

## **M.L. 2013 Project Abstract**

For the Period Ending June 30, 2016

**PROJECT TITLE:** Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Judy Schulte

**AFFILIATION:** MN DNR-SNA

**MAILING ADDRESS:** 1241 East Bridge Street

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**FUNDING SOURCE:** Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

**LEGAL CITATION:** M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04c

**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT:** \$750,000

### **Overall Project Outcomes and Results**

Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements were acquired on 330 acres thereby permanently protecting valuable native prairie. Specifically, 3 easements were acquired in part with this appropriation located in Wilkin, Traverse and Big Stone Counties (194 acres pro-rated to this appropriation). In total, 12 baseline property reports were written through this appropriation (including 2 of the 3 newly acquired easement baselines). In addition to baseline reports, 16 existing Native Prairie Bank easements were monitored and data entered into the Department of Natural Resource (DNR)'s Conservation Easement Monitoring database.

Restoration and enhancement activities were completed on a total of over 850 acres exceeding the project's target acreage. Specific accomplishments are 18 prescribed burns on 702 acres, 4 prairie reconstructions on 6 acres, and 21 invasive species control projects on 147 acres; 9 of these 43 projects involved Conservation Corps Minnesota (CCM) crews. Boundary signing has been completed on 5 NPB easements.

Through this appropriation, 9 different events were held aimed at getting prairie stewardship information to landowners. NPB staff also worked with all 10 Prairie Conservation Plan Local Technical Teams to insure that landowners being approached by other practitioners are made aware of their prairie stewardship options such as Native Prairie Bank that are available through the Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program. Prairie specialists engaged 70+ different priority prairie landowners one-on-one to discuss prairie protection and management options for their property. One landowner received a comprehensive Prairie Stewardship plan.

### **Project Results Use and Dissemination**

Native Prairie Tax Exemption brochures were updated and printed to aid in prairie outreach, encourage prairie preservation and improve prairie stewardship of native prairie acres that may not be protected long-term by other means. A .pdf copy of this brochure is included with the final report and a paper copy can be made available upon request. A total of 3000 Prairie Tax Exemption brochures were printed, 1000 of which were paid for through this appropriation.

Additionally, included with the final report is an article written about a landowner technical assistance success story. This article was written to promote the technical assistance available to private land prairie landowners through this appropriation and encourage pro-active prairie land management. An abbreviated version of this story was shared in the SNA *Nature Notes* which is published quarterly and distributed to over 3,250 subscribers. One Prairie Stewardship Plan was completed and is being followed by the landowner.





# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2013 Work Plan Final Report

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**Date of Status Update Report:** August 15, 2016

**Date of Next Status Update Report:** Final Report

**Date of Work Plan Approval:** June 25, 2013

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2016

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**PROJECT TITLE:** Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte

**Affiliation:** MN DNR - SNA

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**Location:** Statewide

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**Total ENRTF Project Budget:**

**ENRTF Appropriation:** \$750,000

**Amount Spent:** \$747,150

**Balance:** \$2,850

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04c

**Appropriation Language:** \$750,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire native prairie bank easements, prepare baseline property assessments, restore and enhance native prairie sites, and provide technical assistance to landowners. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2016, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

## **I. PROJECT TITLE: Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement**

**II. PROJECT STATEMENT:** About half of Minnesota's 225,000 acres of remaining native prairie is not formally protected, meaning it's in the hands of private landowners. The MN Prairie Conservation Plan calls for the protection of remaining native prairie in the State of Minnesota. This project aims to work with landowners of native prairie sites identified by the MN Biological Survey (MBS) and provide them protection options and support their conservation efforts through a suite of tools offered by the DNR Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program. About 200 acres of high quality native prairie will be acquired by the DNR and permanently protected as Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements. Native habitat restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on 690 acres of NPBs and high priority private prairie lands threatened by human impacts, invasive species, and lack of natural disturbance regimes. Private landowners will also receive management consultation from SNA Prairie Specialists as well as prairie stewardship planning assistance.

## **III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**Project Status as of (January 31, 2014):** SNA acquisition staff have approached and begun NPB easement negotiations with 3 different landowners – a 217-ac Swift County site, a 60-ac Swift County site, and a 55-ac Wilken County site. SNA prairie specialists have begun writing 8 burn plans, installed 2 firebreaks, and continue to prepare for the 2014 spring burn season. Priority invasive species treatment sites have been identified and 11 projects have been initiated. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in Farm Fest, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement consultation to landowners (August 2013). SNA Prairie Specialists have also engaged 4 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property.

**Project Status as of (July 31, 2014):** SNA acquisition staff have completed 2 NPB easements – a 53 acre Wilken County site and a 158 acre Traverse County site, and are nearing on option on a 124 acre site in Big Stone County. SNA prairie specialists have complete 4 prescribed burns on 99 acres and are prepare for the 2015 spring burn season. One invasive species treatment on 8 acres is complete, and 11 invasive control projects have been initiated. SNA Prairie Specialists have also participated in 3 landowner workshops/field days, providing native prairie protection, restoration and enhancement consultation to landowners. In addition, SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 10 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property.

**Amendment Request (July 31, 2014):** The original budget for Activity 1 included \$9,000 for contracts. The intent was to contract out some of the baseline property report work. It has become difficult to find vendor who can do this kind of work. The reports are also entered in the department's easement monitoring database, which vendors do not have access to. It has been much easier and cost effect to have DNR staff complete baseline reports. The SNA Program would like to request that \$9,000 within Activity 1 be moved from contracts be to easement acquisition and the associated professional costs (see Attachment A).

**Amendment Approved: 8/11/14**

**Project Status as of (January 31, 2015):** Two Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements protecting 212 acres (139 acres pro-rated to this appropriation) have been acquired – a 54.5-acre Wilkin County site (44 acres paid with the appropriation) and a 157.7-acre Traverse County site (95 acres paid with this appropriation). The DNR has options acquisition of a 124.6 acre NPB easement in Big Stone County (60 acres to be paid with this appropriation). Herbaceous invasive species treatment activities were completed on 14.1 acres at 3 NPBs and prescribed burns were completed on 205.1 acres at 5 NPBs. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 7 landowner workshops/field days, providing native prairie protection, restoration and enhancement consultation to landowners. In addition, SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 68 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property.

**Amendment Request** (June 29, 2015): Request that reporting dates be adjusted to September 1 and March 1 of each year to better accommodate fiscal year closeout to insure the most up-to-date budget information is available during the reporting timeframe. Additionally updated Project Manager details from Peggy Booth (interim) to Judy Schulte. **Amendment Approved: July 8, 2015.**

**Amendment Request** (August 31, 2015): As we finalize real costs associated with closing on the 200 acres of Native Prairie Bank easements, we would like to request that \$1,057 be moved from Activity 1 Salary to Activity 1 Professional Services for Acquisition. This is due to general inflation in costs for acquisition services since the original budget was created. **Amendment approved by LCCMR 8-31-2015**

**Project Status as of (September 1, 2015):** One additional Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easement was acquired bringing the total to 337 protected acres (201 acres pro-rated to this appropriation)— a 54.5-acre Wilkin County site (44 acres paid with the appropriation), a 157.7-acre Traverse County site (95 acres paid with this appropriation) and a 124.6-acre Big Stone County site (62 acres paid with this appropriation). Herbaceous invasive species treatment activities completed now total 47.6 acres at 10 NPBs, completed woody invasive species activities total 32.3 acres at 8 NPBs and completed prescribed burns total 674.1 acres at 16 NPBs. Prairie restoration and rehabilitation have taken place on 9.5 acres with post-restoration invasive species management on-going. SNA Prairie Specialists have participated in a total of 7 landowner workshops/field days, providing native prairie protection, restoration and enhancement consultation to landowners. In addition, SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 70 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Boundary signs were installed at 5 NPBs, including those acquired with this appropriation. Baseline Property Reports were completed for 4 NPBs and easement monitoring was conducted on 16 NPBs.

**Amendment Request** (February 3, 2016): One additional prairie reconstruction site (a 1 acre rehabilitation on Minnesota Falls 3-1 Native Prairie Bank) has been added to the parcel list since there are remaining restoration dollars and the project is a great opportunity to improve a small disturbed area. **Amendment approved: February 8, 2016**

**Project Status as of (February 3, 2016):** Three Native Prairie Banks have closes for a total of 337 protected acres (201 acres pro-rated to this appropriation)— a 54.5-acre Wilkin County site (44 acres paid with the appropriation), a 157.7-acre Traverse County site (95 acres paid with this appropriation) and a 124.6-acre Big Stone County site (62 acres paid with this appropriation). Herbaceous invasive species treatment activities completed now total 47.6 acres at 9 NPBs, completed woody invasive species activities total 32.3 acres at 8 NPBs and completed prescribed burns total 674.1 acres at 15 NPBs. An error was caught in the September 1, 2015 project status update, which reported 9.5 acres of prairie restoration and rehabilitation when only 2.3 acres had been completed as September 1, 2015. To-date, prairie restoration and rehabilitation have taken place on 2.3 acres with post-restoration invasive species management on-going. SNA Prairie Specialists have participated in a total of 7 landowner workshops/field days, providing native prairie protection, restoration and enhancement consultation to landowners. In addition, SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 70 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Boundary signs were installed at 5 NPBs, including those acquired with this appropriation. Baseline Property Reports have been completed for 5 NPBs with an additional 7 on-track to be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Easement stewardship monitoring has been completed on 16 existing NPB easements.

