in forest ecology and forest hydrology

Molly will provide oversight to this project. She has effectively demonstrated her capacity to manage programs and budgets, maintain accurate records, and direct staff. Molly has experience in collaborating with a wide range of internal-external stakeholders in addressing complex land protection and management issues. She is organizationally driven and has the knowledge and background to attain project accomplishments.

**Organization:** MN DNR - Ecological and Water Resources Division

**Organization Description:**

Charged under MS 86A.05 to protect and perpetuate in an 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.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Coordinators & planner		Coordinate acquisition, restoration, and budget implementation, contract execution, partner coordination, strategic plan update / climate risk assessment			25%	3.08	X	\$275,000
Specialists & Technicians		On the ground project implementation			25%	18.62	X	\$1,242,100
Seasonal Laborers & crews		On the ground project implementation			20%	4.9	X	\$183,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,700,100</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
State of Minnesota	Acquisition costs	Professional Services for Acquisition: Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition				0.76		\$100,000
TBD & Conservation Corps of MN & IA (CCMI)	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Restoration of forest, prairie, & outcrop sites; invasives removal & treatment; prescribed disturbance; site development; adaptive management planing & monitoring; contracted volunteer events; CCMI individual placements.				4		\$602,000
State of Minnesota	Professional or Technical Service Contract	MNIT contract to provide ongoing upgrades and maintenance to the SNA Program's spatial outcomes tracking system, the Adaptive Management Spatial Database (AMSD)				0.06		\$16,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$718,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Materials & supplies	Parts, tools, repair costs, and supplies for restoration, invasives treatment, prescribed burning, etc. (this is largely for SNA tools, such as chain saws, pump cans, drip torches, fire racks,					\$91,611

			pulaskis, other handtools, backpack sprayers, portable pumps & hose, personal protective equipment, etc, & supplies such as herbicides, spreading oils, flagging, stakes, etc.); signs (entry, boundary, interpretive & rules signs), posts/hardware, fencing, gravel, & other site development tools & supplies. Includes supplies for citizen science, volunteer events & site steward work (including safety items, hand tools, training materials, temporary signs, stamps, envelopes, etc).					
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$91,611</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 250 Parcels: 3						\$1,770,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,770,000</b>
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	DNR fleet charges (for operation of trucks, cars, & special fieldwork equipment) & instate travel costs (as per state contracts)	Travel expenses needed to complete direct project work					\$283,700
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$283,700</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								



	Printing	Printing of interpretive signs, brochures, maps, pocket cards; citizen science, educational & volunteer materials; State Register publication (required to designate acquired parcels)	To achieve improved public awareness and management efficiency of SNAs, enhance outreach/citizen science experiences, and transparently disclose additions of new SNA parcels.					\$10,400
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$10,400</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		DNR's Direct and Necessary Costs	Pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated projects. Direct and necessary costs cover HR (~44,185), Safety (~8,207), Financial (~29,894), Communication (~7,945), IT (~89,066), and Planning Support (~6,893)					\$186,189
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$186,189</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$4,760,000</b>

