

ML17 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2022

PROJECT TITLE: Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Project Manager: Judy Schulte

Organization: MN DNR – SNA Program

Mailing Address: 1241 East Bridge Street

City/State/Zip Code: Redwood Falls, MN 56283

Telephone Number: (507) 637-6016

Email Address: judy.schulte@state.mn.us

Web Address: www.dnr.state.mn.us

FUNDING SOURCE: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 9 (e), as amended by M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 4, Subd. 9 (e) as extended by M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$2,675,000

AMOUNT SPENT: \$1,764,830

AMOUNT REMAINING: \$910,170

Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

Permanently protected 287 acres of high-quality historically undisturbed native prairie, which house state threatened and special concerns species, Species in Greatest Conservation Need and a wide variety of pollinators. Prairie enhancement (1,227 acres), outreach, monitoring and research activities were implemented across the state to improve prairie habitat.

Overall Project Outcome and Results

Through this appropriation, 287 acres of high-quality native prairie, which house state threatened and special concerns species, Species in Greatest Conservation Need and a wide variety of pollinators, were permanently protected through 5 Native Prairie Bank conservation easements (see attached parcel list). Protection efforts, through this appropriation and others, preserve some of the best remaining native prairie in the state for current and future Minnesota Citizens benefit. These remaining native prairies function at a significantly higher level and provide habitat to more species of insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals than restored prairie. Additionally, 21 Baseline Property Reports and 53 monitoring events were completed and stewardship funds for the 5 closed Native Prairie Bank easements were enrolled into the Conservation Easement Stewardship Account.

A total of 705 acres of invasive species control and 522 acres of prescribed disturbance were completed to improve prairie quality throughout the prairie region of the state. Adaptive Management Monitoring was completed on 50 Native Prairie Banks. Knowledge gained through this monitoring and research will help landowners, DNR land managers and partner agencies improve the management of native prairie and wetlands.

DNR Prairie Specialists participated in 8 outreach events and engaged over 215 different priority prairie landowners on prairie protection, restoration, and enhancement. Prairie Stewardship Plans were completed for 14 landowners providing site specific management recommendations. The “Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook” was published in June of 2021. To-date 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed to landowners and conservation professionals. A [digital version of the book](#) can be found on the DNR website.

Throughout this appropriation many challenges were encountered. A decrease in payment rates caused a higher decline rate, more time needed by landowners to decide on enrollment and the need for increased staffing to accomplish acquisition goals. This did allow for the acquisition of more acres for less and the return of a significant amount of money to the Commission for use on other great conservation projects. A pandemic froze or limited the ability to do many tasks, but staff got creative and looked for alternative approaches to get the work done.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

Fourteen Prairie Stewardship Plans were provided to native prairie landowners. These plans will guide the landowner's enhancement activities for well over a decade. The "Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook" was published in June of 2021. To-date 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed to landowners and conservation professionals (who will continue to give the book to landowners managing prairies for years to come). A digital version of the book can be found here:

<https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/prairierestoration/prairie-handbook.pdf>

All outreach materials produced through this appropriation followed ENRTF acknowledgement guidelines. Special thanks was given to ENRTF in the back cover of the book.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2017 LCCMR Work Plan Final Report

Date of Submission: February 17, 2022

Final Report

Date of Work Plan Approval: June 7, 2017

Project Completion Date: June 30, 2022

PROJECT TITLE: Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

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Web Address: www.dnr.state.mn.us

Location: Statewide

Total ENRTF Project Budget:

ENRTF Appropriation: \$2,675,000

Amount Spent: \$1,764,831

Balance: \$910,169

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 9 (e), as amended by M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 4, Subd. 9 (e) as extended by M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2

Appropriation Language:

\$2,675,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources to acquire native prairie bank easements in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 84.96, on approximately ~~335~~ 250 acres, prepare baseline property assessments, restore and enhance at least 570 acres of native prairie sites, and provide technical assistance to landowners. Of this amount, up to \$132,000 may be deposited in a conservation easement stewardship account. Deposits into the conservation easement stewardship account must be made upon closing on conservation easements or at a time otherwise approved in the work plan. A list of proposed easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required work plan. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2020, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

M.L. 2020 - Sec. 2. ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND; EXTENSIONS. [to June 30, 2021]

I. PROJECT TITLE: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

II. PROJECT STATEMENT:

Native prairie will be permanently protected and conservation actions by prairie landowners will be increased through a suite of tools offered by the DNR Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program. Of Minnesota's 235,000 acres of remaining native prairie, about 100,000 acres have no form of protection. Threats to native prairie are widespread including cropland conversion, mining, development, invasive species, woody encroachment and non-prairie focused land use/management. Since native prairie is a fragile, unique natural resource that provides exceptional water quality, wildlife and pollinator benefits, these threats are extremely disheartening. The MN Prairie Conservation Plan provides a road map for all partners to pursue the protection of all remaining native prairie over the next 20 years – this project is one of those efforts. About 335 acres of native prairie will be permanently protected through acquisition of Native Prairie Bank (NPB) conservation easements with priority given to high quality prairie identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS). The current landowner "waiting list" for NPB includes over 85 projects for over 5200 acres with an estimated easement value of over 14 million dollars. Native prairie restoration and enhancement activities will be implemented on about 570 acres of NPBs threatened by invasive species and lack of natural disturbance regimes. The first stage in the creation of a Native Prairie Tax Exemption web-based online database will be created to help improve the tracking and communication with assessors and landowners. Prairie technical assistance will be provided to landowners and practitioners.

III. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of March 1, 2018: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Invasive Species activities have been completed on 28 acres. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 1 outreach event and have engaged 10 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Five prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites to be released through the state bid process during the spring of 2019. MN IT has started putting together a cost estimate for the Prairie Tax Exemption web-application.

Project Status as of September 1, 2018: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Invasive Species activities have been completed on 75.5 acres and prescribed burning has been completed on 21 acres. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 2 outreach event and have engaged 20 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Five prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites to be released through the state bid process during the spring of 2019. Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 37 NPB tracts targeting gophersnakes/bullsnakes and plains hog-nosed snakes to help mitigate future negative impacts due to prairie management activities. Further details on the cost estimate for the Prairie Tax Exemption web-application have led to the conclusion that it would not be cost effect at this time to develop a web application for Prairie Tax Exemption. We hope that by waiting a few years, technology will have advanced enough to lower the cost of its creation and make it more feasible. An amendment will be asked in the future to move funds tied to this outcome to further advance one or more of the other outcomes within this work plan.