**Final Report Summary (August 15, 2016):**

### **Overall Project Outcomes and Results**

Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements were acquired on 330 acres thereby permanently protecting valuable native prairie. Specifically, 3 easements were acquired in part with this appropriation located in Wilkin,

Traverse and Big Stone Counties (194 acres pro-rated to this appropriation). In total, 12 baseline property reports were written through this appropriation (including 2 of the 3 newly acquired easement baselines). In addition to baseline reports, 16 existing Native Prairie Bank easements were monitored and data entered into the Department of Natural Resource (DNR)'s Conservation Easement Monitoring database.

Restoration and enhancement activities were completed on a total of over 850 acres exceeding the project's target acreage. Specific accomplishments are 18 prescribed burns on 702 acres, 4 prairie reconstructions on 6 acres, and 21 invasive species control projects on 147 acres; 9 of these 43 projects involved Conservation Corps Minnesota (CCM) crews. Boundary signing has been completed on 5 NPB easements.

Through this appropriation, 9 different events were held aimed at getting prairie stewardship information to landowners. NPB staff also worked with all 10 Prairie Conservation Plan Local Technical Teams to insure that landowners being approached by other practitioners are made aware of their prairie stewardship options such as Native Prairie Bank that are available through the Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program. Prairie specialists engaged 70+ different priority prairie landowners one-on-one to discuss prairie protection and management options for their property. One landowner received a comprehensive Prairie Stewardship plan.

#### IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

##### ACTIVITY 1: NPB Acquisition of Prairie of Biodiversity Significance

**Description:** The SNA Program will protect and buffer native prairie sites of biodiversity significance by acquisition of perpetual NPB conservation easements on 200 acres. NPB conservation easement baseline reports and monitoring would be completed on about 12 sites; including those sites acquired through these funds (~1-4 sites) and up to 8 existing NPB easement sites. As of March 2012, the SNA Program manages 102 NPB conservation easements of which 27 have baseline property reports; creating a backlog of 75 baseline reports to complete. Priority sites are identified by MBS and target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, and key habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). NPB payments rates are 65% of the permanent marginal agricultural land payment rate as established by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, which is updated annually. Any buffers, or lands needing restoration, will be completed using a combination of funds from Activity 2 below and/or bonding appropriations. It is anticipated that only 10 of the 200 acquired will need restoration. NPB conservation easements are monitored according to the "Scientific & Natural Areas Program Conservation Easement Long-Term Stewardship, Monitoring & Enforcement Plan". This plan calls for annual landowner contacts and on-the-ground site evaluations every 1-3 years. Long-term monitoring and enforcement costs will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to, ENRTF, OHF, federal grants, and other funds as appropriated. The *Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program Conservation Easement Long-Term Stewardship, Monitoring and Enforcement Plan* is available upon request. A separate NPB stewardship and enforcement fund does not exist at this time, but will be pursued in the future.

##### Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 524,570  
Amount Spent: \$ 524,188  
 Balance: \$ 382

##### Activity Completion Date:

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. acquisition of NPB conservation easement 200 acres of native prairie	6/30/2016	\$514,000
2. baseline property reports & monitoring for 12 NPB easements	6/30/2016	\$24,000

**Project Status as of (January 31, 2014):** SNA acquisition staff have approached and begun NPB easement negotiations with 3 different landowners – a 217-ac Swift County site, a 60-ac Swift County site, and a 55-ac Wilken County site. These projects are considered to be in "stage 2" of the NPB easement enrollment process, meaning project maps and easement terms are being drafted and reviewed. We anticipated having options

offered on these properties within the next 6-9 months. As the projects get closer to completed, baseline property reports for monitoring will be written.

**Project Status as of (July 31, 2014):** SNA acquisition staff have completed and closed 2 Native Prairie Bank easements and are in negotiations on a third. The 2 closed easements have Baseline Property Reports completed and entered into the DNR Conservation Easement Monitoring System. The 2 easements that have closed will be taking their payments in installments (i.e. spreading payments across several years). Initial installment payments have been made and the remaining payments are encumbered in a DNR account for future payments. The third easement project has a Fact Sheet submitted and is being processed by DNR Lands & Minerals; an option should be presented to the landowner within a month. The table below outlines the current easement projects:

Project Name	County	Total Project Acres	Acres Funded with this Appropriation	Status
Atherton 5-1 NPB	Wilkin	53	44 (80% of total)	Completed
Windsor 13-1 NPB	Traverse	158	95 (60% of total)	Completed
Lower Akron 2-1 NPB	Big Stone	124	60 (48% of total)	Fact Sheet being review, option to be presented in the next month
			<b>199 acres</b>	

**Project Status as of (January 31, 2015): – cumulative accomplishments to date:** Two Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements protecting 212 acres (139 acres pro-rated to this appropriation) have been acquired – a 54.5-acre Wilkin County site (44 acres paid with the appropriation) and a 157.7-acre Traverse County site (95 acres paid with this appropriation). The DNR has options acquisition of a 124.6 acre NPB easement in Big Stone County (60 acres to be paid with this appropriation). The 2 closed easements have Baseline Property Reports completed and entered into the DNR Conservation Easement Monitoring System; field work has been completed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline which will be finalized after the boundary survey and final legal description are completed; also a 4<sup>th</sup> baseline (from the backlog of baselines) was completed. The 2 easements that have closed will be taking their payments in installments (i.e. spreading payments across several years). Initial installment payments have been made and the remaining payments are encumbered in a DNR account for future payments. Easement stewardship monitoring will be completed this year for up to 16 existing NPB easements (with site visits already completed for about ¾’s of those sites) – completion will entail entering monitoring data into the DNR Conservation Easement Database.

The table below summarizes the acquisition projects through this appropriation:

Project Name	County	Total Project Acres	Acres Funded with this Appropriation	Status
Atherton 5-1 NPB	Wilkin	54.5	44 (81% of total)	Completed
Windsor 13-1 NPB	Traverse	157.5	95 (60% of total)	Completed
Lower Akron 2-1 NPB	Big Stone	124.6	60 (48% of total)	Optioned; to close following the boundary survey to be completed in spring 2015.
			<b>199 acres</b>	

**Work Plan Budget Amendment Request (February 5, 2015): Reduce total amount for this Activity by \$13,430.** Move \$18,590 in salary from Activity 1 to Activity 3 – this is because staff work on the acquisitions was paid in part with other appropriations. Add \$80 under supplies for postage to mail baseline reports to landowners for signature. Increase acquisition professional services budget by \$4,910 to cover anticipated extra expenses for

boundary surveys for easements acquired. Increase travel by \$170 to complete baseline property reports and easement monitoring. **Amendment Approved: February 10, 2015**

**Amendment Request** (August 31, 2015): As we finalize real costs associated with closing on the 200 acres of Native Prairie Bank easements, we would like to request that \$1,057 be moved from Activity 1 Salary to Activity 1 Professional Services for Acquisition. This is due to general inflation in costs for acquisition services since the original budget was created. **Amendment approved: August 31, 2015**

**Project Status as of (September 1, 2015):– cumulative accomplishments to date:** One additional Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easement was acquired bringing the total to 337 protected acres (201 acres pro-rated to this appropriation) – a 54.5-acre Wilkin County site (44 acres paid with the appropriation), a 157.7-acre Traverse County site (95 acres paid with this appropriation) and a 124.6-acre Big Stone County site (62 acres paid with this appropriation). The 3 closed easements have Baseline Property Reports completed and entered into the DNR Conservation Easement Monitoring System; additionally a 4th baseline (from the backlog of baselines) was completed. Two of the three easements that have closed will be taking their payments in installments (i.e. spreading payments across several years). Initial installment payments have been made and the remaining payments are encumbered in a DNR account for future payments. Easement stewardship monitoring will be completed this winter for 16 existing NPB easements (site visits already completed – completion will entail entering monitoring data into the DNR Conservation Easement Database).

The table below summarizes the acquisition projects through this appropriation:

Project Name	County	Total Project Acres	Acres Funded with this Appropriation	Status
Atherton 5-1 NPB	Wilkin	54.5	44 (81% of total)	Completed
Windsor 13-1 NPB	Traverse	157.5	95 (60% of total)	Completed
Lower Akron 2-1 NPB	Big Stone	124.6	62 (50% of total)	Completed
			<b>201 acres</b>	

**Project Status as of (February 3, 2016):** cumulative accomplishments to date: Three Native Prairie Banks have closes for a total of 337 protected acres (201 acres pro-rated to this appropriation)– a 54.5-acre Wilkin County site (44 acres paid with the appropriation), a 157.7-acre Traverse County site (95 acres paid with this appropriation) and a 124.6-acre Big Stone County site (62 acres paid with this appropriation). The 3 closed easements have Baseline Property Reports completed (2 baselines paid for with this appropriation) and entered into the DNR Conservation Easement Monitoring System; additionally 3 other baselines have been completed with another 7 baselines on-track to be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Two of the three easements that have closed will be taking their payments in installments (i.e. spreading payments across several years). Initial installment payments have been made and the remaining payments are encumbered in a DNR account for future payments. Easement stewardship monitoring has been completed on 16 existing NPB easements and entered into the DNR Conservation Easement Monitoring System.

