



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

### 2026 Request for Proposal

#### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2026-339

**Proposal Title:** Native Prairie Bank-Private Native Prairie Conservation and Outreach

#### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Heidi Wolf

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

**Office Telephone:** (651) 392-0974

**Email:** heidi.wolf@state.mn.us

#### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Native Prairie Bank (NPB) will help landowners conserve native prairie through multiple outreach methods, restoration and enhancement of 600 acres, and protection of 140 acres through conservation easements.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$2,500,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2030

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Land (F)

#### Project Location

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

Region(s): Central, Metro, NW, SE, SW,

**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.**

Prairies are recognized as one of the most threatened ecosystems in North America and temperate grasslands as one of the most endangered in the world. Tallgrass prairie, savanna and barren communities have declined by more than 98% nationwide. Prairies once covered 1/3 of Minnesota's land area, yet today, only 1-2% (~250,000 acres) of Minnesota's original native prairie still exists. Native prairie provides a multitude of benefits to Minnesotans, such as water filtration and recharge, pollinator and wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, soil health, erosion control, outdoor recreation, etc. Prairies also serve as critical habitat for a disproportionate number of rare species. In Minnesota, 41% of the state's rare species are associated with native prairie, even though native prairie comprises less than 0.5% of the land area. Although protection of native prairie has been a conservation priority for decades, nearly half of Minnesota's native prairie remains unprotected, with the vast majority occurring on privately-owned land. Threats to native prairie continue to be widespread including cropland conversion, mining, development, invasive species, woody encroachment and non-prairie focused land use/management.

**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.**

This proposal seeks to protect and enhance high-quality native prairie to ensure these highly complex habitats continue to protect the habitat essential to many of the state's rare, threatened and endangered species, set the standard for native prairie pollinator habitat and provide a multitude of benefits to the people and animals of the state.

Established in 1987 through Minnesota Statute 84.96, Native Prairie Bank (NPB) has a proven track record of working with landowners to enhance and protect high-quality native prairie while leaving the land in private ownership. In partnership with landowners, Native Prairie Bank currently manages, 15,543 acres of native prairie and associated habitat on 179 sites throughout the prairie region of the state. The goal is to expand this partnership and effort through this proposal.

**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?**

Through this proposal, prairie outreach and technical assistance will be provided to landowners, practitioners, youth and the general public. Native prairie restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on about 600 acres of Native Prairie Banks. Permanent protection of about 140 acres will take place through the acquisition of Native Prairie Bank conservation easements with priority given to high quality remnant prairie identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS).

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Prairie Landowner Assistance, Prairie Outreach, and Existing Native Prairie Bank Stewardship

**Activity Budget:** \$218,956

**Activity Description:**

Private landowners, practitioners, youth and the general public will increase their awareness and stewardship of native prairie as a result of this project's workshops, field days, presentations, one-on-one technical assistance, online resource development, etc. The Prairie Landowner Network established through the ML18 appropriation will continue to use innovative ways to connect prairie landowners and practitioners through social media, email, newsletters, and training opportunities. This network is aimed at improving prairie quality on private lands by keeping landowners and practitioners up to date on the best management strategies. At least 10 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan that will provide specific prairie management expertise for their property. About 70 monitoring visits will be completed on existing NPBs to evaluate current conditions and ensure easement compliance.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Monitoring and Stewardship of ~70 NPB Easements	June 30, 2030
~10 prairie stewardship plans provided to prairie landowners	June 30, 2030
1200+ prairie stewards/landowners participating in the Prairie Landowner Network	June 30, 2030
Consultation, guidance, management assistance, etc. to 90+ landowners	June 30, 2030
~10 workshops/field days for prairie landowners, practitioners, youth and general public (~500 people)	June 30, 2030