Amendment Request February 12, 2019: Request to move \$30,000 from the Prairie Tax Exemption Database in Activity 4 to salary (\$25,000) and travel (\$5,000) in Activity 3. This will help us hit the higher enhancement goals indicated in statute from the last minute legislative change that lowered the budget but not outcomes. Ideally, we hope to exceed the enhancement goals with these added dollars and conduct extra adaptive management/ecological monitoring that will improve site management moving forward. The Prairie Tax Exemption web-application project has been put on hold. Further details on the cost estimate for the web-

application have led to the conclusion that it would not be cost effective at this time to develop a web application for Prairie Tax Exemption. We hope that by waiting a few years, technology will have advanced enough to lower the cost of its creation and make it more feasible.

Amendment Approved by LCCMR 3/12/2019

Project Status as of February 12, 2019: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Invasive Species activities have been completed on 100 acres and prescribed burning has been completed on 21 acres. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 5 outreach events and have engaged 51 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Five prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites to be released through the state bid process during the spring of 2019. Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 37 NPB tracts targeting gophersnakes/bullsnakes and plains hog-nosed snakes to help mitigate future negative impacts due to prairie management activities.

Amendment Request August 7, 2019: Request to add 2 specific parcels to the parcel list. Popple Grove 36-1 is a wet prairie, upland prairie and prairie wetland complex. Lake Grove 31-1 is mesic prairie, wet meadow and calcareous fen. Both parcels are located in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan Waubun Prairie Core Area. These parcels fall within the Wambach Santee Prairie complex already on the parcel list, we are simply requesting to add the specific parcels to be acquired within this complex. **Amendment Approved by LCCMR 8/20/2019.**

Project Status as of August 7, 2019: Two acquisition parcels for a total of 110 acres in Mahnomens County have started to advance and will option soon. Over the next few months, additional parcels will start to be selected and advanced through the acquisition process. Invasive Species activities have been completed on 195 acres and prescribed burning has been completed on 124 acres. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 6 outreach events and have engaged 86 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Five prairie stewardship plans have been completed with another 9 prairie stewardship plans contracted out with an anticipated completion date of June 15, 2020. Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to ensure no negative impacts occur in the future to the species.

Amendment Request November 18, 2019 (Updated January 7, 2020):

Request: Extend project completion date to June 30, 2021 to allow for additional time to complete acquisitions and Prairie Landowner Handbook.

- Reason for Acquisition Request:
 - In 2016, Native Prairie Bank did a review and lowered payment rates to better reflect real estate market value. This allowed Native Prairie Bank to acquire significantly more acres than initially anticipated for the ML15 Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition appropriation (675 acre outcome goal, exceeded by 432 acres for a total of 1,107 acres protected).
 - This opportunity also came with a large set of challenges. Some landowners previously interested at the higher payment rate are no longer interested, landowners are taking much more time to decide if they want to move forward with protection, and a higher number of landowners decline offers which in turn slows progress on funding appropriations.
 - In August of 2019, the program hired a 3-year temporary acquisition specialist to help increase promotion and execution of the easements with intentions to mitigate some of the above mentioned challenges.

- These successes and challenges have put Native Prairie Bank behind on anticipated acquisition timelines, which leads to the need for a request to extend the availability of this appropriation for acquisition activities.
- Currently, Native Prairie Bank does anticipate having binding agreements in place by the current June 30, 2020 deadline on 221 acres, just shy of the 250 acre outcome laid out in the work plan. However, due to the lowered payment rates, this would leave a significant amount of the appropriation, approximately \$570,000, left unspent.
- A timeline extension of one year will allow Native Prairie Bank to move forward on applying funds to more acquisition projects, ultimately allowing more acres of native prairie to be protected.
- This would also lead to the extension of site development as part of Activity 3 to allow for all new acquisitions boundaries to be posted and the extension of Activity 2, Long-Term Easement Stewardship, to allow for the enrollment of dollars into the account for long-term stewardship of the additional protected parcels.
- Reason for Prairie Landowner Handbook Request:
 - When initially proposed, the plan was to contract out the bulk writing of the Prairie Landowner Handbook, however finding one contractor with the amount of expertise needed proved more difficult than anticipated.
 - An alternative plan was implemented to gather input from all of the best topic experts from across the DNR and partner agencies (30+ conservation professionals). Ultimately, this will lead to an improved, well-rounded, field-tested, conservation professional approved handbook.
 - The time lost seeking an appropriate contractor, changing plans and the added time needed to bring together such a large team of experts has extended the project's timeline.
 - A DRAFT document should be completed by the current June 30, 2020 deadline however, more time is needed to finalize edits, utilize creative services to fine tune product image and complete accessibility checks, and print copies for distributing.
 - This plan change also resulted in the need to move dollars from contracts to salary, as requested in Amendment B below.

Amendment pending further LCCMR and legislative action as of 2/11/2020

Project extended to June 30, 2021 by LCCMR 6/18/20 as a result of M.L. 2020, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Sec. 2, legislative extension criteria being met.

Amendment Request B November 18, 2019 (Updated January 7, 2020): Request to add 1 specific parcel to the parcel list. Sherman 15-1 is a dry-hill prairie, rock outcrop and oak-basswood forest complex. This parcel is located in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan Upper Minnesota River Prairie Core Area. This parcel falls within the Upper Minnesota River Prairie complex already on the parcel list, this request simply adds the specific parcel to be acquired within this complex.

