

I. Acquisition of Scientific and Natural Areas

Program Manager: Bob Djupstrom
Scientific and Natural Areas Program
Department of Natural Resources - Box 7
500 Lafayette Rd.
St. Paul, MN 55155
612-297-2357

A. M.L. 91, Chpt. 254, Art. 1, Sect. 14, Subd: 9 (K) Appropriation: \$300,000
Balance: \$ - 0 -

Acquisition of Scientific and Natural Areas: This appropriation is to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire scientific and natural area sites consistent with the state scientific and natural areas plan.

B. Compatible Data: During the biennium ending June 30, 1993, the data collected by projects funded under this section that have common value for natural resource planning and management must conform to information architecture as defined in guidelines and standards adopted by the Information Policy Office. In addition, the data must be provided to and integrated with the Minnesota Land Management Information Center's geographic data bases with the integration costs borne by the activity receiving funding under this section.

C. Match Requirement: Not applicable

II. Narrative

The Department of Natural Resources has developed a long-range plan for Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA) protection. This plan relies on the Natural Heritage Program and County Biological Survey to identify plant and animal communities, rare and endangered species or other biotic features, and geological formations for protection as SNA's for scientific study and public education as components of a healthy environment.

Many rare species and communities occur on existing publicly owned property. However, others occur on private lands where public lands are lacking or where inventory work has determined these elements do not occur on existing public lands. These critical private lands need to be acquired to ensure their protection and management.

III. Objectives

A. Acquire identified critical lands as scientific and natural areas

A.1. Narrative: To acquire lands and water that meet the objectives and criteria established in the SNA long-range plan approved by the LCMR in 1980. Target areas have been identified as priorities for protection by the Heritage Program/County Biological Survey. Areas targeted are of state significance because of the undisturbed plant communities, geological features, and rare and endangered species found there.

A.2. Procedure: Presently, 92 areas have been designated on existing public lands or acquired through purchase, gift, or free leases. To adequately protect Minnesota's critical resource "elements" the SNA long-range plan call for the protection of at least five sites for plant communities and three sites for rare species in each landscape region of the State. Not to preserve these sites would deny future generations the opportunity to enjoy, study and research remnants of our natural heritage and result in the loss of valuable rare species and communities from the state.

The SNA Program as a matter of practice explores all possibilities for gifts, partial donations, and land exchange possibilities whenever discussing protection of critical sites with landowners. Similarly, the public land base is being continually reviewed to determine if critical elements are already adequately protected. Because the acquisition of lands is from willing sellers at an appraised value, the SNA Program is unable to purchase an interest in many critical sites.

A.3. <u>Budget</u>	<u>LCMR funds</u>
a. Amount Budgeted	\$200,000
b. Balance	\$ - 0 -

A.4. Timeline for Products/Tasks July91 Jan92 June92 Jan93 June93

Acquire critical sites

A.5. Status: The acquisition of a prairie/sand dune community, a parcel at an oak savanna and a site for the five-lined skink has been accomplished. Two projects had lands gifted to establish and expand SNA. One project is currently being appraised. Eleven other projects have had multiple landowners contacted to determine their interest in selling their property.

A.6. Benefits: Minnesota's natural areas serve as places where the public can view rare plant and animal species or quietly appreciate and study nature in an unspoiled setting. They serve as outdoor classrooms for teaching and research in the natural sciences.

Scientists use natural areas to gain insights into natural processes, to gather information on environmental contaminants, and as bench marks or reference points against which to measure changes in our environment.

Nature preserves also serve as genetic storehouses of plant and animal material that could someday be used to provide breakthroughs in medicine, agriculture or industry.

Last, natural areas protect the best and/or last remaining occurrences of rare plant and animal species, plant communities, and unique geological features.

B. Develop public use facilities and address protection needs

B.1. Narrative: To ensure the elements present on any SNA are not jeopardized, damaged, or destroyed and to accommodate appropriate public use requires development/protection activities. To not adequately protect these sites would jeopardize the existing investment made in acquiring the property and the very existence of valuable rare plant and animal species and communities. In addition, lack of limited site facilities discourages appropriate public use or may even result in damage to a site’s resources.

B.2. Procedures: To ensure that SNAs are adequately protected and managed, management plans are developed. Management plans outline development needs for public use and protection needs for the rare and unique resources found on any site. In general, development or protection costs are relatively low and basically consist of signing, posting, facilities, restoration activities, and interpretive facilities.

B.3. <u>Budget:</u>	<u>LCMR Funds</u>
a. Amount Budgeted	\$100,000
b. Balance	\$ - 0 -

B.4. Timeline for Products.tasks: July91 Jan92 June92 Jan93 June93
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B.5. Status: Development activities were carried out on forty-seven SNA. These activities included forty-one prescribed burns to control woody encroachment/exotic species and ensure the survival of native prairie plants and animals; twenty-seven projects involving signing, posting, gating and fencing natural areas; fifty-six projects to reduce woody encroachment from trees, sumac and other shrubs on prairies; twenty projects to eliminate exotic species threatening wooded and prairie sites; nineteen projects developing burn breaks; seventeen site clean-up projects; and six projects involving seed collection and the restoration of prairies and woods.

B.6. Benefits: The public investment made in acquiring the property and the rare features found on the site will be protected for present and future generations. Limited facilities and interpretive signs will also encourage appropriate public use, and serve to educate the public about the resources at the site and ensure greater protection for the rare elements found there.

IV. Evaluation: For the FY92-93 biennium the program can be evaluated by the number of sites identified by the Heritage Program and/or County Biological Survey that are protected and the development and protection actions that take place on SNAs.

V. Context:
A. Many more sites have been identified for protection and management than funds have been available for these purposes.

B. The proposed project will greatly assist in the acquisition of new sites.

C. Since 1975 approximately \$3,876,000 has been available for acquisition and development of SNA as follows:

<u>Acquisition</u>					
<u>State bonding</u>	<u>Reinvest in Minnesota</u>	<u>LCMR</u>	<u>State bonding</u>	<u>RIM</u>	<u>LCMR</u>
\$3,076,000	\$600,000	\$100,000	\$310,000	\$37,500	\$240,000

It is anticipated that the SNA program will request \$1,000,000 on a biennial basis from the LCMR.

D. Scientific and Natural Areas	<u>Amount</u>	\$1,400,000
Acquisition and Betterment - Laws 1987, Chapter 400, Sec. 5, Subd. 2 (e).	<u>Balance</u>	\$ - 0 -
Reinvest in Minnesota - SNA Acquisition	<u>Amount</u>	\$600,000
Laws 1990, Chapter 10, Sec. 20, Subd. 3	<u>Balance</u>	\$ - 0 -
Scientific and Natural Areas Acquisition	<u>Amount</u>	\$100,000
Laws 1992, Chapter 559, Sec. 18, Subd. 8	<u>Balance</u>	\$ - 0 -

E. Not available at this time.

- VI. Qualifications
1. Program Manager
- a. Bachelor of Science Degree Natural Resource Management - Wildlife Ecology Major, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
- b. U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Outdoor Recreation 1973-75 Minnesota DNR - Trail Planner, Environmental Review Specialist, Long Range Planner 1975-1982 Minnesota DNR - Supervisor SNA Program - 1982 to Present
2. Cooperators/other Investigators
- None

VII. Semiannual status report will be submitted not later than Jan. 1, 1992, July 1, 1992, Jan. 1, 1993 and a final status report by June 30, 1993.