Project Name	County	Total Project Acres	Acres Funded with this Appropriation	Status
Atherton 5-1 NPB	Wilkin	54.5	44 (81% of total)	Completed
Windsor 13-1 NPB	Traverse	157.5	95 (60% of total)	Completed
Lower Akron 2-1 NPB	Big Stone	124.6	62 (50% of total)	Completed
			<b>201 acres</b>	



**Final Report Summary (August 15, 2016):** Cumulative accomplishments to date:

Three Native Prairie Bank conservation easements were acquired to protect 330 acres (194 acres pro-rated to this appropriation).

- A 53.4-acre wet meadow/wet prairie complex located in Wilkin County (44 acres paid with the appropriation).
- A 150.8-acre dry-hill and mesic prairie located within the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan Core Area along Lake Traverse in Traverse County (88 acres paid with this appropriation).
- A 125.5-acre mesic prairie located within the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan Lac Qui Parle Prairie Core Area in Big Stone County (62 acres paid with this appropriation).

These numbers were adjusted from previous status updates as acres and dollars spent were finalized. The initial acquisition report, transaction cost report, shapefile and legal description were submitted to LCCMR staff via email on August 2, 2016. Eligible Native Prairie Bank 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. The 3 easements acquired with this appropriation were evaluated using the “Native Prairie Bank Evaluation Form” and scored based on these factors.

The 3 closed easements have Baseline Property Reports completed (2 baselines paid for with this appropriation) in accordance with DNR’s Operational Order #128 “Conservation Easement Stewardship” and are entered into the DNR Conservation Easement Monitoring System. Ten additional baselines have also been completed and easement stewardship monitoring has been completed on 17 existing NPB easements. All of which follow DNR’s Operational Order #128 and are entered into the DNR Conservation Easement Monitoring System.

*Native Prairie Bank Easements acquired:*

Project Name	County	Total Project Acres	Acres Funded with this Appropriation	Status
Atherton 5-1 NPB	Wilkin	53.4	44 (81% of total)	Completed
Windsor 13-1 NPB	Traverse	150.8	88 (60% of total)	Completed
Lower Akron 2-1 NPB	Big Stone	125.5	62 (50% of total)	Completed
			<b>194 acres</b>	

*Native Prairie Bank Baseline Property Reports Completed*

NPB Name	County
Windsor 13-1	Traverse
Atherton 5-1	Wilkin
Minnesota Falls 10-1	Yellow Medicine
Ransom 4-1	Nobles
Stony Run 10-1	Yellow Medicine
Stony Run 11-1	Yellow Medicine
Stony Run 11-2	Yellow Medicine
Storden 28-1	Cottonwood
Swedes Forest 20-1	Redwood
Lamberton 15-1	Redwood
Meine	Brown
Meine Addition	Brown

*Native Prairie Bank Monitoring Completed*

Site Name	County
Swedes Forest 27-1	Redwood

Swedes Forest 22-1	Redwood
Swedes Forest 20-1	Redwood
Swedes Forest 20-2	Redwood
Holly 2-1	Murray
Holly 3-1	Murray
Hantho 25-1	Lac Qui Parle
Belmont 5-1	Jackson
Lyon/Lynd	Lyon
Meine	Brown
Meine Addition	Brown
Swedes Forest 21-1	Redwood
Johnson	Big Stone
Lake Pleasant 22-1	Red Lake
Stanton 18-1	Goodhue
Warsaw 7-1	Goodhue
Nidaros 21-1	Otter Tail

**ACTIVITY 2: Native Prairie Restoration & Enhancement**

**Description:** Restoration and enhancement activities would be completed on about 690 acres at up to about 12 NPBs and 3 native prairie stewardship sites. Management practices at 3 NPB sites would be measured to evaluate if objectives were met as part of adaptive management. This activity will contribute towards implementation of the SWAP through restoration of native prairie needed to support SGCN (also Habitat Recommendation 5 of the SCPPE), as well as the management recommendations of the MN Prairie Conservation Plan. Restoration and enhancement activities – including bringing sites acquired up to minimum standards – would be carried out through landowner agreements, DNR staff, Minnesota Conservation Corps Minnesota (CCM), and private contractors. Activities include seed collection, planting, exotics control, woody encroachment removal, boundary signing, prescribed burns (or prescribed haying or mowing, necessary for sites or conditions where use of fire is limited), and monitoring. Restoration and enhancement projects will be based upon ecological restoration and management plans and/or project plans with goals for reconstructing or enhancing 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 and funding. All restorations will use seeds/plants of a local ecotype, collected from onsite or within 25 miles. Long-term management costs (e.g. invasives treatments, prescribed fire, and monitoring/evaluation) will be covered by a combination funding sources, including, but not limited to, ENRTF, OHF, federal grants, and other funds as appropriated. Restoration projects will receive an initial evaluation in terms of project goals and to ascertain how well the native plants have been established which will be included in the final report. In order to facilitate long term ecological and site management monitoring and more robust and accurate accomplishment reporting, the Adaptive Management Spatial Database (AMSD) was launched with ENRTF support. This activity and its funding would include all work needed to bring up to the Department’s minimum standards those NPB easements acquired through this funding (e.g. boundary signing and site cleanup).

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 158,980**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 157,760**  
**Balance: \$ 1,220**

**Activity Completion Date:**

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. 4 acres of prairie reconstruction (restoration)	6/30/2016	\$12,000
2. 80 acres of woody removal & exotics species treatment	6/30/2016	\$60,000
3. 600 acres of prescribed burning, haying or mowing	6/30/2016	\$60,000
4. NPB easement boundary signs & development work to meet minimum standards on 3-4 NPB sites (including those acquired with this funding)	6/30/2016	\$5,000

**Project Status as of (January 31, 2014):** SNA prairie specialists have begun writing 8 burn plans, installed 2 firebreaks, and continue to prepare for the 2014 spring burn season. Priority invasive species treatment sites have been identified and 11 projects have been initiated. The invasive projects initiated so far are targeting Wild Carrot, Leafy Spurge, Canada Thistle, Crown Vetch and Buckthorn. Work plans are also being developed for 2014 woody encroachment and prairie reconstruction projects.

**Project Status as of (July 31, 2014):** In the spring of 2014, SNA Prairie Specialists were able to complete 4 Native Prairie Bank easement prescribed burns for 99 acres. An 8 acre invasive species complete project (Canada Thistle), and 11 other projects have been initiated. The invasive species control projects initiated so far are targeting Wild Carrot, Leafy Spurge, Canada Thistle, Crown Vetch, Leafy Spurge, Buckthorn and Sumac. Work plans and contracts are also being developed for 2014/2015 winter woody encroachment project, as well as preparations for future prairie reconstruction projects.

**Project Status as of (January 31, 2015) – cumulative accomplishments to date:** **2-1. Prairie Reconstruction:** Hand seed collection on 10.7 acres was completed. **2-2. Woody Removal & Invasive Species:** Herbaceous invasive species treatment activities were completed on 14.1 acres at 3 NPBs. **2c. Prescribed Burning:** About 12.3 miles of firebreaks were installed at 14 NPBs and prescribed burns were completed on 205.1 acres at 5 NPBs. **2-4. Development:** boundary signs were installed at 3 NPBs.

**Work Plan Amendment Request (February 5, 2015):** Add 2 small restoration project sites at Swedes Forest 27 and Moulton 19 NPBs (see attached list); reduce the number of restoration acres accomplished from 10 to 4 acres. The primary reason that 10 acres cannot be completed on the proposed Holly 2 NPB site is the cooperative arrangement needed with the fee landowner (who has already been working very well with DNR to limit grazing to that needed for management); when the landowner was called to give him a 1 year notice to restore the field, the landowner said that he wanted to honor the 3-year lease with his renter using the field; thus DNR decided to delay to a later appropriation restoration of the rest of his field

Delete Outcome #5 on “Adaptive Management Monitoring on 3 NPB Sites” – the Prairie Status and Trend Monitoring of targeted native prairie sites (including NPBs) was done with the previous ENRTF appropriation; no NPB sites scheduled for monitoring in 2015; prairie management monitoring is proposed for the ML15 work plan; funding allocated for this will be reallocated within this activity to help meet management outcomes. No change is proposed in management target acres; however weather permitting, spring 2015 prescribed burns are planned, such that about 840 acres expected to be completed with this appropriation (exceeding the target by 240 acres). **Amendment Approved: February 10, 2015**

**Budget Amendment Request (February 5, 2015): Increase total amount for this Activity by \$15,980.** Move \$4,890 in salary from Activity 2 to Activity 3 – this is because more natural resource management work will be completed through contracts. Increase contracts by \$16,020 to achieve additional prescribed burning and woody invasive species control projects. Decrease equipment/tools/supplies by \$360. Increase travel costs by \$5210 for fleet equipment costs necessary to achieve prescribed burning and woody invasive species control. **Amendment Approved: February 10, 2015**

**Project Status as of (September 1, 2015):**– cumulative accomplishments to date: 2-1. Prairie Reconstruction: Prairie restoration and rehabilitation was completed on 9.5 acres with post-restoration invasive species management on-going. 2-2. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Herbaceous invasive species treatment activities were completed on 47.6 acres at 10 NPBs and woody invasive species activities were completed on 32.3 acres at 8 NPBs. 2c. Prescribed Burning: About 14.3 miles of firebreaks were installed at 18 NPBs and prescribed burns were completed on 674.1 acres at 16 NPBs. 2-4. Development: Boundary signs were installed at 5 NPBs, including those acquired with this appropriation.