Request to change the handbook deliverable from 3 smaller handbooks to 1 larger handbook. As work progressed on the handbook, it became clear that it is much more cost effective to create 1 handbook that covers all 4 prairie ecological sub-sections, rather than individual handbooks for each subsection. Initially, the plan was to follow the Woodland Landowner Handbook template, which creates a handbook for each ecological subsection however, since prairie management is very similar across the subsections staff feel 1 handbook can adequately cover all 4 prairie ecological subsections in addition to helping landowners managing prairie outside of the prairie defined ecoregions of the state. Also, request to move \$15,000 in contracts to salary to account for

a shift from the work being done by a contractor to being done by DNR staff and partners, as noted in Amendment A above. **Amendment Approved by LCCMR 2/11/2020.**"

Project Status as of February 11, 2020: Two acquisitions parcels (110 acres) in Mahnomen County have executed options and are advancing to closing and a third parcel (121 acres) in Redwood County should option soon. Two additional parcels are currently being negotiated and will be added to the parcel list once factsheet stage is reached. Twenty Baselines have reached draft stage and are ready for landowner review and approval. Thirty-seven NPB easements have been monitored. Invasive Species activities have been completed on 229 acres and prescribed disturbance has been completed on 357 acres. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 6 outreach event and have engaged 148 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Five prairie stewardship plans have been completed with another 9 prairie stewardship plans contracted out and are on track to be completed by June 15, 2020. Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling began at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to ensure no negative impacts occur in the future to the species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures. Updated acre outcomes in Activity 1 Outcome 1 to match ML19 technical correction associated with the amended and approved appropriation language, from M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 4, Subd. 9 (e), with your next update.

Amendment Request August 20, 2020: Request to add two projects to the parcel list. Tanberg 21-1 is a 35 acre high quality wet prairie and seepage wetland complex of outstanding biodiversity, located within the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Rothsay Prairie Core Area. This project was started back in 2017 but the family was not quite ready. Recently the family has decided its time and we were able to option very quickly because of the earlier work completed. Also request to add Lyon 7-2, a 27 acre mosaic of dry and wet prairie located within the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Camden-Prairie Marshes Core Area. Parcel is ranked outstanding biodiversity and is surrounded on 3 sides by Camden State Park.

Request to extend the completion date on all activities to 6/30/2021. Though the majority of promised outcomes have been met, there are dollars remaining in the budget that can be put to work exceeding outcomes where possible.

Request to move \$30,000 from Activity 3 contracts to Activity 3 salary. This is due to COVID-19 safety measures impacting the type of work we can do and the way in which this work is completed. No prescribed burning has been able to take place since early spring due to health and safety concerns, this has caused staff to change gears and look to alternative prescribed disturbance measures. The "unknowns" around the pandemic also make contracting work out much more difficult. **Amendment Approved by LCCMR 9/4/2020**

Project Status as of August 20, 2020: Two acquisitions parcels (110.6 acres) in Mahnomen County have closed. Three additional parcels have optioned and are moving towards close (~182.3 acres). Twenty Baselines are complete and awaiting signatures. Getting notarized landowner signatures has been difficult at this time so we continue to navigate limitations to get the signatures needed. Thirty-seven NPB easements have been monitored. Invasive Species activities have been completed on 323 acres and prescribed disturbance has been completed on 381 acres. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 6 outreach event and have engaged 188 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Thirteen prairie stewardship plans have been completed with one additional prairie stewardship plan to be completed spring 2020. Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling began at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to ensure no negative impacts occur in the

future to the species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures.

Amendment Request: February 22, 2021: Request to move \$10,000 from Activity 1 Travel, \$20,500 from Activity 4 Travel and \$21,500 from Activity 4 Personnel to Activity 1 Personnel. Also request to move \$7,000 from Activity 4 Personnel, \$8,000 from Activity 3 Travel and \$20,000 from Activity 3 Contracts to Activity 3 Personnel. This results in a shift of \$42,000 from Activity 4 to Activity 1 and a shift of \$7,000 from Activity 4 to Activity 3. As we finish up activities for this appropriation, we would like to adjust the budget to help finish up projects, especially on-going acquisitions that need staff attention. Since prescribed fire was not allowed last spring due to COVID-19 and it is uncertain at this time the extent that fire will be able to be used as a management tool this coming spring, more fire planning and execution is being proposed in-house in order to allow for flexibility as information and procedures evolve. This prompted the move of \$20,000 from contracts to salary in Activity 3 noted above. **Amendment Approved by LCCMR 3/05/2021.**

Project Status as of February 22, 2021: Three acquisition parcels, protecting 110.6 acres in Mahnomen County and 35 acres in Wilkin County have closed. Two additional parcels have optioned and are moving towards close (~147.3 acres). Twenty-one baselines are complete with 13 signed by landowners and 8 awaiting signatures. Getting notarized landowner signatures has been difficult at this time so we continue to navigate limitations to get the signatures needed. Forty-one NPB easements have been monitored. Invasive Species activities have been completed on 602 acres and prescribed disturbance has been completed on 434 acres. SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 8 outreach event and have engaged 197 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Thirteen prairie stewardship plans have been completed with one additional prairie stewardship plan to be completed spring 2021. Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling took place at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to ensure no negative impacts occur in the future to these species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs in 2019 to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures. This work was continued in 2020 utilizing the ML18 appropriation. Adaptive management monitoring was completed on 11 NPBs for the on-going SPICE (Sustaining Prairies in a Changing Environment) monitoring that began with earlier ENRTF appropriations. This monitoring aims to help manager's best select and time the disturbance regimes needed to improve the management of prairies given the on-going environmental changes.

Amendment Request June 3, 2021: Request to extend appropriation 1 year to close on Lyon 7-2 which has optioned (binding agreement) and will close shortly after June 30, 2021 (option attached to email request).

Extension Amendment approved by LCCMR 6/29/21

Also request to move \$3,994 from supplies and \$4,000 from contracts in Activity 4 to Printing in Activity 4. These additional printing dollars will be used for the printing of the "Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook" as the printing quote came in higher than our original estimation. Likely not all of these dollars will not be needed, just making sure we have enough to cover if something unexpected occurs between now and June 30th. Also request to move \$500 from contracts in Activity 4 to DNR Creative Services in Activity 4. Similar to the printing, actual costs are just running slightly higher than earlier estimates.

Budget amendment approved by LCCMR 6/29/21

Project Status as of August 18, 2021: Four acquisition parcels, protecting 262 acres in Mahnomen County (111 acres), Wilkin County (35 acres) and Redwood County (116 acres) have closed. One additional parcel will close soon (Lyon County-25 acres). Twenty-one baselines are complete. Fifty-three NPB easements have been

monitored. Easement stewardship funds have been enrolled for the 4 Native Prairie Bank easements acquired through this appropriation so far. One additional easement will close soon with easement stewardship funds to be enrolled prior to the end of FY22.

