



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2023 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2023-028

**Proposal Title:** SNA Stewardship, Outreach, and Biodiversity Protection

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Molly Roske

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

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

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

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) habitat restoration/enhancement (500+ acres), increased public involvement, and strategic acquisition (50+ acres) will conserve Minnesota's most unique places and rare species for everyone's benefit.

**Funds Requested:** \$1,955,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2027

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Land Acquisition, 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 ecological protection of public land in the state and as such, 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 containing Minnesota's flagship geologic features.

Ensuring that this natural heritage is not lost, however, is an ongoing challenge: the SNA Program strives to ensure protection of at least a representative sample of five high-quality occurrences of every native plant community (NPC) in each of the state's ecological subsections, as well as three viable populations of every animal and plant species native to Minnesota. These land-acquisition goals have not yet been attained, and more protection work is necessary. Moreover, we are seeing the continued acceleration of impacts to native ecosystems from development, agricultural conversion, fragmentation, invasive species, and climate change, while visitors arriving in record numbers also present management challenges on the landscape. Under these conditions, natural area protection and stewardship are increasingly urgent and necessary.

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

Safeguarding Minnesota's natural heritage for future generations requires both the designation of currently unprotected high-priority lands, and the attentive stewardship of acres already under SNA protection. The SNA Program must continue to proactively seek out, acquire, and protect the "gaps" in the protected area system of high-quality natural lands. It must simultaneously increase the land management and stewardship capacity of its committed staff, partners, and volunteer base with every new acre protected. This stewardship work revitalizes the native plant communities and habitats protected on SNAs through scientifically-supported management tactics such as prescribed disturbance, invasive species treatment or removal, and other actions to reduce or reverse pressures that lead to environmental degradation (often human-exacerbated). The SNA Program continues to meet these challenges with innovative solutions, partnering with the broader conservation community and enhancing Minnesotans' awareness, appreciation, and support for protected public 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?**

This proposal advances the aims of Minnesota's SNAs through three main activity areas: Habitat restoration, enhancement, and site improvement activities will be implemented on ~500 acres of SNA lands experiencing greatest impacts (from e.g. terrestrial invasive species, lack of natural disturbance regimes, etc.). Outreach and community science efforts will enhance public participation and nature-based recreation through ~20 SNA events, by sustaining the network of volunteer Stewards at ~130 SNAs. Around 50 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

**Activity Budget:** \$1,028,912

**Activity Description:**

Native habitat restoration, enhancement, and site improvement activities will be completed on about 500 acres and at approximately 15 SNAs as guided by ecological data and monitoring. Management plans will be completed or revised for 2 or more SNAs (including sites acquired through these funds). Around 50 SNAs will be monitored to improve management and track rare species populations, vulnerable native plant communities, and other important protected features. SNA staff will provide ecological/technical guidance and on-site verification for around 4 projects implemented by partners on SNAs. Restoration and improvement activities will be carried out by DNR staff, Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), contractors, Sentence to Service, and/or volunteers, 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, and fencing (removal or installation as needed for management purposes); and prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance - such as prescribed haying, mowing or grazing - where use of fire is limited). This may include work to bring acquired parcels up to DNR's minimum standards for SNAs.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
~10 acres of habitat restoration	June 30, 2027
~250 acres of invasive species treatment and/or woody vegetation removal	June 30, 2027
~250 acres of prescribed burns or alternative prescribed disturbance	June 30, 2027
~5 SNA interpretive kiosks installed AND development work completed on ~25 SNA sites	June 30, 2027
Adaptive Management Plans completed or revised for 2+ SNAs	June 30, 2027
Monitoring (adaptive management, ecological, and conservation easement) carried out on ~50 SNA sites	June 30, 2027
Ecological and/or technical guidance for ~4 partnership projects	June 30, 2027

### Activity 2: Public Engagement, Outreach and Community Science in Natural Areas

**Activity Budget:** \$456,946

**Activity Description:**

Science-based information and the chance to "get involved" in nature conservation will drive Minnesotans' engagement in volunteer stewardship events, community science, monitoring, and education activities on SNAs. A partnership with the Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) will help sustain a network of ~130 SNA volunteer site stewards; organize about 20 events focusing on community involvement in monitoring, bio-blitzes, volunteer work days, and recreation-educational events (guided nature hikes, etc.); and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions. These engagement opportunities will be largely in-person, but may also be via enhanced virtual platforms when possible. New and refined electronic/social media communications tools, interpretive information, and mapping aids may be developed and disseminated to advance the public's understanding of Minnesota's wild places and biodiversity science, and to enhance appropriate nature-based recreational use of SNAs. Work will be accomplished in part with the involvement of two one-year, full-time CCMI individual placement positions.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
~20 volunteer & community science events held (stewardship work days & educational events, including online events)	June 30, 2027