**Amendment Request (February 3, 2016):** One additional prairie reconstruction site (a 1 acre rehabilitation on Minnesota Falls 3-1 Native Prairie Bank) has been added to the parcel list since there are remaining restoration dollars and the project is a great opportunity to improve a small disturbed area. **Amendment approved: February 8, 2016**

**Project Status as of (February 3, 2016):** cumulative accomplishments to date: 2-1. Prairie Reconstruction: An error was caught in the September 1, 2015 project status update, which reported 9.5 acres of prairie restoration and rehabilitation when only 2.3 acres had been completed as September 1, 2015. As of February 1, 2016, Prairie restoration and rehabilitation has been completed on 2.3 acres with post-restoration invasive species management on-going. 2-2. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Herbaceous invasive species treatment activities were completed on 47.6 acres at 9 NPBs and woody invasive species activities were completed on 32.3 acres at 8 NPBs. 2c. Prescribed Burning: About 15.4 miles of firebreaks were installed at 18 NPBs and prescribed burns were completed on 674.1 acres at 16 NPBs. 2-4. Development: Boundary signs were installed at 5 NPBs, including those acquired with this appropriation.

**Final Report Summary (August 15, 2016):** cumulative accomplishments to date: 2-1. Prairie Reconstruction: Prairie restoration and rehabilitation was completed on 6 acres on 4 NPB sites with post-restoration invasive species management on-going. Initial restoration evaluations are included with the Final Report. 2-2. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Herbaceous invasive species treatment activities were completed on 48 acres at 10 NPBs and woody invasive species activities were completed on 99 acres at 11 NPBs. Invasive species work targeted leafy spurge, birds’ foot trefoil, crown vetch, Queen Anne’s lace, honeysuckle, buckthorn, sumac and eastern red cedar. 2c. Prescribed Burning: About 15.4 miles of firebreaks were installed at 18 NPBs and prescribed burns were completed on 702 acres. 2-4. Development: Boundary signs were installed at 5 NPBs, including those acquired with this appropriation.

Activity	Target	Completed
1. Prairie reconstruction (restoration)	4 acres	6 acres
2. Woody removal & exotics species treatment	80 acres	147 acres
3. Prescribed burning, haying or mowing	600 acres	702 acres
4. NPB easement boundary signs & development work	3-4 sites	5 sites

**ACTIVITY 3: Native Prairie Landowner Assistance & Incentives**

**Description:** Private landowners will increase their stewardship of native prairie through a suite of strategies. Three prairie management workshops/field days for private landowners and other practitioners will be held. DNR staff will meet with 16 landowners to provide technical consultation on how to best manage their prairie. At least 10 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan including an evaluation their prairie’s condition, identification of management needs, and recommendations for management action.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 3:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 66,450**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 65,203**  
**Balance: \$ 1,247**

**Activity Completion Date:**

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. 3 workshops/field days for prairie landowners & practitioners	6/30/2016	\$6,000
2. consultations, guidance, mgmt. asst., etc. to 16 landowners	6/30/2016	\$25,100
3. prairie stewardship plans provided to 1 prairie landowners	6/30/2016	3,700

**Activity Status as of (January 31, 2014):** SNA Prairie Specialists participated in Farm Fest, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement consultation to landowners (August 2013). SNA Prairie Specialists have also engaged 4 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Over 15 potential prairie stewardship planning sites have been identified and a Prairie Stewardship Planning RFP is expected to be released in the next 2-months.

**Activity Status as of (July 31 2014):** SNA Prairie Specialists participated in Farm Fest (August 2013), the State Cattlemen’s Summer Tour (May 2014), and a Yellow Medicine County workshop for Calcareous Fen landowners (June 2014). At these workshops and field days the SNA Prairie Specialists presented landowners with native prairie protection, restoration and enhancement information and advice. SNA Prairie Specialists have also engaged 10 different priority prairie landowners one-on-one to discuss protection and management options for their property. Over 15 potential prairie stewardship planning sites have been identified and a Prairie Stewardship Planning RFP is expected to be released in the coming months.

**Activity Status as of (January 31, 2015) – cumulative accomplishments to date – with changes underlined:** SNA Prairie Specialists participated in two Farm Fests (August 2013 and 2014), the State Cattlemen’s Summer Tour (July 2014), Yellow Medicine County workshop for Calcareous Fen landowners (June 2014), Prairie Pothole Day (August 2014), the Regional SWCD Environmental Fair (September 2014), and the Women Caring for the Land Workshop (January 2015). At these workshops and field days the SNA Prairie Specialists presented landowners with native prairie protection, restoration and enhancement information and advice. SNA Prairie Specialists have also engaged 68 different priority prairie landowners one-on-one to discuss protection and management options for their property.

**Work Plan Amendment Request (February 5, 2015):** Reduce Outcome #3 to prepare prairie stewardship plans from 10 plans to 1 plans delivered – plans were previously completed or completed with other funding for the two NPBs acquired with this appropriation – the [land needed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> property acquired with be prepared by staff rather than contracted; an RFP for contractor-written prairie stewardship plans is proposed for the ML15 work plan; funding allocated for this will be reallocated within this activity to consultations with prairie landowners in order towards conserving native prairie. **Amendment Approved: February 10, 2015**

**Budget Amendment Request (February 5, 2015): Decrease total amount for this Activity by \$2,550.** Increase salary by \$32,670 (move \$18,590 in salary from Activity 1 to Activity 3, move \$4,890 in salary from Activity 2 to Activity 3, and move \$9,190 within Activity 3 from contract to salary – this is to support increased landowner contacts which are essential for native prairie protection. Eliminate funding for prairie stewardship plans as explained above. Decrease equipment/tools/supplies by \$340 and printing by \$110 because of reduced expenses for workshops and field days. Increase travel costs by \$3130 for landowner visits and additional workshops and field days. **Amendment Approved: February 10, 2015**

**Project Status as of September 1, 2015):** cumulative accomplishments to date: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in two Farm Fests (August 2013 and 2014), the State Cattlemen’s Summer Tour (July 2014), Yellow Medicine County workshop for Calcareous Fen landowners (June 2014), Prairie Pothole Day (August 2014), the Regional SWCD Environmental Fair (September 2014), and the Women Caring for the Land Workshop (January 2015). At these workshops and field days the SNA Prairie Specialists presented landowners with native prairie protection, restoration and enhancement information and advice. SNA Prairie Specialists have also engaged 70

different priority prairie landowners one-on-one to discuss protection and management options for their property. One draft Prairie Stewardship Plan, which included a grazing and haying plan, has been completed and is currently being reviewed by the landowner, prior to finalization.

**Project Status as of (February 3, 2016):** cumulative accomplishments to date: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in two Farm Fests (August 2013 and 2014), the State Cattlemen's Summer Tour (July 2014), Yellow Medicine County workshop for Calcareous Fen landowners (June 2014), Prairie Pothole Day (August 2014), the Regional SWCD Environmental Fair (September 2014), and the Women Caring for the Land Workshop (January 2015). At these workshops and field days the SNA Prairie Specialists presented landowners with native prairie protection, restoration and enhancement information and advice. SNA Prairie Specialists have also engaged 70 different priority prairie landowners one-on-one to discuss protection and management options for their property. One Prairie Stewardship Plan, which included a grazing and haying plan, has been completed.

**Final Report Summary (August 15, 2016):** NPB prairie specialists participated in 9 different events aimed at getting prairie stewardship information to landowners. It has proven very effective to use already planned events and incorporate our prairie stewardship messages and materials. The list of events is provided below.

- August 2013 & August 2014: NPB provided native prairie protection and management information to landowners at Farm Fest in Morgan, MN. Farm Fest is one of the state's largest farm shows and attracts many farmers and landowner.
- June 2014: NPB staff presented to Yellow Medicine County landowners on the significance of calcareous fens and native prairies. The day-long workshop included presentations from the Yellow Medicine SWCD, NRCS and a field trip to multiple locations.
- July 2014: NPB helped organize a Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan booth at the State Cattleman's Tour held near Redwood Falls, MN (pictured below). SNA brought together multiple different prairie partners, including but not limited to USFWS, TNC, MN Land Trust, The Conservation Fund, MDA, BWSR, SWCDs and DNR, to promote grassland protection and enhancement to the state's cattleman. Pictured below are the conservation partners that took part in the booth.
- August 2014: NPB staff prepared prairie protection and enhancement displays and provided prairie brochures for the DNR booth at Prairie Pothole Days near New London, MN.
- September 2014: NPB staff gave a native prairie protection and management presentation at the SW MN SWCD Environmental Fair in Slayton, MN. Over 650 students and teachers attended the fair over two days.
- January 2015: NPB staff gave a native prairie protection and management presentation at the Women Caring for the Land Workshop in Madison, MN.
- February 2015: NPB staff gave presentations to 4-H students and parents on grazing management for native prairie pastures, native prairie protection and additional prairie enhancement techniques.
- June 2016: NPB staff presented on native prairie protection and management to the Fergus Falls Rotary Club.