### Activity 2: 600 Acres of Native Prairie Habitat Enhancement & Restoration

**Activity Budget:** \$1,264,833

**Activity Description:**

Restoration and enhancement activities will be completed on about 600 acres. Activities include seed collection, site preparation, planting, invasive species prevention and control, woody species removal, boundary sign installation, site cleanup, prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance, such as haying, mowing or grazing, where appropriate) and monitoring. Ecological Monitoring will occur at 15 NPB sites to collect ecological data used to evaluate whether the objectives of management were met, to analyze ecological changes over time and to contribute to future management decisions. Restoration and enhancement activities will be carried out via landowner agreements, DNR staff, Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), volunteers, and/or contractors.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Ecological monitoring of ~15 NPB sites	June 30, 2030
NPB easement boundary signs & development work on ~4 NPB sites	June 30, 2030
~415 acres of prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance)	June 30, 2030
~180 acres of woody removal & invasive species treatment	June 30, 2030
~5 acres of prairie restoration or interseeding post enhancement implementation	June 30, 2030

### Activity 3: Acquisition and Stewardship of 140 acres of Native Prairie Bank Easements

**Activity Budget:** \$1,016,211

**Activity Description:**

Native Prairie Bank will work with willing landowners to permanently protect 140 acres of high-quality native prairie and supporting habitats through perpetual conservation easements. Payment rates are determined by authorizing law, M.S. 84.96, as applied according to policies of the Department of Natural Resources. Conservation easement baseline reports will be completed on approximately 4 NPBs. Priority sites are identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) which target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, key habitats for Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and parcels within larger habitat complexes to reduce impacts from habitat fragmentation. Funding will be deposited into a conservation easement stewardship account dedicated to perpetual monitoring and enforcement on NPB easements acquired with this proposal.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Acquisition of ~140 acres of Native Prairie Bank conservation easements	June 30, 2030
~4 baseline property reports for NPB easements	June 30, 2030
Dollars deposited into conservation easement stewardship account (~4 easements)	June 30, 2030

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan Partners and Local Technical Teams	Teams of staff from SWCD's, NRCS, DNR, USFWS, TNC, Pheasants Forever, etc.	Help create and provide outreach to prairie landowners, youth and citizens. Cultivate relationships with prairie landowners and bring new potential NPB parcels to DNR prairie staff for further evaluation.	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?**

Currently, DNR holds 15,543 acres of NPB easements, which accounts for 40% of the MBS mapped native prairie protected through conservation easements statewide. If NPB aimed to protect 40% of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan native prairie easement protection goals, NPB would need to acquire an additional 44,000 acres. At the same time, without active natural resource management prairie values will be lost. Thus, Native Prairie Bank could utilize ENRTF support of about \$2-4M per year to sustain and protect native prairie.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 09b	\$2,000,000
Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 09h	\$1,341,000
Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 09e	\$1,353,000
Native Prairie Outreach and Stewardship through Native Prairie	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 09d	\$620,000

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Heidi Wolf

**Job Title:** Ecosystem Management and Protection Section Manager

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

Heidi Wolf is the section manager for the Ecosystem, Management and Protection Section under which the Native Prairie Bank program falls. This position exists to manage and direct the Division's work on habitat management and restoration; invasive species; forest and prairie systems; conservation planning and policy; ecological education outreach and recreation; biological surveys and monitoring; acquiring and managing Scientific and Natural Areas; and ecosystem services evaluation programs such that these support the DNR mission.

Heidi has been with the Department of Natural Resources since 2001. During her time as the Invasive Species Unit Supervisor, Heidi was the grant manager for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant (~\$800,000 annually) and the State Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention Grant (~\$50,000 annually) from 2014 to 2022. During that time Heidi also oversaw the issuance of the DNR's Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Grants (~400,000 annually) and a variety of grants and contracts to sub-grant awards or get work completed through partners. In her current position

Heidi manages or influences a budget of about \$16,000,000.

Heidi completed her Bachelors of Science at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities with a Major in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies.