Invasive Species activities have been completed on 705 acres and prescribed disturbance has been completed on 522 acres. Fourteen prairie stewardship plans have been completed. Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling took place at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to ensure no negative impacts occur in the future to these species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs in 2019 to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures. This work was continued in 2020 utilizing the ML18 appropriation. Adaptive management monitoring was completed on 11 NPBs for the on-going SPICE (Sustaining Prairies in a Changing Environment) monitoring that began with earlier ENRTF appropriations. This monitoring aims to help manager's best select and time the disturbance regimes needed to improve the management of prairies given the on-going environmental changes.

SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 8 outreach event and have engaged over 215 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. The "Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook" was completed, printed and distributed in June 2021. 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed across the state to landowners and conservation professionals. Conservation professionals will continue to give the book to landowners managing prairies for years to come. A digital version of the book can be found here: <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/prairierestoration/prairie-handbook.pdf>

Project Status as of February 17, 2022: Five acquisition parcels, protecting 287 acres in Mahnommen County (111 acres), Wilkin County (35 acres), Redwood County (116 acres) and Lyon County (25 acres) have closed. Twenty-one baselines are complete. Fifty-three NPB easements have been monitored. Easement stewardship funds have been enrolled for the 5 Native Prairie Bank easements acquired through this appropriation.

Invasive Species activities have been completed on 705 acres and prescribed disturbance has been completed on 522 acres. Boundary signs were installed or repaired at 8 Native Prairie Banks. Fourteen prairie stewardship plans have been completed. Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling took place at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to ensure no negative impacts occur in the future to these species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs in 2019 to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures. This work was continued in 2020 utilizing the ML18 appropriation. Adaptive management monitoring was completed on 11 NPBs for the on-going SPICE (Sustaining Prairies in a Changing Environment) monitoring that began with earlier ENRTF appropriations. This monitoring aims to help ~~manager's~~ managers best select and time the disturbance regimes needed to improve the management of prairies given the on-going environmental changes.

SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 8 outreach event and have engaged over 215 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. The "Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook" was completed, printed and distributed in June 2021. 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed across the state to landowners and conservation professionals. Conservation professionals will continue to give the book to landowners managing prairies for years to come. A digital version of the book can be found here: <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/prairierestoration/prairie-handbook.pdf>

Overall Project Outcomes and Results:

Through this appropriation, 287 acres of high-quality native prairie, which house state threatened and special concerns species, Species in Greatest Conservation Need and a wide variety of pollinators, were permanently protected through 5 Native Prairie Bank conservation easements (see attached parcel list). Protection efforts, through this appropriation and others, preserve some of the best remaining native prairie in the state for current and future Minnesota Citizens benefit. These remaining native prairies function at a significantly higher level and provide habitat to more species of insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals than restored prairie. Additionally, 21 Baseline Property Reports and 53 monitoring events were completed and stewardship funds for the 5 closed Native Prairie Bank easements were enrolled into the Conservation Easement Stewardship Account.

A total of 705 acres of invasive species control and 522 acres of prescribed disturbance were completed to improve prairie quality throughout the prairie region of the state. Adaptive Management Monitoring was completed on 50 Native Prairie Banks. Knowledge gained through this monitoring and research will help landowners, DNR land managers and partner agencies improve the management of native prairie and wetlands.

DNR Prairie Specialists participated in 8 outreach events and engaged over 215 different priority prairie landowners on prairie protection, restoration, and enhancement. Prairie Stewardship Plans were completed for 14 landowners providing site specific management recommendations. The “Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook” was published in June of 2021. To-date 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed to landowners and conservation professionals. A [digital version of the book](#) can be found on the DNR website.

Throughout this appropriation many challenges were encountered. A decrease in payment rates caused a higher decline rate, more time needed by landowners to decide on enrollment and the need for increased staffing to accomplish acquisition goals. This did allow for the acquisition of more acres for less and the return of a significant amount of money to the Commission for use on other great conservation projects. A pandemic froze or limited the ability to do many tasks, but staff got creative and looked for alternative approaches to get the work done.

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: NPB Acquisition of Prairie of Biodiversity Significance

Description: DNR-administered NPB conservation easements will be acquired on about 335 acres of high quality native prairie, which will include no more than 15% non-prairie necessary to improve prairie management. Payment rates are determined by authorizing law, M.S. 84.96, as applied according to policies of the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Water and Soils Resources. Conservation easement baseline reports will be completed on 16 NPBs, including all of those acquired with this funding. Monitoring will be done on 20 NPB easements. Priority sites for acquisition are identified by MBS which target rare and endangered plant and animal species, high quality plant communities, and key habitats for Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN).

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$1,389,999
Amount Spent: \$ 836,155
Balance: \$ 553,844

Outcome	Completion Date
1. acquisition of about 250 acres NPB conservation easements	6/30/2022
2. ~16 baseline property reports for NPB easements	6/30/2022
3. monitoring and stewardship of ~20 NPB easements	6/30/2021

Activity 1 Status as of March 1, 2018: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Over the next few months, parcels will start to be selected and advanced through the acquisition process.

Activity 1 Status as of September 1, 2018: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Over the next few months, parcels will start to be selected and advanced through the acquisition process.

Activity 1 Status as of February 12, 2019: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Over the next few months, parcels will start to be selected and advanced through the acquisition process.

Activity 1 Status as of August 7, 2019: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Two parcels, added through the August 7, 2019 amendment request, have started to advance and will option soon. Over the next few months, additional parcels will start to be selected and advanced through the acquisition process.

Activity 1 Status as of February 11, 2020: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Two acquisitions parcels (110 acres) in Mahnomen County have executed options and are advancing to closing and a third parcel (121 acres) in Redwood County should option soon. Two additional parcels are currently being negotiated and will be added to the parcel list once factsheet stage is reached. Twenty Baselines have reached draft stage and are ready for landowner review and approval. Thirty-seven NPB easements have been monitored.

Activity 1 Status as of August 20, 2020: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Two acquisitions parcels (110.6 acres) in Mahnomen County have closed and three additional parcels (182.3 acres) have optioned. Twenty Baselines are complete and awaiting signatures. Getting notarized landowner signatures has been difficult at this time so we continue to navigate limitations to get the signatures needed. Thirty-seven NPB easements have been monitored.

Activity 1 Status as of February 22, 2021: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Three acquisition parcels, protecting 110.6 acres in Mahnomen County and 35 acres in Wilkin County have closed. Two additional parcels have optioned and are moving towards close (~147.3 acres). Twenty-one baselines are complete with 13 signed by landowners and 8 awaiting signatures. Getting notarized landowner signatures has been difficult at this time so we continue to navigate limitations to get the signatures needed. Forty-one NPB easements have been monitored.