Additionally, NPB Prairie Specialists engaged 70+ different priority prairie landowners one-on-one to discuss prairie protection and management options for their property. As a result of these one-on-one consultations, 4 new NPB easement projects have been initiated and multiple prairie stewardship activities have been completed by landowners. Included with this final report is an article written about one particular landowner technical assistance story. An abbreviated version of this story was shared in the SNA *Nature Notes* which is published quarterly and distributed to over 3,250 subscribers. One Prairie Stewardship Plan, which included a grazing and haying plan, has been completed.



**2014 State Cattleman's Tour Prairie Partners Booth.** Pictured (left to right): Back Row-Steve Hobbs (The Conservation Fund), Kelly Anderson (MDA), Greg Hoch (DNR Wildlife), Kristin Fritz (USFWS), Joe Blastick (TNC), Wayne Monson (Independent Grazing Contractor), Maggie Karschnia (MN Land Trust). Front Row-Mike Tenney (DNR Wildlife), Judy Schulte (DNR SNA), Emilee Nelson (PF) Not Pictured: Jeff Zajac (DNR Wildlife), Kristy Zajac (Redwood SWCD)

## V. DISSEMINATION:

**Description:** Copies of Stewardship Plans are provided to local DNR managers and used by the landowner with other agencies and programs. Workshops and field days will be listed on the SNA website:  
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/index.html>.

**Status as of (January 2014):** There have been no dissemination efforts during this reporting period.

**Status as of (July 2014):** There have been no dissemination efforts during this reporting period.

**Status as of (January 2015):** Posters (including the ENRTF logo) were developed and displayed at the State Cattleman's Summer Tour and at FarmFest 2014 (examples submitted with this report).

**Project Status as of (September 1, 2015):** Draft Prairie Stewardship Plan currently being reviewed by landowner prior to finalization.

**Project Status as of (February 3, 2016):** One Prairie Stewardship Plan was completed and is being followed by the landowner.

**Final Report Summary (August 15, 2016):**

Native Prairie Tax Exemption brochures were updated and printed to aid in prairie outreach, encourage prairie preservation and improve prairie stewardship of native prairie acres that may not be protected long-term by other means. A .pdf copy of this brochure is included with the final report and a paper copy can be made available upon request. A total of 3000 Prairie Tax Exemption brochures were printed, 1000 of which were paid for through this appropriation.

Additionally, included with the final report is an article written about a landowner technical assistance success story. This article was written to promote the technical assistance available to private land prairie landowners through this appropriation and encourage pro-active prairie land management. An abbreviated version of this story was shared in the *SNA Nature Notes* which is published quarterly and distributed to over 3,250 subscribers. One Prairie Stewardship Plan was completed and is being followed by the landowner.

**VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. ENRTF Budget:**

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Personnel:	\$142,323	Acquisition Coordinator (.25 FTE for 3-yr; ~\$47.5K) ; Specialist and Technician (.50 FTE spread across 4 people for 3-yr; ~\$68.5K); Laborer and seasonal crews (.20 FTE spread across 2 people for 3-yr; ~\$17.5K)
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:	\$75,220	Professional/technical Contractors (state bid process) will be sought for delivering easement baseline property reports, adaptive management monitoring, and private Prairie Stewardship Plans. Service contracts will use CCM or the state bid process for delivering including woody encroachment removal & exotics control, prescribed burning/mowing, and site development
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$4,570	Supplies, parts, tools, repair costs & supplies for restoration and enhancement, including safety items, hand tools, etc; signs & posts; workshop & event supplies
Easement Acquisition:	\$451,500	Estimate securing about 3 easements for 200 acres that will be held by the MN DNR - SNA Program
Professional Services for Acquisition:	\$35,467	Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition; anticipate about 3 transactions; cost/transaction varies greatly between projects...\$5000 - \$12,000/acquisition
Printing:	\$290	Printing of materials for workshops and field days, and prairie stewardship plans
Travel Expenses in MN:	\$15,510	Fleet charges for trucks, cars, & equipment, e.g. mowers, seeders; mileage, lodging & meals as per state contracts
Direct and Necessary Services for the	\$25,120	DNR costs for the appropriation



Appropriation:*		
<b>TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	

\* Direct and Necessary expenses include both Department Support Services (Human Resources, IT, Financial Management, Communications, Procurement, and Facilities) and Division Support Services. Department Support Services are described in agency Service Level Agreements, and billed internally to divisions based on indices that have been developed for each area of service. Department leadership (Commissioner’s Office and Regional Directors) are not assessed. Division Support Services include costs associated with Division business offices and clerical support. Those elements of individual projects that put little or no demand on support services such as large single-source contracts, large land acquisitions, and funds that are passed-thru to other entities are not assessed Direct and Necessary costs for those activities. For this work plan, the easement acquisition activity (Activity 1.1) with an associated cost of \$447,000 has not been assessed Direct and Necessary costs.”

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** 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. No funding from this appropriation will be used to cover personnel costs for this work program’s Project Manager.

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$3,500:** NA

**Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) funded with this ENRTF appropriation:** A total of .95 FTE’s spread across 7 different people for 3-years.

**Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) estimated to be funded through contracts with this ENRTF appropriation:** It’s not possible to know how many employees a future contractor will use, the hours they will work, or what salary they may pay their employees. It’s only possible to estimate the total funding for contracts - \$107,639.

**B. Other Funds:**

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state	\$0	\$0	Landowners often contribute towards management activities. These costs are not tracked.
State	\$0	\$0	The accomplishments were pro-rated for any activities that were partially funded with other funding.
<b>TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	

**VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:**

**A. Project Partners:** This proposal includes the DNR’s work and funding to be used by the SNA program towards partnership project work on NPB’s and other native prairie stewardship lands being submitted as separate, but coordinated LCCMR projects. This includes work with The Nature Conservancy and DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife. These efforts are complementary not redundant; all accomplishments on joint projects would be prorated.

**B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy:** The Division’s long-term goal is to permanently protect an additional 20,000-25,000 acres of quality native prairie in the NPB program. This strategy is tied to the larger statewide strategies outlined in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan, which calls for the protection and management of all remaining native prairie.

**C. Spending History:**

Funding Source	M.L. 2007 or FY08	M.L. 2008 or FY09	M.L. 2009 or FY10	M.L. 2010 or FY11	M.L. 2011 or FY12-13
ENRTF	\$50,000 (4b) \$220,000 (4d)	\$37,500 (3c) \$815,000 (3m)	\$37,500 (4e)	\$31,500 (4f) \$1,046,000 (4b)	\$1,000,000 (4h)
OHF				\$650,000	229,000
G.O. bonding		\$2,000,000			
Landowner and conservation partner donations		\$38,000			

**VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST:** *See attached list*

**IX. MAP(S):** *See attached map*

**X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM:**

**XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted not later than January 2014, July 2014, January 2015, September 2015, and March 2016. A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2016 as requested by the LCCMR.

Final Attachment A: Budget Detail for M.L. 2013 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Projects												
Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition												
Legal Citation: M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04c												
Project Manager: Judy Schulte												
M.L. 2013 ENRTF Appropriation: \$750,000												
Project Length and Completion Date: June 30, 2016												
Date of Update: Final Report (August 15, 2016)												
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	Activity 2 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	Activity 3 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL SPENT	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	NPB Acquisition of Prairie			Native Prairie Restoration & Enhancement			Prairie Landowner Assistance & Incentives					
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b> 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	30,597	30,474	123	56,412	56,406	6	55,314	55,114	200	\$142,323	\$141,995	\$328
Acquisition Coordinator (.25 FTE for 3-yrs) [~\$47.5K]												
Specialist and Technician (.45 FTE spread across 4 people for 3-yrs) [~\$68.5K]												
Laborer and seasonal crews (.15 FTE spread across 2 people for 3-yrs) [~\$17.5K]												
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</b> Professional/technical Contractors (state bid process) will be sought for deliverableng easement baseline property reports, adaptive management monitoring, and private Prairie Stewardship Plans. Service contracts will use CCM or the state bid process for delivering including woody encroachment removal & exotics control, prescribed burning, and site development	0	0	0	75,220	75,095	125	0	0	0	\$75,220	\$75,095	\$125
Direct and Necessary Services for the Appropriation	5,956	5,956	0	12,908	12,908	0	6,256	6,256	0	\$25,120	\$25,120	\$0
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies</b> Supplies, parts, tools, repair costs & supplies for restoration and enhancement, including safety items, handtools, etc; signs & posts; workshop & event supplies	80	27	53	4,030	3,490	540	460	275	185	\$4,570	\$3,792	\$778
<b>Easement Acquisition</b> Estimate securing about 3 easements for 200 acres that will be held by the MN DNR - SNA Program	451,500	451,500	0							\$451,500	\$451,500	\$0
<b>Professional Services for Acquisition</b> Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs assooiated with completing an acquisition; anticipate about 3 transactions; cost/transaction varies greatly between projects...\$5000 - \$12,000/acquisition	35,467	35,423	44							\$35,467	\$35,423	\$44
<b>Printing</b> Printing of materials for workshops and field days, and prairie stewardship plans							290	239	51	\$290	\$239	\$51
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b> Fleet charges for trucks, cars, & equipment, e.g. mowers, seeders; mileage, lodging & meals as per state contracts	970	808	162	10,410	9,861	549	4,130	3,318	812	\$15,510	\$13,987	\$1,523
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	<b>\$524,570</b>	<b>\$524,188</b>	<b>\$382</b>	<b>\$158,980</b>	<b>\$157,760</b>	<b>\$1,220</b>	<b>\$66,450</b>	<b>\$65,203</b>	<b>\$1,247</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$747,150</b>	<b>\$2,850</b>

