



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2023 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2023-032

Proposal Title: Wannigan Regional Park Land Acquisition

Project Manager Information

Name: Denise Anderson

Organization: Frazee Community Development Corporation - Wannigan Regional Park Land Acquisition FCDC

Office Telephone: (218) 790-8040

Email: riverbendcrew@yahoo.com

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Acquire 174.55 acres for river corridor conservation and future development of Wannigan Regional Park, where the Heartland State, North Country National, and Otter Tail River Water Trails will meet.

Funds Requested: \$727,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2024

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

Project Location

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

Region(s): NW

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

Region(s): NW

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Narrative

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

The Frazee/Becker County area lacks sufficient public parks. The Otter Tail River State Water Trail passes by Frazee, but public access to it is limited. The North Country National Scenic Trail, a natural surface hiking-only trail, passes through the area, but uses roads in this section of the state, detracting from the visitor experience. The Heartland State Trail is scheduled to pass through Frazee within the next few years. These factors combine to provide an opportunity for Frazee to capitalize on its location as the meeting point of two State and one National Trails, and increase the provision of parks and trails for local residents while creating an attraction for tourists. In addition, vacant land is being subdivided for residential housing in the Frazee and Detroit Lakes area, so wildlife habitat is losing connectivity and prairies and forests are diminishing. The Wannigan Park parcels include 1.09 miles of shoreline along the Otter Tail River, a State Water Trail. The current landowner has proposed to subdivide the property into residential lots if it is not purchased for park land, so there is an urgent need to preserve this land and river corridor before it is too late.

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.

The project will purchase fee title to three land parcels along the Otter Tail River, totaling 174.55 acres, for recreation and conservation, to be owned by the City of Frazee and operated as a City park by the Frazee Community Development Corporation. After acquisition, Wannigan Regional Park will be developed on the parcels in a future project phase. The highlight of the park will be the intersection of three trails: the Heartland State Trail, the North Country National Scenic Trail, and the Otter Tail River State Water Trail. The park will include campgrounds for RVs, tents and groups, natural surface trails, hard surface ADA-accessible trails, an interpretive center, an amphitheater, picnic shelters and tables, and a canoe/kayak launch. The park will preserve a fifty foot corridor on each side of the river, all wetlands and all forested areas on site. Former pasture and row crop lands on the site will be restored into oak savannah habitat. The park concept plan gives natural resource conservation top priority, placing park development in the disturbed areas and using sustainable design principles. Interpretive signs and the interpretive center will inform visitors and school classes about the area's natural resources, history and culture.

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?

Preserve 174.55 acres along the Otter Tail River, in the 2000 square mile Otter Tail River watershed, in a region where three biomes meet. Preserve:

- 5,761 linear feet of Otter Tail River corridor
- 34.5 acres of wetlands
- 27.7 acres of woodlands

In future project phases:

- Restore disturbed lands into oak savanna habitat
- Provide public access to three major trails for both land and water based recreation
- Provide for outdoor recreation through the development of campgrounds, trails, picnic shelters, an accessible canoe/kayak dock and launch, an interpretive center, an amphitheater, interpretive signs and shore fishing areas.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Property Acquisition

Activity Budget: \$727,000

Activity Description:

Acquisition of the property from the private landowner. The landowner has held this property in a trust for the park project for the past 4 years. He is anxious to complete the acquisition within a relatively short period of time or he has stated he will sell parcels for residential development. We are working to obtain acquisition dollars through grant funding and a capital campaign drive.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Contract with attorney to handle legal aspects of acquisition	August 31, 2023
Negotiate a purchase price and terms of purchase with the private landowner	December 31, 2023
Complete the land purchase through closing, title transfer and recording	October 31, 2024
Complete any closeout reports and accounting for LCCMR/ENTRF	December 31, 2024