Activity 1 Status as of August 18, 2021: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Four acquisition parcels, protecting 262 acres in Mahnomen County (111 acres), Wilkin County (35 acres) and Redwood County (116 acres) have closed. One additional parcel will close soon (25 acres). Twenty-one baselines are complete. Fifty-three NPB easements have been monitored.

Activity 1 Status as of February 17, 2022: SNA Prairie Specialists engaged multiple priority prairie landowners to discuss protection options for their property. Five acquisition parcels, protecting 287 acres in Mahnomen County (111 acres), Wilkin County (35 acres), Redwood County (116 acres) and Lyon County (25 acres) have closed. Twenty-one baselines are complete. Fifty-three NPB easements have been monitored.

Final Report Summary: Through this appropriation 5 native prairie parcels were acquired for a total of 287 acres. Site details provided below (please see Appendix A for a map of acquired parcels):

Popple Grove 36-1 (Mahnomen County)- High quality wet prairie, upland prairie, and prairie wetland complex located in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Waubun Prairie Core Area. This outstanding biodiversity significance site is surrounded on 3 sides by the Waubun WMA. (Acquisition Report Submitted: 2/22/2021 Report ID #21-087-002)

Lake Grove 31-1 (Mahnomen County)- Outstanding biodiversity mesic prairie, wet meadow and calcareous fen with one state threatened and one state special concerns species located onsite. Parcel is located in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Waubun Prairie Core Area and is surrounded by state and federal conservation lands. (Acquisition Report Submitted: 2/22/2021 Report ID #21-087-001)

Sherman 15-1 (Redwood County)- Outstanding biodiversity dry hill prairie, rock outcrop and mesic oak-basswood forest with one state special concern species documented on site (potential for others). Parcel is adjacent to the Cedar Mountain SNA/WMA complex and located in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Upper Minnesota River Prairie Core Area. (Acquisition Report Submitted: 11/17/2022 Report ID #21-127-001)

Tanberg 21-1 (Wilkin County)- Outstanding biodiversity high quality wet prairie and seepage wetland complex located adjacent to Rothsay WMA and located within the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Rothsay Prairie Core Area. (Acquisition Report Submitted: 2/22/2021 Report ID #21-167-001)

Lyons 7-2 (Lyon County)- Mosaic of dry and wet prairie located within the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Camden-Prairie Marshes Core Area. Parcel is ranked outstanding biodiversity and is surrounded on 3 sides by Camden State Park. (Acquisition Report Submitted: 2/3/2022 Report ID #22-083-001)

In addition to acquired sites, 21 baseline property reports and 53 monitoring visits were conducted on Native Prairie Banks through this appropriation.

ACTIVITY 2: Long-Term Easement Stewardship

Description: 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 Native Prairie Bank easements, the DNR has estimated that annual expenses for each project and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 132,000
Amount Spent: \$ 100,095
Balance: \$ 31,905

Outcome	Completion Date
1. dollars deposited into conservation easement stewardship account (~6 easements)	6/30/2022

Activity 2 Status as of March 1, 2018: To-date, no Native Prairie Bank easements have closed using funds allocated through this appropriation, therefore no stewardship funds have been used.

Activity 2 Status as of September 1, 2018: To-date, no Native Prairie Bank easements have closed using funds allocated through this appropriation, therefore no stewardship funds have been used.

Activity 2 Status as of February 12, 2019: To-date, no Native Prairie Bank easements have closed using funds allocated through this appropriation, therefore no stewardship funds have been used.

Activity 2 Status as of August 7, 2019: To-date, no Native Prairie Bank easements have closed using funds allocated through this appropriation, therefore no stewardship funds have been used.

Activity 2 Status as of February 11, 2020: To-date, no Native Prairie Bank easements have closed using funds allocated through this appropriation, therefore no stewardship funds have been used.

Activity 2 Status as of August 20, 2020: To-date, two Native Prairie Bank easements have closed using funds allocated through this appropriation with easement stewardship funds to be enrolled in the stewardship account prior to the end of FY21.

Activity 2 Status as of February 22, 2021: To-date, three Native Prairie Bank easements have closed using funds allocated through this appropriation with easement stewardship funds to be enrolled in the stewardship account prior to the end of FY21.

Activity 2 Status as of August 18, 2021: Easement stewardship funds have been enrolled for the 4 Native Prairie Bank easements acquired through this appropriation so far. One additional easement will close soon with easement stewardship funds to be enrolled prior to the end of FY22.

Activity 2 Status as of February 17, 2022: Easement stewardship funds have been enrolled for the 5 Native Prairie Bank easements acquired through this appropriation.

Final Report Summary: Easement stewardship funds for the 5 Native Prairie Banks acquired through this appropriation have been deposited into the DNR's Conservation Easement Stewardship Account. These dedicated stewardship funds will provide the support needed for the long-term, ongoing monitoring and minor enforcement activities associated to these Native Prairie Bank easements. For each specific Native Prairie Bank easement, initial investment dollars were determined using a DNR approved Conservation Easement Stewardship Calculator, which estimated the annual expenses and the investment needed to generate annual income sufficient to cover these expenses in perpetuity. Funds deposited into the established conservation easement stewardship account adhere to Minnesota Management & Budget protocols.

ACTIVITY 3: Native Prairie Restoration & Enhancement

Description: Enhancement activities, based on the best scientific and technical knowledge, will be completed on about 570 acres. Activities include seed collection, site preparation, planting, invasive species treatment, woody species removal, boundary signing, site cleanup, prescribed burns (or alternative prescribed disturbance, such as haying, mowing or grazing, where appropriate) and monitoring. Adaptive Management Monitoring will occur at 4 NPB sites to evaluate whether the objectives of management were met and to contribute to future management decisions. Enhancement activities would be carried out via landowner agreements, DNR staff, Conservation Corps MN (CCM), volunteers, and/or contractors.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 3:

ENRTF Budget: \$752,698

Amount Spent: \$ 528,711

Balance: \$ 223,987

Outcome	Completion Date
1. ~200 acres of woody removal & invasive species treatment	6/30/2021
2. ~370 acres of prescribed burns	6/30/2021
3. NPB easement boundary signs & development work on ~6 NPB sites	6/30/2022
4. adaptive management monitoring on ~4 NPB sites	6/30/2021

Activity 3 Status as of March 1, 2018: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 28 acres at 1 NPB. 3-3. Prescribed Burning: Firebreaks will be installed this fall for burns planned the spring of 2019. 3-4. Development: No boundary signs have been installed to-date. 3-5. Adaptive Management Monitoring: A request for proposals will be released this spring to contract out adaptive management monitoring to be completed throughout the 2018 growing season.