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2013 Acquisition/Restoration List

FINAL REPORT

Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship and Native Prairie Bank Acquisition

Project Manager Name: Judy Schulte

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$750,000

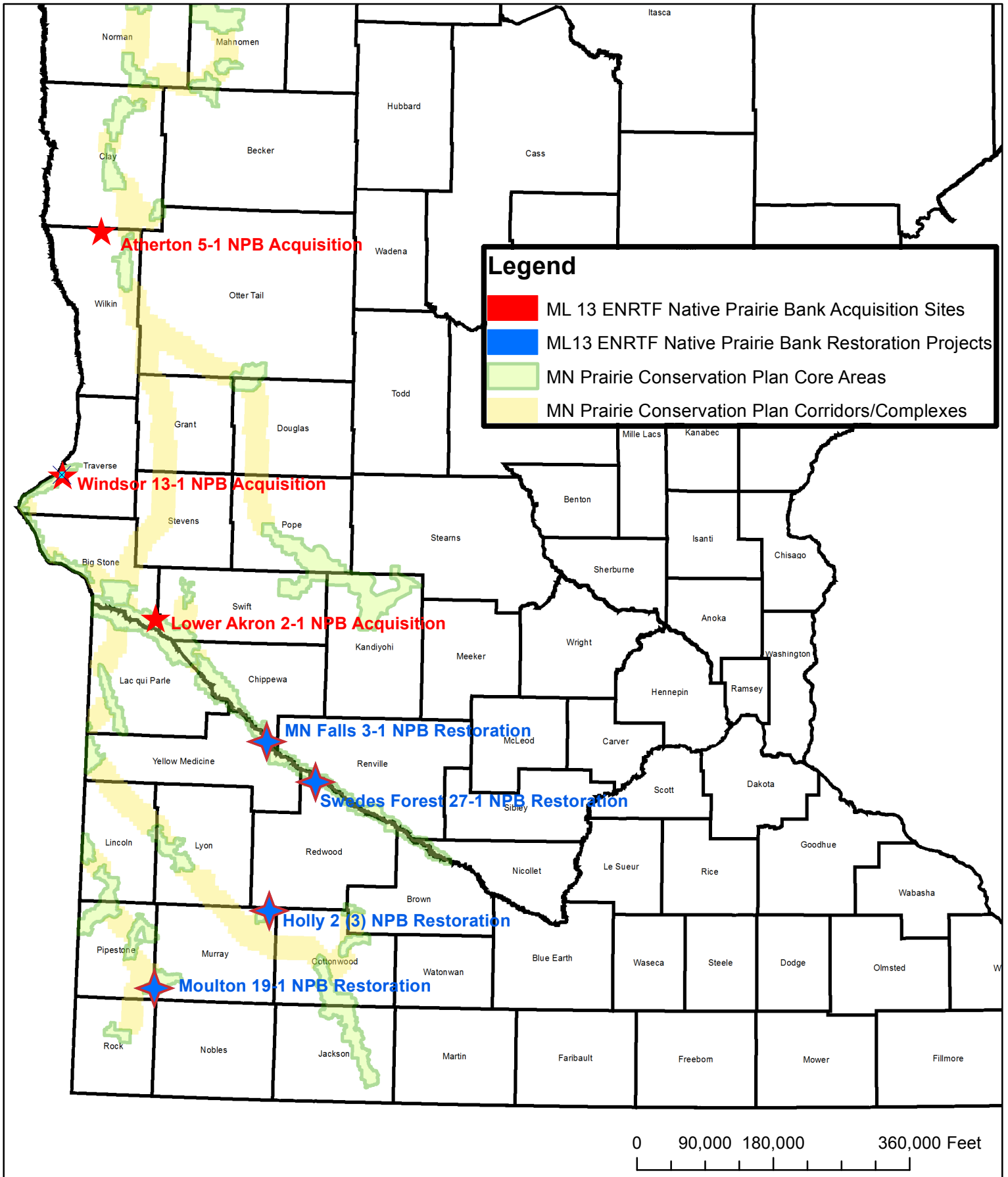
#	Acquisition Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	Acquisition Type (Fee Title or Conservation Easement)	County	Ecological Significance	Proposed # of Acres	Proposed # of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status
		Latitude	Longitude										
1	Lake Traverse Prairies	216728	5070238	\$1925/ac	\$0	Conservation Easement	Traverse	dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species	60	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	Closed on 150.8 acre (88.0 pro-rated acres with this approp) easement in Traverse County (Windsor 13-1 NPB)
2	Lac Qui Parle Prairies	252454	5013543	\$2150/ac	\$0	Conservation Easement	Big Stone	Next to existing DNR and TNC protected native prairies, part of a large macro site with many native prairie tracts; expands habitat for many rare butterfly and bird species	80	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	Closed on 125.5 acre (62.0 pro-rated acres with this approp) easement in Big Stone County (Lower Akron 2-1 NPB).
3	Holly 2 & 3 Native Prairie Bank	300379	4895366	\$1200/ac	\$0	Prairie restoration	Murray	Dry Hill Prairie, part of Plum Creek complex of native prairies, within Prairie Plan Core Area	1	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	3 acres total seeded. 1 acre restoration and 2 acres of interseeding.
4	Swedes Forest 27 Prairie Bank	318903	4947160	\$1000/ac	\$0	Prairie restoration	Redwood	Mesic Prairie restoration adjacent to remnant native prairie, within Prairie Plan Core area	1	NA	Private	DNR-SNA	1 acre seeded fall of 2014.
5	Moulton 19 Prairie Bank	254038	4864403	\$600/ac	\$0	Prairie restoration	Murray	Dry Hill Prairie interseeding project to aide in forb diversification, within Prairie Plan Core area	2	NA	Private	DNR-SNA	1 acre of inter-seeded spring of 2015.
6	Minnesota Falls 3-1 Prairie Bank	299198	4963500	\$1500/ac	\$0	Prairie rehabilitation	Yellow Medicine	Prairie Outcrop-Prairie Complex, restoration of areas degraded through cedar growth and removal. Within MN Prairie Conservation Plan Upper Minnesota River Valley Core Area	1	NA	Private	DNR-SNA	1 acre seeded spring of 2015.
8	Rothsay Prairies	232579	5169025	\$1200/ac	\$0	Conservation Easement	Wilken	Mesic to wet Prairie, part of the large Rothsay complex of native prairies, within Prairie Plan Core Area	80	NA	Private	DNR - SNA	Closed on 53.4 acre (44.0 pro-rated acres with this approp) easement in Wilkin County (Atherton 5-1 NPB)

NOTES: The above list represents locations with identified high quality prairies and interested landowners. This proposal will target these locations and enroll 200 acres; not all sites on the list will be enrolled. Parcel Names are named Prairie Core Areas identified in the 2010 MN Prairie Conservation Plan (except: Root River Prairies and Rock County Rock Outcrop Prairies). Parcel lists for woody removal, exotics treatment and prescribed burning/disturbance projects are not known at this time and will be reported in work program updates.

# ML13 Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement

## M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04c

### Acquisition & Restoration Map



## Evaluation of ENRTF Restoration Project

**Report Date:** 6/30/2016

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04c

**Project Title:** Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte

**Parcel Name:** Holly 2 & Holly 3 Native Prairie Banks (Murray County)

**Parcel Ownership:** DNR administered Native Prairie Bank perpetual conservation easement

**Completed Restoration and Management Plans Consistent with ENRTF Requirements:** J. Hunt Prairie Stewardship Plan (2004), J. Hunt Prairie Stewardship Plan Update (2005)

**Summary of Plan Outcomes:** Desired future condition: Ups13d –Dry Hill Prairie (Southern) native plant community.

Reestablishment of Dry Hill Prairie on former crop ground at this site will provide habitat for native prairie species and provides a buffer to the existing native prairie on the Protected Property. Converting the crop ground to grassland also provides benefits to water quality and reduces soil erosion and soil loading to the nearby streams.

Inter-seeding after applying prescribed fire on these hilltops will increase the native species diversity in areas that have been single species stands of smooth brome. This restoration project will also provide nectar plants and larva food plants for native pollinators.

### Activities Completed Through This Project:

Seed was collected from adjacent diverse high quality prairie remnants (within Holly 2 & Holly 3 Native Prairie Bank Easements). Seed collection occurred during the fall of 2014.