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jordan Roberts	City of Frazee	City of Frazee Administrator. The City of Frazee Council will obtain ownership of the proposed property and over see the Frazee Community Development Corporation actions during acquisition, development and management of the project.	No
Holly Larson	National Park Service	Advisor for the Wannigan Park Project	No
Steve Skoog	Becker County Economic Development Authority	Provides Becker County's direction and support of project	No
Samantha VanWechel-Meyer	West Central Initiative	Will collect and distribute private donations contributed before, during and after our Capital Campaign drives. Also will submit Frazee Community Development Corporation's yearly State reports.	No
Patrick Hollister	Minnesota Partnership for Health	Advisor for project developments to promote safe and healthy outdoor activities for groups of all ages.	No
Hank Ludtke	City of Frazee Economic Development Authority	Provide direction, management and approval of development phases	No
Marsha Wateland	Becker County Soil and Water Conversation	Has developed an extensive soil and water conservation plan for the project. Will direct and implement natural grassland vegetation plants, shrubs, reforestation and management of the proposed project.	No
Kris Carlson	Ulteig Engineering	Project Engineering Consultant to ensure proper development of infrastructure and roadways to substain the project for years.	No
Karen Mulary	Becker County Recreational Advisory Committee	Provide County support, direction and advise for best use practice's for the project	No
Matt Davis	North Country National Scenic Trail	Will partner with the construction and maintenance of hiking trail and camping area for North Country National Scenic Trail users.	No
Chuck Turcotte	Frazee Sportman's Club	Will partner and provide volunteer support for the project.	No
Jerry Bellefuelle	Frazee Lion's Club	Will partner and provide volunteer support for the project.	No
Brikker Ware	Frazee Area Community Club	Will provide support and volunteer help for the project.	No
Terry Karger	Frazee Vergas Independent School District #23	Will provide support and direction to enable the students of the District to receive outdoor classroom education of conservation and recreation.	No
Chandler Esslinger	Essentia Health	Will partner, support and advise on best use practices	No
David Schotzko	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Support and provide guidance for waterway development	No
Matthew Kirkwood, Professor	North Dakota State	Partner for planning camp ground locations, sites and park amenities	No

	University Team		
Dan McLaughlin	Becker County Land Commissioner	Support and advise for land use activities	No
Tom Winters	Ramstad, Skoyles & Winters Attorney's at Law	Support and consultation for legal advise during acquisition and future development.	No
Heather Perrine	Frazee HS Indian Educator Coordinator & Native Club Advisor	Provide education and history of native culture and preservation for students of ISD 23 and the public.	No
Steve Young	Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota	Assist and advise with land acquisition process	No

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?

The property will be conveyed to the City of Frazee, and FCDC will manage it. The site will be developed as a park with many areas for conservation. In the first development phase, campgrounds and picnic shelters will be built. A business plan has determined that revenues from these fees will be ample to support the management and operations of the park and the natural resources restoration. See the implementation portion of the Master Plan ([link](#)).

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Denise Anderson

Job Title: President - Frazee Community Development Corporation

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

I, Denise Anderson, have worked in City Municipal Government for 28 years. In 2021 I retired as the City Administrator of Frazee. During my career I have had opportunities to budget, guide and direct communities for many projects and improvement districts and had the privilege to apply, receive and manage grants to improve water, wastewater and community developments to enhance economic development along with projects to improve healthy living styles. During my career I have partnered and worked with several agencies throughout the State for Safe Routes to Schools projects, Minnesota Housing Partnership to implement an interest free housing down payment program for Becker County residents, worked with the Department of Transportation to create a multi-use path within the City of Frazee along with serving on the Heartland Trail Committee to create a trail from Detroit Lakes to Frazee. In 2021 I was asked to join the board of the Frazee Community Development Corporation (FCDC) and agreed to serve as president of the board. My grandfather, Howard Welty led the foundation of Kathio State Park. As a young adult, I accompanied him on several trips to inspect the development of Kathio park and this instilled in me a strong desire to practice conservation and create green space for future generations. As president of FCDC, I will continue to fulfill the vision of Wannigan Park and work with organizations and cities in my quest to serve this region of Minnesota in which I live, the City of Frazee and the State of Minnesota.