Activity 3 Status as of September 1, 2018: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 62 acres at 5 NPBs. Herbaceous invasive species activities has been completed on 13.5 acres at 11 NPBs. 3-3. Prescribed Burning: Prescribed burns were completed on 21 acres at 2 NPBs. 3-4. Development: No boundary signs have been installed to-date. 3-5. Adaptive Management Monitoring: Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 37 NPB tracts targeting gophersnakes/bullsnakes and plains hog-nosed snakes. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to insure no negative impacts occur in the future to the species. NPB tracts were located in Big Stone, Brown, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Swift, and Yellow Medicine counties.

Activity 3 Status as of February 12, 2019:

Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 76 acres at 6 NPBs. Herbaceous invasive species activities has been completed on 24 acres at 18 NPBs. 3-2. Prescribed Burning: 9.4 miles of firebreaks have been installed at 17 NPBs. Prescribed burns have been completed on 21 acres at 2 NPBs. 3-3. Development: No boundary signs have been installed to-date. 3-4. Adaptive Management Monitoring: Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 37 NPB tracts targeting gophersnakes/bullsnakes and plains hog-nosed snakes. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to insure no negative impacts occur in the future to the species. NPB tracts were located in Big Stone, Brown, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Swift, and Yellow Medicine counties.

Activity 3 Status as of August 7, 2019: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 76 acres at 6 NPBs. Herbaceous invasive species activities has been completed on 119 acres at 24 NPBs. 3-2. Prescribed Burning: 12.8 miles of firebreaks have been installed at 20 NPBs. Prescribed burns have been completed on 124 acres at 7 NPBs. 3-3. Development: No boundary signs have been installed to-date. 3-4. Adaptive Management Monitoring: Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to insure no negative impacts occur in the future to the species.

Activity 3 Status as of February 11, 2020: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 76 acres at 6 NPBs. Herbaceous invasive species activities has been completed on 153 acres at 30 NPBs. 3-2. Prescribed Burning: 18.7 miles of firebreaks have been installed at 23 NPBs. Prescribed burns have been completed on 253 acres at 10 NPBs. Prescribed grazing (alternative disturbance) has been completed on 104 acres at 2 NPBs. 3-3. Development:

Boundary signs have been installed at 1 NPB. 3-4. Adaptive Management Monitoring: Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling began at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to insure no negative impacts occur in the future to the species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures.

Activity 3 Status as of August 20, 2020: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 90 acres at 10 NPBs. Herbaceous invasive species activities has been completed on 233 acres at 38 NPBs. Total invasive control acres between these acres is 323 acres. 3-2. Prescribed Burning: 19.4 miles of firebreaks have been installed at 23 NPBs. Prescribed burns have been completed on 253 acres at 10 NPBs. Prescribed grazing (alternative disturbance) has been completed on 128 acres at 3 NPBs. Total prescribed disturbance between these activities is 381 acres. 3-3. Development: Boundary signs have been installed at 4 NPBs. 3-4. Adaptive Management Monitoring: Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling began at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to insure no negative impacts occur in the future to the species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures.

Activity 3 Status as of February 22, 2021: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 329 acres at 27 NPBs. Herbaceous invasive species activities has been completed on 273 acres at 38 NPBs. Total invasive control completed on 602 acres. 3-2. Prescribed Burning: 32 miles of firebreaks have been installed at 32 NPBs. Prescribed burns have been completed on 253 acres at 10 NPBs. Prescribed grazing (alternative disturbance) has been completed on 181 acres at 3 NPBs. Total prescribed disturbance between these activities is 434 acres. 3-3. Development: Boundary signs have been installed at 6 NPBs. 3-4. Adaptive Management Monitoring: Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling took place at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to insure no negative impacts occur in the future to these species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs in 2019 to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures. This work was continued in 2020 utilizing the ML18 appropriation. Adaptive management monitoring was completed on 11 NPBs for the on-going SPICE (Sustaining Prairies in a Changing Environment) monitoring that began with earlier ENRTF appropriations. This monitoring aims to help manager's best select and time the disturbance regimes needed to improve the management of prairies given the on-going environmental changes.

Activity 3 Status as of August 18, 2021: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 384 acres at 27 NPBs. Herbaceous invasive species activities has been completed on 321 acres at 41 NPBs. Total invasive control completed on 705 acres. 3-2. Prescribed Burning: 33 miles of firebreaks have been installed at 32 NPBs. Prescribed burns have been completed on 341 acres at 14 NPBs. Prescribed grazing (alternative disturbance) has been completed on 181 acres at 3 NPBs. Total prescribed disturbance between these activities is 522 acres. 3-3. Development: Boundary signs have been installed at 7 NPBs. 3-4. Adaptive Management Monitoring: Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling took place at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to insure no negative impacts occur in the future to these species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs in 2019 to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures. This work was continued in 2020 utilizing the ML18 appropriation. Adaptive management monitoring was completed on 11 NPBs for the on-going SPICE (Sustaining Prairies in a Changing Environment) monitoring that began with

earlier ENRTF appropriations. This monitoring aims to help manager's best select and time the disturbance regimes needed to improve the management of prairies given the on-going environmental changes.

Activity 3 Status as of February 17, 2022: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 3-1. Woody Removal & Invasive Species: Woody invasive species activities were completed on 384 acres at 27 NPBs. Herbaceous invasive species activities has been completed on 321 acres at 41 NPBs. Total invasive control completed on 705 acres. 3-2. Prescribed Burning: 33 miles of firebreaks have been installed at 32 NPBs. Prescribed burns have been completed on 341 acres at 14 NPBs. Prescribed grazing (alternative disturbance) has been completed on 181 acres at 3 NPBs. Total prescribed disturbance between these activities is 522 acres. 3-3. Development: Boundary signs have been installed at 8 NPBs. 3-4. Adaptive Management Monitoring: Rare grassland snake surveys were conducted at 42 NPB tracts in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species. Butterfly distance sampling took place at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to insure no negative impacts occur in the future to these species. Ecological monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs in 2019 to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures. This work was continued in 2020 and 2021 utilizing the ML18 appropriation. Adaptive management monitoring was completed on 11 NPBs for the on-going SPICE (Sustaining Prairies in a Changing Environment) monitoring that began with earlier ENRTF appropriations. This monitoring aims to help manager's best select and time the disturbance regimes needed to improve the management of prairies given the on-going environmental changes.