On February 24, 2015 approximately .64 acres of former crop ground was broadcast seeded with locally harvested seed.

On May 6, 2016 prescribed fires were conducted to burn off smooth brome-dominated hilltops on the Protected Property. On May 12, 2016 approximately 2.8 acres of recently burned grassland was inter-seeded with locally harvested native prairie seed (seed harvested within Holly 2 & Holly 3 Native Prairie Banks). The total area in the related prescribed burn was 4.2 acres.

The Conservation Corps assisted NPB staff in conducting the prescribed burns used to prepare the site for restoration. Thistle and other weed species were targeted for control efforts.

**Map of Restoration project:** Attached below as Appendix A

**Ongoing Management Needs & Funding:**

Prescribed fire and invasive species treatment are ongoing needs on the Holly 2/3 Native prairie Bank. The seeded areas need to be monitored for invasive species and treated as needed. Well timed mowing and spot spraying herbicide treatments for the area seeded in 2015 would benefit the restoration.

These tasks will be done with funding available through appropriations by the legislature, including future ENRTF and Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations. Future use of CCM crews is proposed to aide in ongoing management activities, including native seed collection, invasive species control, prescribed fire preparation and implementation.

### Initial Evaluation

**Dates:** June 30, 2016

#### **Summary of Evaluation:**

The restoration area seeded in 2015 shows some native species establishment, but smooth brome, thistle and annual weed species are common across the site. This is typical for prairie restoration projects early in the plant establishment period. The native plants are sparse, but should start to become more dominant within the next year or two.

The areas that were burned and seeded in 2016 have greatly reduced percent cover of smooth brome and have a greater presence of native grasses than nearby unburned areas. The native species that are present likely are not related to the seeding, but were probably encouraged by burning. The seeding will probably not have apparent results for a few years.

### Three Year Evaluation



**Proposed Dates:** June 2019

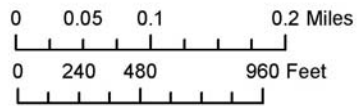
#### **Summary of Evaluation:**

# Appendix A. Restoration Area at Holly 2, 3 NPB



### Holly 2 & Holly 3 Native Prairie Banks

-  restoration\_area
-  Prairie Bank Easement Boundaries





**Appendix C: Photographs: Holly 2-3 NPB [2016]**



Restoration seeded in 2015



Restoration seeded in 2015



Restoration seeded in 2015



Burned and seeded 2016



Burned and seeded 2016

# Evaluation of ENRTF Restoration Project

**Report Date:** June 2016

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04c

**Project Title:** Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte

**Parcel Name:** Minnesota Falls 3-1 Native Prairie Bank (Yellow Medicine County)

**Parcel Ownership:** DNR administered Native Prairie Bank perpetual conservation easement

**Completed Restoration and Management Plans Consistent with ENRTF Requirements:** Prairie Stewardship Plan for Minnesota Falls 3 Prairie Bank (Great River Greening, 2009).

**Summary of Plan Outcomes:** Desired future condition: dry prairie (Ups23) native plant community.

The goal of this project was to restore native prairie plant communities after a large woody plant removal project. The restoration area had been dominated by a very dense cover of eastern red cedar, and non-native woody species including honeysuckle and common buckthorn. After woody removal, numerous brush piles were created and then burned.

## Activities Completed Through This Project:

Brush pile locations and areas where little or no native prairie were observed after the brush and woody removal project and identified for seeding. Seed was harvested by hand from high-diversity remnant prairie areas on Minnesota Falls 3-1 NPB in 2013.

Hand broadcast seeding of burn locations and sparsely vegetated areas was accomplished on June 18, 2015. The estimated area seeded in this restoration project was on 0.98 acres.

A CCM crew was used to complete the most recent prescribed burn onsite which took place on May 15, 2014.

**Map of Restoration project:** Attached below as Appendix A

## Ongoing Management Needs & Funding:

Invasive species control is a necessary activity throughout the Minnesota Falls 3-1 NPB. Red cedar regeneration must be controlled and there is encroachment of bird's foot trefoil from outside the NPB property. Non-native honeysuckle and buckthorn are prevalent in the wooded area around the NPB easement and need to be monitored and controlled to prevent them from impacting existing native plant communities or the restoration site.

Prescribed fire should be applied to the site on a regular basis to enhance the native species and control non-native cool-season grasses, as well as woody species encroachment.

These tasks will be done with funding available through appropriations by the legislature, including future ENRTF and Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations. Future use of CCM crews is proposed to aid in ongoing management activities, including native seed collection, invasive species control, prescribed fire preparation and implementation.

### Initial Evaluation

**Dates:** June 27, 2016

**Summary of Evaluation:** The seeded area has a strong presence of non-native honeysuckle and annual weeds but native prairie species are present and expected to continue to increase over the next two to three years. Cedar regeneration from the existing seed bank is present, but has subsequently been cleared from the restoration site. Ongoing effort to clear honeysuckle and prevent the establishment of buckthorn is necessary due to re-sprouting. CCM crews have been onsite annually working on woody regrowth issues.

### Three Year Evaluation



**Proposed Dates:** June 2019

**Summary of Evaluation:**

## Appendix A. Restoration Area at Minnesota Falls 3-1 NPB



### Minnesota Falls 3-1 Native Prairie Bank

-  restoration\_area
-  Prairie Bank Easement Boundaries

0 0.045 0.09 0.18 Miles

0 185 370 740 Feet



# Evaluation of ENRTF Restoration Project

**Report Date:** 6/30/2016

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04c

**Project Title:** Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte

**Parcel Name:** Moulton 19-1 Native Prairie Bank (Murray County)

**Parcel Ownership:** DNR administered Native Prairie Bank perpetual conservation easement

## **Completed Restoration and Management Plans Consistent with ENRTF Requirements:**

Moulton 19 Prairie Stewardship Plan (Bonestroo 2010)

**Summary of Plan Outcomes:** Desired future condition: Southern Dry Hill Prairie (Ups13d) native plant community.

The purpose of the restoration is to restore a former crop field that was dominated by non-native grasses prior to a 2011 restoration project. The field is 8.45 acres out of the 62.6 acre Native Prairie Bank easement and surrounded on three sides by Southern Dry Hill Prairie. Restoring this area increases the area dominated by native grassland plant species, provides a larger contiguous area of grassland habitat.

## **Activities Completed Through This Project:**

On August 29, 2011 the 8.45 acre field was seeded with locally harvested seed from the adjacent remnant prairie. This area was mowed to reduce weeds in July, 2012. The area was mowed again in July 2013 for weed control. The initial seeding and weed control was completed through other funding sources.

As the project was evaluated, staff felt a few small areas of the restoration had a low diversity of forbs present, so this appropriation was utilized to complete a high forb diversity seed harvest in the fall of 2014 from neighboring remnant prairie (Moulton 10-1 NPB) and the seed collected was interseeded into 0.55 acres of the original restoration.

The seed that was collected in 2014 was applied by broadcast seeding to an area of 0.55 acres following a prescribed fire on May 28, 2015. CCM crews were utilized as part of the DNR burn crew. More seed will need to be collect in the near future and would be applied after the next prescribed fire.

**Map of Restoration project:** Attached below as Appendix A

**Ongoing Management Needs & Funding:**

Invasive species control and prescribed fire are ongoing management needs on the Moulton 19-1 NPB property. Seed collection from nearby prairie remnants will be needed. Collected seed will be broadcast in areas of this Native Prairie Bank that are determined to benefit from efforts to increase species diversity.

These tasks will be done with funding available through appropriations by the legislature, including future ENRTF and Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations.

Future use of CCM crews is proposed to aide in ongoing management activities, including native seed collection, invasive species control, prescribed fire preparation and implementation.