**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 & Seasonal Crews		On the ground project implementation			20%	0.48	X	\$30,000
Specialist & Technicians		On the ground project implementation			25%	10.28	X	\$900,000
Coordinators & Consultants		Coordinate acquisition, enhancement, outreach, and budget implementation, contract execution, partner coordination			25%	0.44	X	\$50,000
Habitat Crew Leaders/Supervisors		Day-to-day field operations planning, organization, implementation and supervision.			25%	0.48	X	\$58,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,038,000</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD & Conservation Corps of MN & IA (CCMI)	Service Contract	prairie restoration; invasives removal & treatment; prescribed disturbance; site development; prairie stewardship planning; ecological monitoring; outreach materials production; CCMI individual placements.				3.6		\$367,000
State of Minnesota	Acquisition services	Professional Services for Acquisition: Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition				0.44		\$100,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$467,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	Activity 1: outreach materials and supplies Activity 2: herbicide, posts, signs, safety supplies, equipment repair/parts, seed cleaning/testing, field tools, exclosure fence for monitoring, etc. Activity 3: deed and baseline reporting printing, field tools	Project implementation					\$25,000
	Equipment	Activity 2: minor equipment for field operations (walk-behind brush mowers, water pumps and tanks, etc.)	Project implementation					\$15,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
	Conservation Easement Acquisition	Acres: 140 Parcels: 4						\$600,000
	Stewardship Funds	State of Minnesota-MN DNR						\$100,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$700,000</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					\$110,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$110,000</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
	Printing	Printing of outreach materials and Minnesota Prairie Landowner Network Newsletter	Direct printing and mailing for project outcomes					\$19,414
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$19,414</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 (~\$23,680), Safety (~\$3,752), Financial (~\$17757), Communication (~\$1,902), IT (~\$77,124), and Planning Support (~\$1,371).					\$125,586
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$125,586</b>



							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>
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## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
<b>Personnel</b> - Laborers & Seasonal Crews		On the ground project implementation	<b>Classified</b> : Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for NPB, 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 NPB activities.
<b>Personnel</b> - Specialist & Technicians		On the ground project implementation	<b>Classified</b> : Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for NPB, 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 NPB activities.
<b>Personnel</b> - Coordinators & Consultants		Coordinate acquisition, enhancement, outreach, and budget implementation, contract execution, partner coordination	<b>Classified</b> : Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the NPB 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 NPB activities.
<b>Personnel</b> - Habitat Crew Leaders/Supervisors		Day-to-day field operations planning, organization, implementation and supervision.	<b>Classified</b> : Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations for the NPB 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 NPB activities.

Non ENRTF Funds

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

Total Project Cost: \$2,500,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Agassiz Dunes	Norman, Polk,	Dry barrens oak savanna-rare prairie plant community in northern MN	Conservation Easement	80	-	\$160,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Big Stone Lake Prairie (north & south)	Big Stone	Dry Hill, mesic and wet prairies along Big Stone Lake next to DNR state park and SNA parcels	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$156,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Big Stone Moraines	Big Stone	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species	Conservation Easement	80	-	\$312,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Blanket Flower Prairies	Becker, Clay, Otter Tail,	Dry Sand-gravel prairie in Alexandria Moraine and Hardwood Hills subsection	Conservation Easement	100	-	\$230,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Blue Mounds/Touch-The-Sky Prairies	Rock	Mesic to wet prairie with rock outcrops; provides habitat for many rare rock outcrop plants	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$304,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Blue Stem Prairie	Clay	Mesic, wet meadow/carr, & wet prairie parcels intermixed with DNR SNA and Audubon preserves	Conservation Easement	80	-	\$304,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Chanarambie Creek Prairies	Murray, Pipestone,	Dry gravel, mesic & wet prairies in biggest grassland complex with the highest quality prairie parcels in SW MN	Conservation Easement	80	-	\$536,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Des Moines River Valley	Cottonwood, Jackson,	Des Moines River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, dry hill prairie; expands habitat for many, butterflies, birds and rare plants - including Prairie Bush Clover.	Conservation Easement	80	-	\$560,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Felton Prairies	Clay	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation Easement	100	-	\$350,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Frontenac Hay Creek Bluffs	Goodhue	Southern dry bedrock bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams	Conservation Easement	20	-	\$116,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun