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Personnel - Coordinators & planner		Coordinate acquisition, restoration, and budget implementation, contract execution, partner coordination, strategic plan update / climate risk assessment	<b>Classified</b> : Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the SNA program, this funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. These positions would not exist, but for special project funding received through the ENRTF and other funds. Each year these positions are assigned work based on the particular combination of soft funding available to address priority SNA Program activities.
Personnel - Specialists & Technicians		On the ground project implementation	<b>Classified</b> : Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the SNA program, this funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. These positions would not exist, but for special project funding received through the ENRTF and other funds. Each year these positions are assigned work based on the particular combination of soft funding available to address priority SNA Program activities.
Personnel - Seasonal Laborers & crews		On the ground project implementation	<b>Classified</b> : Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the SNA program, this funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff paid almost exclusively with special project funds. These positions would not exist, but for special project funding received through the ENRTF and other funds. Each year these positions are assigned work based on the particular combination of soft funding available to address priority SNA Program activities.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Badoura Jack Pine Woodland SNA	Hubbard	Jack pine (yarrow) woodland	Restoration	10	-	\$20,000	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Blanket Flower Prairie SNA	Clay	Dry gravel prairie	Restoration	40	-	\$30,000	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Boltuck-Rice Forever Wild SNA addition	Itasca	Provides better public access to the site and protects old growth forest.	Fee Title	25	0.03	\$150,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Butterwort Cliffs SNA	Cook	Project is in Aspen-birch forest adjacent to Lake Superior shoreline with listed species. Project will return long-lived conifers to the forest, provide scarification for birch regeneration, reduce brush, and will be visible to travelers along Hwy 61.	Restoration	15	-	\$15,000	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Cannon River Turtle Preserve SNA	Goodhue	Project will convert old agricultural field that abuts bluffs and restored prairie. Restoration of agricultural field to prairie will add continuity between remnant goat prairies and previously restored prairie on the bluffs above the Cannon River	Restoration	27	-	\$73,000	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Des Moines River SNA addition	Jackson	Buffer to SNA to aide in mgmt. of native prairie	Fee Title	50	-	\$200,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Falls Creek SNA addition	Washington	One of the most diverse forested natural areas remaining in Washington County. Will add to core SNA habitat, protect St. Croix River frontage, fill a protection gap within the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, and provide better public access.	Fee Title	120	0.5	\$2,400,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Felton Prairie SNA	Clay	Dry gravel prairie	Restoration	28	-	\$60,000	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Frenchmans Bluff SNA addition	Norman	Dry Sand-gravel prairie in good condition	Fee Title	73	-	\$511,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Hemlock Ravine SNA	Carlton	Imperiled boreal hardwood forest: Red oak - Sugar maple - Basswood -	Restoration	2	-	\$5,000	Public	DNR-SNA	In progress

		(Bluebead lily) forest and White pine - White spruce - Paper birch forest (S2 ranked) with a state-endangered tree (Eastern hemlock). Project will continue an effort to stabilize and re-establish vegetation on eroded slide areas in the ravine.							
Hythecker Prairie SNA addition	Dodge	200 foot grassland buffer on the east and north sides of the SNA to protect prairie from overspray from agricultural fields.	Fee Title	40	-	\$320,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Iona's Beach SNA	Lake	Gravel/cobble beach (Lake Superior) and Dry bedrock shore (Lake Superior) with Special concern species. Project would rehabilitate user-created trails and eroded areas	Restoration	1	-	\$2,000	Public	DNR-SNA	In progress
Mille Lacs Moraine SNA	Crow Wing	Red oak - Basswood forest (Noncalcareous till) with several listed bird species. Project would rehabilitate a small former building site with debris and invasive species present.	Restoration	2	-	\$7,500	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Mille Lacs Moraine SNA addition	Crow Wing	MBS-mapped forest communities; Red-shouldered hawk, Cerulean warbler habitat	Fee Title	265	0.5	\$800,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA	St. Louis	Beachgrass dune (Lake Superior), Juniper dune shrubland (Lake Superior), and Sand beach (Lake Superior) (all S1 ranked) with numerous listed species. Project would restore dune and beach communities eroded by storm surge and compliment beach nourishment activities being carried out by the Army Corps of Engineers	Restoration	2	-	\$10,000	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Morton Outcrop SNA addition	Renville	Protect additional rock outcrop and mesic prairie along with additional access to site	Fee Title	3	-	\$24,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Mound Prairie SNA addition	Houston	Protect additional mesic and dry bluff prairie, and provide better management access to the SNA	Fee Title	40	-	\$200,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Mound Springs Prairie SNA	Yellow Medicine	Dry hill & mesic prairie	Restoration	5	-	\$13,500	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun

North Fork Zumbro SNA addition	Goodhue	Protect additional floodplain forest and improve public access.	Fee Title	68	0.5	\$476,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Rock Ridge SNA addition	Cottonwood	Protect additional rock outcrop prairie	Fee Title	80	-	\$640,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Roscoe Prairie SNA addition	Stearns	Wet prairie with rare butterfly habitat	Fee Title	40	-	\$240,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Rose Dell Prairie (NEW)	Rock	MBS-mapped prairie with rare features. May be the biggest population of Western prairie Fringed orchids on private land in the US.	Fee Title	80	-	\$400,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Sandpiper Prairie SNA	Norman	Wet-mesic prairie	Restoration	40	-	\$30,000	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
Zumbro Falls Woods SNA	Wabasha	Project will restore agricultural land edge of SNA back to prairie, increasing prairie acres on-site and regionally	Restoration	16	-	\$43,000	Public	DNR-SNA	Has not begun
				-	-	-			
<b>Totals</b>				<b>1,072</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>\$6,670,000</b>			