Organization: Frazee Community Development Corporation - Wannigan Regional Park Land Acquisition FCDC

Organization Description:

FCDC has a history of community service beginning with the foundation of the Frazee Event Center, a 20,000 square foot facility that seats 420, with a large dance floor, stage, industrial kitchen and bar. That project required raising almost \$700,000 in private donations. FCDC is a group of private citizens that provide volunteer and financial management to projects that benefit residents and visitors of the City of Frazee. We report to the City of Frazee. We were established in 1998 as a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Former board members act as advisors to the current board. The current board consists of 7 individuals who bring senior-level business and city management skills to our efforts. Our mission is to create healthy opportunities for everyone to make the Frazee area a premiere place to live, work and visit. Our vision is to create and enhance space for everyone to experience a healthy environment in their everyday lives while showcasing renewable energy and sustainability in the built and natural environment. Our current focus is establishing and operating Wannigan Park, a premiere regional park where 3 outdoor trails converge. The Otter Tail river is the jewel of the proposed Wannigan Park.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
Ramstad, Skoyles and Winters Attorneys at Law	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Attorney to process legal documents for purchase of property				0		\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$10,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
	Fee Title Acquisition	174.55 Parcels: 3						\$717,000
							Sub Total	\$717,000
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$727,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Private donations	Difference between fair market value documented in the appraisal and the landowner's asking price	Secured	\$95,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$95,000
			Funds Total	\$95,000

Acquisition and Restoration

Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Main Parcel 030237003	Becker	Parcel includes 3,651 linear feet of river corridor, 26 acres of wetlands and 22 acres of forest, which will be preserved. The river corridor and wetlands are habitat for waterfowl, birds, and mammals, possibly from three biomes, because the Coniferous Forest, Deciduous Forest and Prairie Grassland biomes are closer together here in Becker County than anywhere else in the State. Disturbed areas will be developed for the canoe/kayak access, trails, an amphitheater on a natural hill, picnicking, and an interpretive center. Remaining disturbed areas will be restored to Oak Savannah habitat.	Fee Title	126.9	0.69	\$521,300	Private	Frazer Community Development Corporation	Negotiations In Progress
Northeast Parcel 030234000	Becker	This parcel includes 2,110 linear feet of river corridor and 7.4 acres of wetlands along the river as well as 2.6 acres of forest, and disturbed, high ground. It is accessible via a private road and by river. This parcel will be purchased primarily for conservation, but part of the high ground may be developed in the future for camping or other park uses if road access can be secured. The high ground will be restored to Oak Savannah habitat and the wetlands and river corridor preserved.	Fee Title	16.8	0.4	\$69,000	Private	Frazer Community Development Corporation	Negotiations In Progress
Northwest Parcel 030239001	Becker	Parcel includes public access from 120th St. (Township Road) via a private gravel road, two wetlands totaling 1.08 acres surrounded by 3.2 acres of woodland, and high ground formerly used as pasture and now partially cultivated for row crops. The disturbed	Fee Title	30.85	-	\$126,700	Private	Frazer Community Development Corporation	Negotiations In Progress

		high ground is ideal for the proposed tent and group camping areas and hard and natural surface trails due to the views it affords of the river corridor, planned park, and City beyond. The disturbed land not used for camping or trails will be restored to Oak Savannah habitat, and the wetlands and woods will be preserved.							
Totals				174.55	1.09	\$717,000			

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.

The idea for a park on this land was formed about fifteen years ago and was publicly addressed in the City of Frazee's 2018-19 comprehensive planning process, which included many public meetings and a formal City adoption process. The parcels were identified during the public comprehensive planning process because of their location on both sides of the Otter Tail River, encompassing 1.09 river miles, and the large number of wetlands, and forest that were not cultivated. The parcels were also chosen because two major trails already pass through Frazee, and a third will be built soon, so the site can be a scenic park where the three major trails meet, and long distance trail visitors can start or end their trips. For the State Water Trail, the parcels are at river mile 145, making the site an ideal location for a take out for day trips from the start of the water trail at river mile 159, and for the planned campground for multi day trail users. There is only one primitive launch site between the start of the water trail and the site, so the launch is needed. The parcels have a flat shoreline area ideal for a launch site with space for a parking lot and other amenities. The site will allow the existing on road segment of the North Country Trail near Frazee to move to a scenic, riverside location in the planned park, and the Heartland State Trail will pass by only a few blocks away and will be accessible via a spur trail. The site's location adjacent to the public elementary and high schools, within four blocks the residential section of Frazee, and about one-half mile from downtown Frazee makes it walkable and bikeable for most Frazee residents and school classes. In addition, the former owner had been allowing school classes from the adjacent high school and elementary school to use the site for outdoor education for years, so public use was already a tradition. A covered bridge over the river at the site is a local landmark treasured by the community. Locals eagerly await its opening to the public for trail use, and it will be an icon for the new regional park.