Glacial Lakes & Moraine Prairie	Kandiyohi, Pope, Swift, Stearns,	Dry sand-gravel prairies of the Alexandria Moraine, provides habitat for the Threatened Dakota Skipper as well as the Poweshiek Skipper and Regal Fritillary	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$120,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Glacial Ridge Prairies	Polk	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation Easement	100	-	\$190,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairies	Lincoln, Pipestone,	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat around existing TNC and DNR lands	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$220,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Kellogg-Weaver Dunes Prairies	Wabasha, Winona,	Rolling sand dune topography, mature dunes with dry, mesic, or wet prairie as well as oak savanna	Conservation Easement	20	-	\$100,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Lake Bronson and Aspen Parkland Prairies	Kittson, Marshall, Roseau,	Aspen parkland complex-many prairie dominated aspen complexes are succeeding to woodland in absence of fire	Conservation Easement	100	-	\$120,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Lake Christina Hills Prairies	Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail,	Dry Hill to wet prairies; part of the rolling topography of the Alexandria moraine	Conservation Easement	80	-	\$184,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Lake Traverse Prairies	Traverse	Dry prairie and prairie- woodland complex	Conservation Easement	100	-	\$410,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
MN River Prairies	Chippewa, Redwood, Renville, Swift, Yellow Medicine,	MN River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$280,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
MN River Prairies	Chippewa, Redwood, Swift, Yellow Medicine,	MN River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$280,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Prairie Coteau/Rock River Prairies	Pipestone	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat around the Prairie Coteau SNA	Conservation Easement	80	-	\$440,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun

Root River Valley Prairies	Winona, Houston, Fillmore,	Southern Dry Bedrock Bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams; habitat for timber rattlesnakes	Conservation Easement	20	-	\$88,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Rothsay Prairies	Wilkin	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as Prairie Chickens	Conservation Easement	160	-	\$512,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Shakotan Prairies	Lincoln	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$200,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Sherburne Sands Prairies	Sherburne	A mosaic of prairie, wetlands and oak savanna set in an important transition zone	Conservation Easement	80	-	\$320,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Wambach Santee Prairie	Mahnomen	Prairie meadow complexes, prairie rich fens and other rare northern plant communities	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$140,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
Yellow Medicine Coteau Prairie	Yellow Medicine	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for Western White Prairie Clover and Upland Sandpiper	Conservation Easement	40	-	\$168,000	Private	DNR-SNA	Has Not Begun
<b>Totals</b>				<b>1,720</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$6,800,000</b>			

## Conservation Easement 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.**

Eligibility for Native Prairie Bank (NPB) is established in both M.S. 84.96 and MN Rule 6136.09. To qualify, land must be dominated by original native prairie vegetation, usually occurring where the sod has never been broken. Eligible lands are prioritized based on factors including: size, quality and diversity of the native prairie habitat; occurrence of, or suitable habitat for rare species; location relative to other native prairie and/or public land; and potential for long-term habitat management and enhancement. MBS data is the foundation for many of these evaluation factors. Native Prairie Bank uses the "Native Prairie Bank Evaluation Form" to evaluate and score individual projects. This form has been included as an attachment to this proposal for reference.

### **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.**

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/prairieplan/index.html>)

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025 (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mnwap/index.html>)

Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/conservationagenda/index.html>)

Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan ([https://www.lccmr.leg.mn/documents/scpp/statewide\\_plan.htm](https://www.lccmr.leg.mn/documents/scpp/statewide_plan.htm))

### **3. For any conservation easement acquired, 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 NPB will have a Prairie Stewardship Plan. Prairie Stewardship Plans include, 1) a resource inventory and assessment of all the lands native plant communities or restored to plant communities that would have been native to the site, 2) landowner and DNR's goals, and 3) prairie management alternatives/recommendations. The goals for the NPB'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 ecological monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including, but not limited to, the landowner, ENRTF, Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), federal grants, and other funds as appropriated. Each Prairie Stewardship Plan is kept in a DNR internal shared electronic filing system accessible to all SNA staff along with a copy given to the landowner.

### **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.**

DNR policy is to notify the county board prior to easement closing, however county board approval is not requested.

### **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 NPB acquisitions are required to have approval of the Ecological and Water Resources Division Director and land conveyances are accepted by the Director or Deputy Director of the Division of Lands and Minerals who have delegated authority to approve this for the Commissioner.