### Initial Evaluation

**Dates:** June 2016

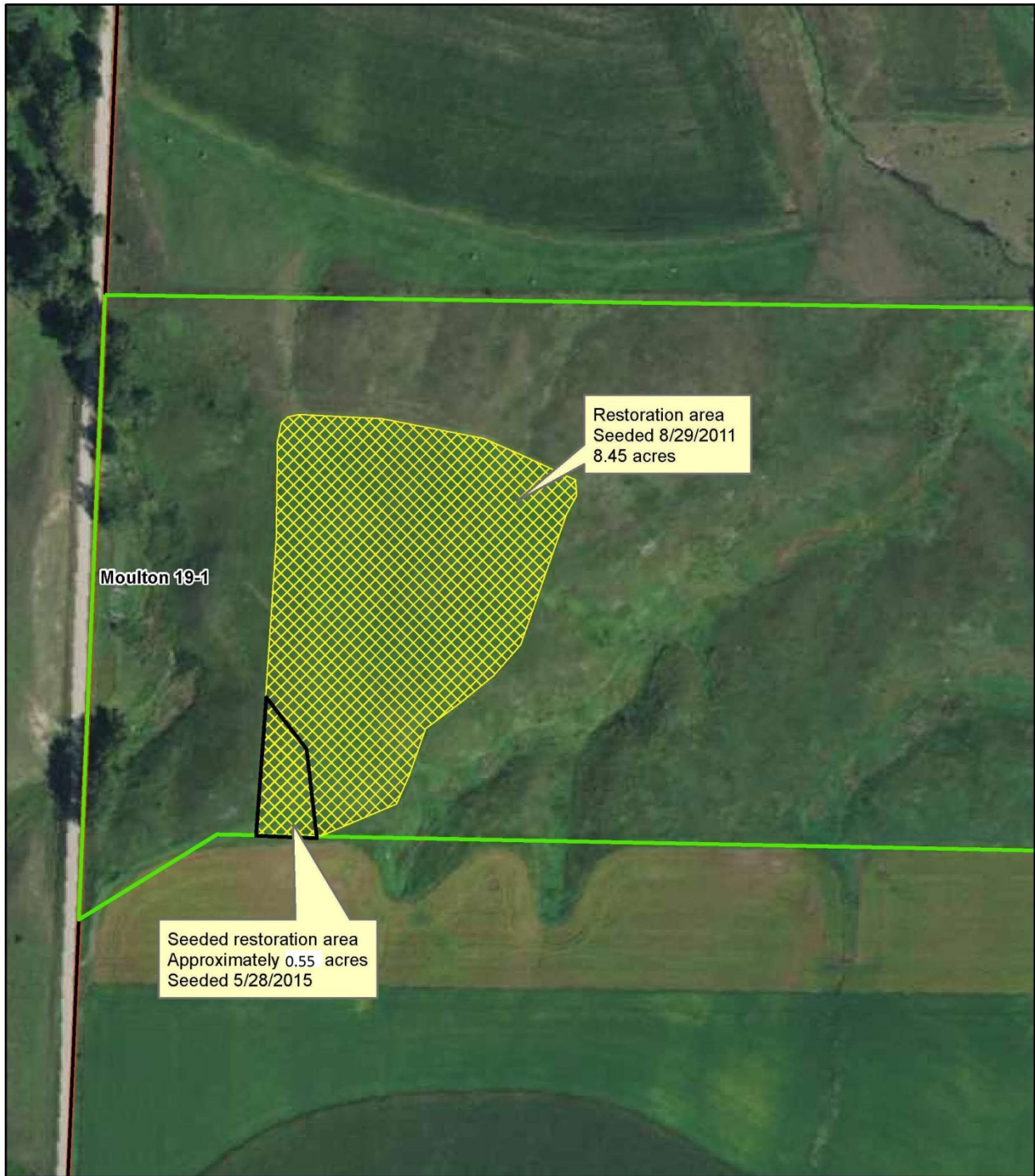
**Summary of Evaluation:** The seeded restoration area has a strong presence of native grass species. Forb presence from the second inter-seeding project is still low, but expected to increase in the next two years. Typically, plant establishment of forbs takes longer than grass and grass like species. The landowner continues to evaluate the presence of annual weeds each year and is mowing for weed control as needed.

### Three Year Evaluation



**Proposed Dates:** June 2019

**Summary of Evaluation:**

# Appendix A. Restoration Area at Moulton 19-1 NPB



## Moulton 19-1 Native Prairie Bank

-  restoration\_area
-  Prairie Bank Easement Boundaries

0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Miles

0 100 200 400 Feet



# Evaluation of ENRTF Restoration Project

**Report Date:** 6/30/2016

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2013, Chp. 52, Sec. 2, Subd. 04c

**Project Title:** Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement

**Project Manager:** Judy Schulte

**Parcel Name:** Swedes Forest 27-1 Native Prairie Bank (Redwood County)

**Parcel Ownership:** DNR administered Native Prairie Bank perpetual conservation easement

## **Completed Restoration and Management Plans Consistent with ENRTF Requirements:**

**Summary of Plan Outcomes:** Desired future condition: Southern Wet Prairie (WPs54b) native plant community.

A narrow strip of cropland along the west edge of the Native Prairie Bank easement needs to be restored to native prairie species to increase the area of prairie habitat and to act as a buffer to protect the remnant native wet prairie from agricultural activities. The goal of this project is to establish a plant community with similar high species plant diversity, as the adjacent remnant native prairie.

## **Activities Completed Through This Project:**

Remnant prairie seed was harvested from adjacent Native Prairie Bank easements within 2 miles of the project site (Swedes Forest 20-1 NPB and Swedes Forest 20-2 NPB). The restoration area was hand broadcast seeded over snow into soybean stubble, on February 24, 2015. Snow seeding allows for good seed to soil contact, especially when done after a final crop harvest. Project size is 0.75 acres.

**Map of Restoration project:** Attached below as Appendix A

## **Ongoing Management Needs & Funding:**

Prescribed fire and invasive species control are ongoing needs at this site.

These tasks will be done with funding available through appropriations by the legislature, including future ENRTF and Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations. Future use of CCM crews is proposed to aid in ongoing management activities, including native seed collection, invasive species control, prescribed fire preparation and implementation.

## [Initial Evaluation](#)

**Dates:** June 2016

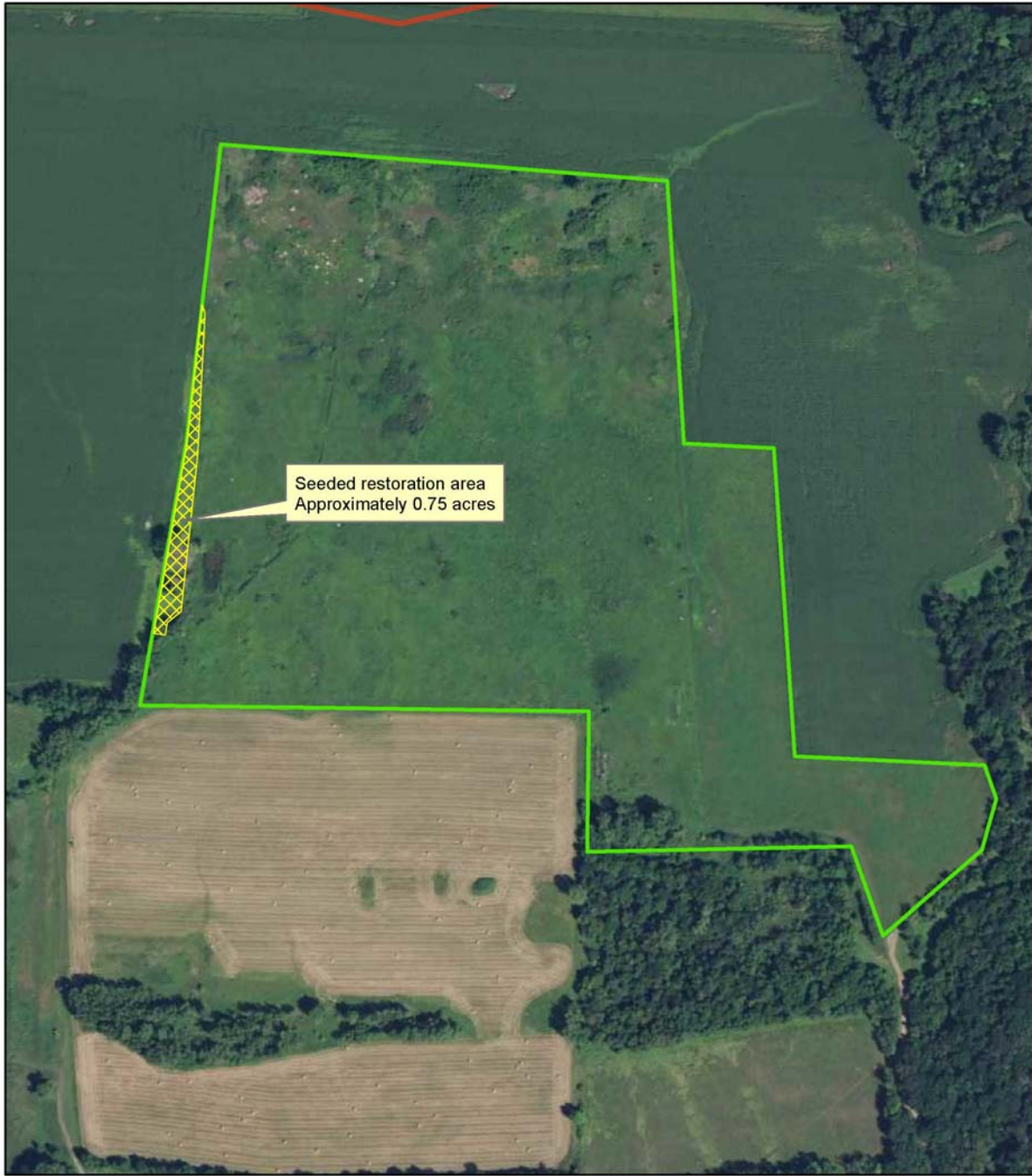


**Summary of Evaluation:** The seeded area is currently dominated by annual weed species, and will benefit from weed management including mowing, and possibly spot herbicide treatments for selected weed species. Some native warm season grass species were present in the restoration. Conditions are typical for a prairie restoration early in its second growing season.

### Three Year Evaluation

**Proposed Dates:** June 2019

# Appendix A. Restoration Area at Swedes Forest 27-1 NPB



### Swedes Forest 27-1 Native Prairie Bank

-  Swedes\_Forest\_27-1\_restoration\_area
-  Prairie Bank Easement Boundaries