Final Report Summary: Enhancement activities have been completed on 1,227 acres within 68 Native Prairie Bank conservation easements. Activities included woody removal on 384 acres, herbaceous invasive control on 321 acres, prescribed burning of 341 acres, and prescribed grazing (alternative prescribed disturbance) of 181 acres. Boundary signs were installed or repaired at 8 Native Prairie Banks (NPBs). Adaptive Management Monitoring was completed on 50 Native Prairie Bank easements. Monitoring included:

- Rare grassland snake surveys at 42 NPBs in western Minnesota. Roughly 16 species of amphibians and reptiles were found, including plains hog-nosed and bull snakes which were the main target species.
- Butterfly distance sampling at 1 NPB. Information collected will be used by management staff to adjust management regimes to ensure no negative impacts occur in the future to these species.
- Smooth brome response monitoring was initiated on 2 NPBs in 2019 to track and monitor the response of brome to different management control measures. This work was continued in 2020 and 2021 utilizing the ML18 appropriation.
- On-going SPICE (Sustaining Prairies in a Changing Environment) monitoring was completed on 11 NPBs This was a continuation of monitoring work that began with earlier ENRTF appropriations which aims to help manager's best select and time the disturbance regimes needed to improve the management of prairies given the on-going environmental changes.

ACTIVITY 4: Native Prairie Landowner Assistance & Incentives

Description: Private landowners and other practitioners will increase their stewardship of native prairie through workshops, field days, one-on-one consultations, and other strategies. Federal funds will be leveraged in the creation and distribution of Landowner Handbooks, which will provide guidance and expertise to landowners of prairie and forest lands in the prairie subsections of Minnesota. At least 14 landowners will receive a comprehensive prairie stewardship plan that will provide specific prairie condition, protection and management expertise for their property. The first stage of an online Prairie Tax Exemption database will be created to allow private landowners to apply online in addition to providing online access to county assessors and DNR staff to improve communication and the overall certification process. The second stage will be included in the ML18 ENRTF Private Native Prairie Conservation through Native Prairie Bank proposal.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 4:

ENRTF Budget: \$400,303
Amount Spent: \$299,870
Balance: \$100,433

Outcome	Completion Date
1. ~7 workshops/field days for prairie landowners & practitioners (~600 people)	6/30/2021
2. consultations, guidance, mgmt. asst., etc. to ~55 landowners	6/30/2021
3. 1 Prairie Landowner Handbook, covering all 4 prairie subsections (~10,000 copies plus web access)	6/30/2021
4. ~14 prairie stewardship plans provided to prairie landowners (~1000 acres)	6/30/2021

Activity 4 Status as of March 1, 2018: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 4-1 Workshops/Field Days: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 1 outreach event, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement education. 4-2 Consultations: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 10 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. 4-3 Landowner Handbooks: SNA Prairie Biologist is coordinating with DNR Forestry staff on the landowner handbooks. Work on the handbooks is expected to start in the fall of 2018. 4-4 Prairie Stewardship Plans: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with a completion date of June 15, 2019. Another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites have been identified and a Prairie Stewardship Planning “Request for Proposals” is expected to be released through the state bid process during the spring of 2019. 4-5 Prairie Tax Exemption Web-App: MN IT staff have put together a cost estimate for the web-app with the hope work will begin the fall of 2018.

Activity 4 Status as of September 1, 2018: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 4-1 Workshops/Field Days: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 2 outreach event, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement education. 4-2 Consultations: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 20 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. 4-3 Landowner Handbooks: SNA Prairie Biologist is coordinating with DNR Forestry staff on the landowner handbooks. Work on the handbooks is expected to start in the fall of 2018. 4-4 Prairie Stewardship Plans: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with a completion date of June 15, 2019. Another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites have been identified and a Prairie Stewardship Planning “Request for Proposals” is expected to be released through the state bid process during the spring of 2019. 4-5 Prairie Tax Exemption Web-App: Further details on the cost estimate for the web-app have led to the conclusion that it would not be cost effect at this time to develop a web application for Prairie Tax Exemption. We hope that by waiting a few years, technology will have advanced enough to lower the cost of its creation and make it more feasible. An amendment will be asked in the future to move funds tied to this outcome to further advance one or more of the other outcomes within this work plan.

Activity 4 Status as of February 12, 2019: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 4-1 Workshops/Field Days: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 5 outreach event, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement education. 4-2 Consultations: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 51 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. 4-3 Landowner Handbooks: SNA Prairie Biologist is coordinating with DNR Forestry staff on the landowner handbooks. Initial planning for the handbooks has begun with hopes to contract out editing of content soon. 8. 4-4 Prairie Stewardship Plans: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with a completion date of June 15, 2019. Another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites have been identified and a Prairie Stewardship Planning “Request for Proposals” is expected to be released through the state bid process during the spring of 2019. 4-5 Prairie Tax Exemption Web-App: Further details on the cost estimate for the web-app have led to the conclusion that it would not be cost effect at this time to develop a web application for Prairie Tax Exemption. We hope that by waiting a few years, technology will have advanced enough to lower the cost of its creation and make it more feasible. An amendment has been requested to shift dollars tied to this project to Activity 3 (see February 12, 2019 amendment request).

Activity 4 Status as of August 7, 2019: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 4-1 Workshops/Field Days: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 6 outreach event, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement education. 4-2 Consultations: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 86 different priority prairie landowners to discuss protection and management options for their property. 4-3 Landowner Handbooks: SNA Prairie Biologist is coordinating with DNR Forestry staff on the landowner handbooks. Initial planning for the handbooks has begun with hopes to contract out editing of content soon. 8. 4-4 Prairie Stewardship Plans: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been completed. Another 9 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with an anticipated completion of June 15, 2020.