### **6. Provide a statement addressing how conservation easements will address specific water quality protection activities, such as keeping water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, protecting groundwater, and not permitting artificial hydrological modifications.**

Native Prairie Bank's goal is to protect existing high quality, high functioning native prairie that currently is providing multiple water quality benefits. In addition, the easement terms and the Prairie Stewardship Plan they are required to follow assures that the prairie health is sustained, thus they inherently do an excellent job of keeping the water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, and protecting groundwater. In addition, use of pesticides on

the easement is prohibited without approval of the DNR. The easement terms also prohibit artificial hydrological modifications by prohibiting excavation, cultivations, drainage, filling, and irrigation.

**7. Describe the long-term monitoring and enforcement program for conservation easements acquired on parcels by your organization, including explanations of the process used for calculating conservation easement monitoring and enforcement costs, the process used for annual inspection and reporting on monitoring and enforcement activities, and the process used to ensure perpetual funding and implementation of monitoring and enforcement activities.**

The policy of the DNR is to protect both the conservation values of the property protected by these easements and the investment of the state in those interests. Elements of this stewardship include the creation of baseline property reports, enforcement protocols, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and reporting, and maintaining effective working relationships with the owners of these easement properties. Native Prairie Bank implements this policy by following DNR Operational Order #128 “Conservation Easement Stewardship” in addition to the “Ecological and Water Resources Division Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan and Guidelines”. This operational order and supporting division guidance calls for annual landowner contacts as well as on-the-ground site evaluations once every three years if no violations are found. If a violation is found, monitoring would occur annually until the violation is corrected.

Budgeted into this work plan is funding to be deposited into the DNR’s Conservation Easement Stewardship Account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements. The dedicated stewardship funds will provide the support needed for long-term, ongoing monitoring and minor enforcement activities of Native Prairie Bank easements acquired under this proposal. For each specific Native Prairie Bank easement, initial investment dollars are determined by using a DNR approved Conservation Easement Stewardship Calculator, which estimates the annual expenses and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity.

Funds for this activity will be deposited into the established conservation easement stewardship account and Minnesota Management & Budget protocols will be adhered to. After the closing of each Native Prairie Bank easement acquired with this appropriation, the calculated easement stewardship funds will be deposited into this account. Once funds are deposited and interest begins to accrue, this accrued interest will be applied towards actual expenses tied to annual landowner contact, regular compliance monitoring, record keeping and minor enforcement protocols.

## 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 activities done with this appropriation are on DNR-owned perpetual Native Prairie Bank conservation easements administered by the SNA Program.

**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 project will be based upon a Native Prairie Stewardship Plan (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 by the landowner and 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”. NPB restorations typically follow the current BWSR Guidelines, including Project Guidance, Plant Community Restoration, and Temporary Cover. 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. Restoration and management of DNR lands are governed by DNR Operational Order #124 on “Plant Material Standards for Native Plant Community Restoration” and DNR Operational Order #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, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination of funding sources, including, but not limited to, the landowner, 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 Native Prairie Bank Program often does project or activity specific agreements. For restoration projects, CCMI has been and will continue to be used when appropriate for hand seed harvest, invasive species control and prescribed burning on NPBs.

**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.**

Restoration 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. The evaluation reports include a summary of management plan outcomes, activities completed through the project, map of the project area, a statement of ongoing management needs and funding, and a summary of the evaluation.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

File: [a96e1b4b-4f6.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

The map depicts the remaining unprotected native prairie throughout Minnesota, approximately 123,000 acres continue to have no formal protection. This proposal aims to protect 140 acres of remaining high-quality native prairie within MN Prairie Conservation Plan priority areas....

### Supplemental Attachments

*Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
NPB Protection Evaluation Form	<a href="#">d73cda8b-b26.doc</a>

## Administrative Use

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

Yes: Restoration, Conservation Easement Acquisition,

**Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

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

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

**Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?**

No

**Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?**

Yes

**Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?**

Yes

**Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:**

MN DNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources

**Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements**

Yes, I understand