## Fee Acquisition

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

To be acquired and designated as SNA, the site must be recommended for SNA designation in an Ecological Evaluation report, which serves as the site's baseline assessment for fee acquisitions. All such sites are predominantly MBS-mapped native plant communities and contain habitat for rare species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. In addition, SNA staff use the "SNA Candidate Site Evaluation Guide" (initially developed through the ENRTF-funded SNA strategic planning process) which incorporates criteria to rate which sites are currently pursued. Criteria include diversity and quality of the native habitat, occurrence of rare species, occurrence of native plant communities under-represented in SNA system, parcel size, location of parcel in relation to biodiversity hotspots (particularly MBS-mapped areas of outstanding and high biodiversity significance) and other conservation lands (including SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan's Conservation Opportunity Areas and Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan's Core Areas), potential for long-term management, and additional factors (e.g. landowner readiness, urgency, and willingness to donate; degree of threat, and partnership opportunities).

### **2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.**

- SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan – <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snap/plan.html>
- Minnesota's State Wildlife Action Plan – <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mnwap/index.html>
- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan – [www.dnr.state.mn.us/prairieplan](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/prairieplan)

### **3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan 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 SNA in fee will have an Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) or if as an addition to an existing SNA, that SNA's Management Plan would be amended to add the new parcel. The AMPs include goals, ecological description, priority features with indicators, and management recommendations. The intended outcome of management of SNAs is that 1) all the lands be native plant communities or restored to plant communities that would have been native to the site, 2) these plant communities are sustained over time, and 3) that visitors are accommodated safely (unless visitor access is restricted by designation order). The goals for the SNA's management are based upon soils, topography, geology, and other factors necessary to sustain the plant community. Each plan includes an implementation timetable that summarizes ongoing management needs and a statement on funding. 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, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated. Each AMP is kept in a DNR internal shared electronic filing system accessible to all SNA staff.

### **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.**

The DNR follows Minnesota Statutes 84.033, which require that any land acquired for designation as SNA must have county board approval as prescribed under MS 97A.145.

### **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.**

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

## 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/enhancement-related activities done with this appropriation are on lands designated as SNA that the state owns in fee or easement.

**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/enhancement project will be based upon an 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”. SNA restorations typically follow the current BWSR Guidelines, including Project Guidance, Plant Community Restoration, Temporary Cover and Forest/Woodlands. 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, SNA restorations use seeds of a local ecotype, collected from onsite or within 25 miles. Restoration and management of DNR lands are governed by DNR Operational Order #124 on “Plant Material Standards for Native Plant Community Restoration” and #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/disturbance, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including, but not limited to, 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 CCMI under which the SNA Program often does project or activity specific agreements. For restoration and site improvement projects, CCMI has been and will continue to be used when appropriate for hand seed harvest, invasive species treatment, prescribed burning, and will be considered on restoration projects for post-planting weed control.

**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.**

Plant community reconstruction and rehabilitation 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. Each evaluation report will include a summary of management plan outcomes, activities completed through the project, map of the project area, statement of ongoing management needs and funding, and summary of the evaluation.



## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

File: [e6ecc735-349.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

Minnesota's Scientific & Natural Areas aim to protect and perpetuate in an undisturbed natural condition the state's natural heritage features of exceptional scientific or educational value. This map depicts the highest-priority conservation opportunity areas of Minnesota targeted by the DNR SNA Program's acquisition and protection efforts, shaded in green polygons (which factor in multiple variables such as unprotected or underrepresented Native Plant Communities [NPCs], areas surveyed and deemed to be of high or outstanding biodiversity significance by the Minnesota Biological Survey, etc.; for details please see the SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan). It also shows markers depicting the geographic location of land parcels included on the present proposal's Parcel List for protection through fee-title acquisition (circles), and already-acquired parcels prioritized for restoration work (stars).

## Administrative Use

**Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?**

Yes: Restoration, Fee Acquisition,

**Does your project have patent, royalties, or revenue potential?**

No

**Does your project include research?**

No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

# ML21 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Proposal

## SNA Habitat Restoration, Public Engagement, and Acquisition