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.

1) Wannigan Regional Park Master Plan, adopted by City of Frazee and the Frazee Community Development Corporation in 2022

https://frazeecity.com/process.php?option=com_news&task=detail&id=24

2) Frazee Comprehensive Plan 2035, adopted by the City of Frazee in 2019

https://issuu.com/njpacoop/docs/frazee_comprehensiveplan_draft-single

3) Wannigan Park Natural Resource Management Plan (see attachment page)

4) Drone video of project site:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHxmQankO9s>

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.

The management plans for Wannigan Park form a portion of the Wannigan Park Master Plan, adopted by the Frazee City Council and Frazee Community Development Corporation's Board of Directors in March 2022 (See link in the Acquisition section #2.) The Natural Resources Plan is included in the Master Plan's Appendix (attached.) Components of the restoration and management plan include:

- Seed wetland areas with natives
- Restore former farm fields and pasture to Oak Savannah and Tallgrass Prairie
- Preserve river corridor, woods and wetlands
- Plant native tree and shrub buffers along edges of property adjacent to residences, and around campsites
- Develop pollinator and butterfly native gardens as demonstration gardens
- Provide short boardwalk sections along two wetlands for bird observation and outdoor education
- Develop an interpretive center and wayside exhibits along trails to educate visitors about natural resources, culture and history.

The City of Frazee will own the property, and the Frazee Community Development Corporation will manage it (see attached agreement.) The park will be acquired and developed using a combination of State, Federal, and local government funding as well as donations and grants from private foundations, corporations, businesses and individuals. A business plan has been developed, documenting that the expected income from the campsites as well as amphitheater and picnic shelter rental will financially sustain the entire park, including long term management and maintenance. The Park will be developed in phases, starting with the trails, water access, picnic shelters and 49 campsites, in order to start generating income to maintain the park. Native restoration will be ongoing as soon as the property is acquired. The larger cost items, the amphitheater and interpretive building, will be later phases.

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.

N/A

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.

Written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction in accordance with M.S. 116P.17.

Attachments

Required Attachments

Map

File: [2f6cbba1-3c8.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Map

This map depicts the boundaries of three parcels proposed for acquisition (outlined in red and labeled as "Phase 1") for the planned Wannigan Regional Park in Burlington Township, Becker County along Otter Tail River. The boundaries are shown on an aerial photo. Adjacent parcels and owners are also....

Financial Capacity

File: [b5e012f4-287.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution	5ded059a-193.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
Letter of Support Becker County Soil and Water District	29bcb10e-dcc.pdf
Letter of Support City of Frazee	5766cac4-960.pdf
Essentia Health System Letter of Support	7e5aef88-674.pdf
Letter of Support PartnerShip 4 Health State MN Program	c4d102c9-312.pdf
Letter of Support North Country National Scenic Trail	d064ad8f-730.pdf
Letter of Support City of Perham	22528b92-ccb.pdf
Letter of Support CornerStone	6a50121e-94d.pdf
Letter of Support Creating Community Consulting	61d7a577-356.pdf
Letter of Support Frazee Schools	198158e1-1fc.pdf
Wannigan Regional Park Concept Map	d7fde344-baa.pdf
Letter of Support State Senator Kent Eken	8568923f-bad.pdf
Natural Resources Management Plan	75a3e9c8-a13.pdf
City of Frazee--Frazee Community Development Corp Agreement--Wannigan Park	9c930801-caf.pdf
Financial Capacity Part 1 of 3	1864349a-4b4.pdf
Financial Capacity Part 2 of 3	2c99f2a9-751.pdf
Financial Capacity Part 3 of 3	6d6079e9-ab1.pdf
Letter of Support Becker County	2af91c2e-240.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

Yes: 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?