SNA website, social media, maps, and other interpretive information maintained and regularly updated	June 30, 2027
Network of volunteer site stewards sustained at ~130 SNAs (or expanded)	June 30, 2027

### Activity 3: Strategic Acquisition of Sites with Biodiversity Significance

**Activity Budget:** \$469,142

**Activity Description:**

MN DNR will acquire ~50 acres of lands of high biodiversity significance as mapped and recommended by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS), and designate as state Scientific & Natural Areas so as to protect and buffer the state's rare features and most important at-risk native plant communities (NPCs). Proactive landowner contacts will target SNA Strategic Land Protection Plan (SLPP) priority areas, including those identified in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and State Wildlife Action Plan. Candidate sites must be recommended for SNA designation through an Ecological Evaluation report and rank-evaluated (quantitatively) with priority to sites identified by MBS as NPCs of outstanding or high biodiversity significance, with habitat for rare, endangered, and threatened species as well as 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. Any new data from MBS and other scientific sources will be incorporated into periodic updates of the SLPP's gap analysis, along with climate change risk/resilience assessment factors, to refine strategic prioritization of SNA acquisition work.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Completion Date
Acquisition and designation as SNA of ~50 acres of high-quality habitat & native plant communities	June 30, 2027
Proactive landowner contacts for ~5 target areas/sites	June 30, 2027

## 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 work be funded?**

Acquiring lands that harbor plant communities not yet protected is central to the state's long-term strategy for averting biodiversity loss in Minnesota. There are around 192,500 acres in the MN DNR's system of ~170 SNAs, which must be managed and protected in perpetuity by the agency, including new lands acquired under this proposal. The support of the people of Minnesota, and of key funding like ENRTF of \$2-5M per annum, among others, are critical to long-term success and sustainability. All restoration, enhancement, and site development results are tracked in DNR databases including the Adaptive Management Spatial Database (AMSD).

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
SNA Acquisition, Restoration, Enhancement and Public Engagement	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 09c	\$4,000,000
Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition and Restoration	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a	\$1,386,000
Minnesota Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area Acquisition	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b	\$500,000
Scientific and Natural Areas Acquisition, Restoration, Citizen Science and Engagement	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b	\$2,500,000
Scientific and Natural Areas Program	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 09l	\$3,250,000
Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a	\$3,500,000
DNR Scientific and Natural Areas	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09a	\$3,000,000
SNA Acquisition, Restoration, Citizen-Science and Outreach	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09j	\$3,336,000

## 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 MnDNR's SNA Program Senior Supervisor. The Program's statutory mandate 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 administering efforts designed to protect, manage, monitor, interpret, promote research on, and acquire state lands of high biodiversity significance and sensitive or vulnerable resources.

Molly has served in the role of SNA Program statewide supervisor since August 2019, and 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.
- Graduate Researcher, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panama (2013), self-designed forest ecology research.

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, 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:**

The mission of the Minnesota DNR is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for the commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life. To carry out the MN DNR's Division of Ecological and Water Resources' commitment to healthy lands and waters, its Scientific & Natural Areas Program is 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>								
Laborers, Seasonals & crews		On-the-ground project implementation			20%	1.88	X	\$69,500
Specialists & Technicians		On-the-ground project implementation and tracking			25%	7.88	X	\$549,500
Coordinators & planner		Coordinate acquisition, restoration, and budget implementation, contract execution, partner coordination, strategic plan update / climate risk assessment			25%	2.64	X	\$235,400
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$854,400</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
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 planning & monitoring; contracted volunteer events; outreach materials production; CCMI individual placements.				4		\$361,500
State of Minnesota	Acquisition costs	Professional Services for Acquisition: DNR Lands and Minerals (and if necessary, Attorney General's Office) costs associated with completing an acquisition				0.28		\$30,000
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)				0.1		\$16,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$407,500</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,					\$69,491

			pump cans, drip torches, fire racks, 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>\$69,491</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
	Fee Title Acquisition	Acres: 50 Parcels: 1						\$350,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	DNR fleet charges (for operation of trucks, cars, & special fieldwork equipment) & in-state travel costs (as per state contracts)	Travel expenses needed to complete direct project work					\$151,100
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$151,100</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; materials for educational, community science, & volunteer events; State Register publication (required to designate acquired parcels)	To achieve improved public awareness and management efficiency of SNAs, enhance outreach & community science experiences, and transparently disclose additions of new SNA parcels.					\$9,900
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$9,900</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 (~34,949), Safety (~5,412), Financial (~25,646), Communication (~7,866), IT (~74,355), and Planning Support (~6,050)					\$112,609
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$112,609</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,955,000</b>

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
Personnel - Laborers, Seasonals & 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.
Personnel - Specialists & Technicians		On-the-ground project implementation and tracking	<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 - 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.