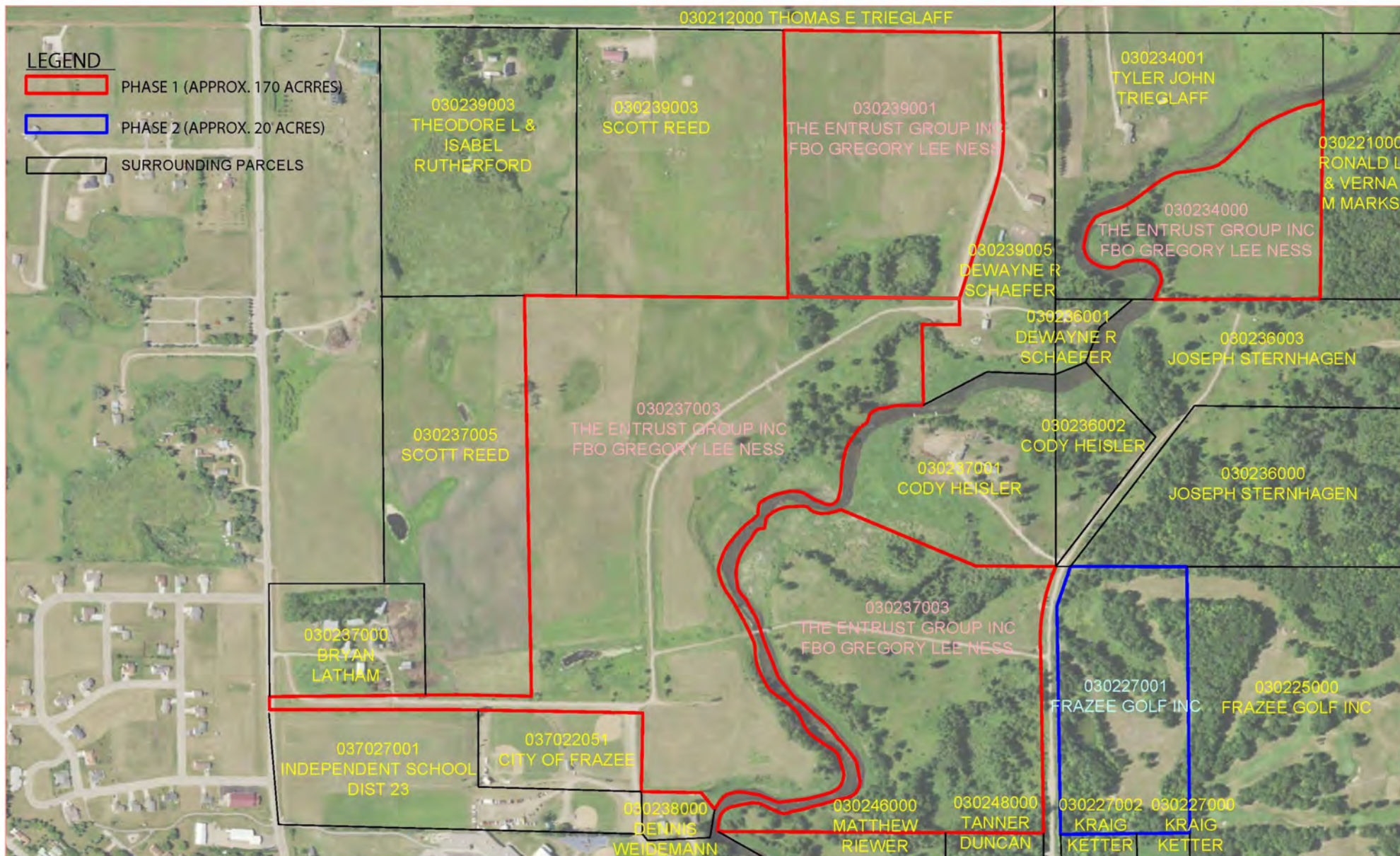
N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No



Wannigan Regional Park Planned Acquisition – EXHIBIT 1

Becker County, Minnesota