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	-
			<b>Funds Total</b>	-

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Blanket Flower Prairie SNA addition	Clay	Adjacent to existing SNA, this parcel contains dry prairie and mesic hardwood native plant community types, the latter of which is not yet protected in this ecological subsection of the state. Habitat for several special-concern butterfly species.	Fee Title	40	-	\$65,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Boot Lake SNA	Anoka	Forest restoration needed in Oak (Red maple) Woodland NPC types	Restoration	13	-	\$37,700	Public	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Cedar Rock SNA addition	Redwood	Seepage meadow, mesic prairie, mesic forest, rock outcrop communities with listed species present adjacent to existing SNA.	Fee Title	60	-	\$420,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Cherry Grove Blind Valley SNA addition	Fillmore	Extensive network of caves of high conservation value due to use as overwintering site for bats, fossils present, and unique geology of site.	Fee Title	15	-	\$100,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Cooks Lake Forest (NEW)	Becker, Otter Tail,	Large intact mesic hardwood forest, rich fen, rich tamarack swamp, and sedge meadow plant communities in an underrepresented target ecological subsection, with state endangered and special-concern plant and animal species present.	Fee Title	160	0.1	\$365,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Englund Ecotone SNA addition	Benton	Provides the only public access to the site and protects additional oak forest, oak savanna, and sedge meadow.	Fee Title	115	-	\$218,400	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Franconia Bluffs SNA addition	Chisago	Majority of parcel consists of high-quality Red oak forest types with State-listed special-concern and threatened species found in or near this parcel. Its location is near or adjacent to two existing SNAs along the St. Croix River corridor.	Fee Title	40	-	\$319,800	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Marsh Grove (NEW)	Marshall	High quality mesic and wet prairie complexes with rare species present,	Fee Title	455	-	\$450,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun

		and ranked as Outstanding Biodiversity Significance.							
Mille Lacs Moraine SNA addition	Crow Wing	MBS-mapped forest communities of biodiversity significance; Red-shouldered hawk and Cerulean warbler habitat, with lakeshore.	Fee Title	240	1.5	\$370,500	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Minnesota Point Pine Forest SNA	St. Louis	Imperiled beach dune systems with numerous rare species and plant communities, and undeveloped Lake Superior shoreline. Project would restore dune and beach communities eroded by storm surge.	Restoration	2	0.75	\$5,500	Public	DNR-SNA	In Progress
North Fork Zumbro Woods SNA addition	Goodhue	Contains incredibly high-quality habitat and is one of the few remaining populations of the state- and federally-endangered Dwarf trout lily. This property would join two disjunct SNA parcels together and extend protections to the largest portion of the Dwarf Trout Lily population that is present on-site.	Fee Title	35	-	\$165,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
River Warren Outcrops SNA addition	Renville	The proposed parcel is an in-holding within an existing SNA. Acquisition would protect significant floodplain forest and create contiguous protections and management strategy.	Fee Title	2	0.03	\$3,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Rock Valley Prairie (NEW)	Yellow Medicine	Large complex of dry hill prairie and other plant communities in Minnesota River corridor. Populations of at least five Special Concern species present.	Fee Title	116	-	\$130,000	Private		Negotiations In Progress
Six Mile Grove (NEW)	Mower	Contains a mesic oak-hickory forest, dominated by shagbark hickory, northern pin oak, bur oak, red oak, bitternut hickory, white oak, and lesser amounts of elm, black cherry, and basswood. This is a unique forest observed nowhere else in the state.	Fee Title	40	-	\$90,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Tom Lake (NEW)	Cook	High-quality intact forest and lakeshore communities present, with high biodiversity significance and S2 imperiled native plant community ranking.	Fee Title	334	1.2	\$900,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun

<b>Totals</b>				<b>1,667</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>\$3,639,900</b>			
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## 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 rank 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, proximity 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/or willingness to donate; degree of vulnerability to imminent degradation; 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 acquired 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) 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, all of whom 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 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. All restoration and management plans and project plans are 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 from within the narrowest distance threshold possible in the range defined by DNR/EWR policy and as scientifically recommended for the preservation of native seed genetic diversity. 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 executes project- or activity-specific agreements. For restoration and site improvement projects, CCMI has been and will continue to be used when appropriate for seed hand-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 assessing 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: [b4e67c85-db7.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

Minnesota's SNAs protect and perpetuate in an undisturbed natural condition the state's natural heritage features of exceptional scientific or educational value. This map depicts parcel locations included on the proposal's parcel list for protection through fee-title acquisition (circle markers), and already-designated parcels prioritized for restoration work (star markers)....

## Administrative Use

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

Yes: Restoration, Fee Acquisition,

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?**

No

**Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?**

N/A

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?**

N/A

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

No

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

No

# ML23 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Proposal

## SNA Stewardship, Outreach, and Biodiversity Protection