Activity 4 Status as of February 11, 2020: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 4-1 Workshops/Field Days: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 6 outreach event, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement education. 4-2 Consultations: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 148 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. 4-3 Landowner Handbooks: When initially proposed, the plan was to contract out the bulk writing of the Prairie Landowner Handbook, however finding one contractor with the amount of expertise needed proved more difficult than anticipated. An alternative plan was implemented to gather input from all of the best topic experts from across the DNR and partner agencies. Ultimately, this will lead to an improved, well-rounded, field-tested, conservation professional approved handbook. The time lost seeking an appropriate contractor, changing plans and the added time needed to bring together such a large team of experts has extended the project's timeline. A DRAFT document should be completed by the current June 30, 2020 deadline however, more time is needed to finalize edits, utilize creative services to fine tune product image and complete accessibility checks, and print copies for distributing. The legislative amendment requested 11/18/2019, if approved, would allow additional time to complete this outcome. 4-4 Prairie Stewardship Plans: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been completed. Another 9 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out and are on track to be completed by June 15, 2020.

Activity 4 Status as of August 20, 2020: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 4-1 Workshops/Field Days: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 6 outreach event, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement education. 4-2 Consultations: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 188 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. 4-3 Landowner Handbooks: When initially proposed, the plan was to contract out the bulk writing of the Prairie Landowner Handbook, however finding one contractor with the amount of expertise needed proved more difficult than anticipated. An alternative plan was implemented to gather input from all of the best topic experts from across the DNR and partner agencies. Ultimately, this will lead to an improved, well-rounded, field-tested, conservation professional approved handbook. The time lost seeking an appropriate contractor, changing plans and the added time needed to bring together such a large team of experts extended the project's timeline. A DRAFT document is nearing completion and over the next several months work to finalize edits, fine tune product image, complete accessibility checks, and bring the handbook to print will be progressing. 4-4 Prairie Stewardship Plans: 13 prairie stewardship plans have been completed. One prairie stewardship plan was placed on hold during the spring of 2020, the plan is to complete this final plan by spring 2020.

Activity 4 Status as of February 22, 2021: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 4-1 Workshops/Field Days: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 8 outreach event, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement education. 4-2 Consultations: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged 197 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. 4-3 Landowner Handbooks: When initially proposed, the plan was to contract out the bulk writing of the Prairie Landowner Handbook, however finding one contractor with the amount of expertise needed proved more difficult than anticipated. An alternative plan was implemented to gather input from all of the best topic experts from across the DNR and partner agencies. Ultimately, this lead to an improved, well-rounded, field-tested, conservation professional approved handbook. The time lost seeking an appropriate contractor, changing plans and the added time

needed to bring together such a large team of experts extended the project's timeline. A DRAFT document is complete and staff are finalizing edits based on feedback from initial reviews. Over the next several months work to finalize edits, fine tune product image, complete accessibility checks, and bring the handbook to print will be progressing. 4-4 Prairie Stewardship Plans: 13 prairie stewardship plans have been completed. One prairie stewardship plan was placed on hold during the spring of 2020, the plan is to complete this final plan by spring 2021.

Activity 4 Status as of August 18, 2021: Cumulative accomplishments to date: 4-1 Workshops/Field Days: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 8 outreach event, providing prairie protection, restoration and enhancement education. 4-2 Consultations: SNA Prairie Specialists have engaged over 215 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. 4-3 Landowner Handbooks: The "Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook" was completed, printed and distributed in June 2021. 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed across the state to landowners and conservation professionals. Conservation professionals will continue to give the book to landowners managing prairies for years to come. Though we originally were aiming to print 10,000 copies we opted to lower that amount and do multiple orders as needed. This will save in storage fees and encourage people to use the digital version when possible. We hope to order more copies of the book (if needed) with the ML18 or ML20 Native Prairie Stewardship appropriations if approved via amendment request. A digital version of the book can be found here: <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/prairierestoration/prairie-handbook.pdf> 4-4 Prairie Stewardship Plans: 14 prairie stewardship plans have been completed.

Final Report Summary: SNA Prairie Specialists participated in 8 outreach event providing prairie protection, restoration, and enhancement education. These same specialists engaged over 215 different priority prairie landowners and practitioners to discuss protection and management options for their property. Prairie Stewardship Plans were completed for 14 landowners providing site specific management recommendations. The "Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook" was completed, printed, and distributed in June 2021. 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed across the state to landowners and conservation professionals. Conservation professionals will continue to give the book to landowners managing prairies for years to come. Though we originally were aiming to print 10,000 copies we opted to lower that amount and do multiple orders as needed. This will save in storage fees and encourage people to use the digital version when possible. We hope to order more copies of the book (as needed) in the future through a combination of federal forest dollars and ML18 or ML20 Native Prairie Stewardship appropriations if approved via amendment request. A digital version of the book can be found here: <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/prairierestoration/prairie-handbook.pdf>.

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](#), and advertised locally via mailings and flyer postings. Landowner Handbooks will be made available to landowners online and at multiple outreach events.

Status as of March 1, 2018: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with a completion date of June 15, 2019. Another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites have been identified and a Prairie Stewardship Planning "Request for Proposals" is expected to be released through the state bid process during the spring of 2019. DNR managers and landowners will be involved in the plan creation process and will be provided a copy of the plans once finished.

Status as of September 1, 2018: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with a completion date of June 15, 2019. Another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites have been identified and a Prairie Stewardship Planning "Request for Proposals" is expected to be released through the state bid process during the spring of

2019. DNR managers and landowners will be involved in the plan creation process and will be provided a copy of the plans once finished.

Status as of February 12, 2019: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with a completion date of June 15, 2019. Another 9 prairie stewardship planning sites have been identified and a Prairie Stewardship Planning “Request for Proposals” is expected to be released through the state bid process during the spring of 2019. DNR managers and landowners will be involved in the plan creation process and will be provided a copy of the plans once finished.

Status as of August 7, 2019: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been completed and copies given to the landowners. Another 9 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out with an anticipated completion of June 15, 2020. DNR managers and landowners will be involved in the plan creation process and will be provided a copy of the plans once finished.

Status as of February 11, 2020: 5 prairie stewardship plans have been completed and copies given to the landowners. Another 9 prairie stewardship plans have been contracted out and are on track to be completed by June 15, 2020. DNR managers and landowners will be involved in the plan creation process and will be provided a copy of the plans once finished.

Status as of August 20, 2020: 13 prairie stewardship plans have been completed and copies given to the landowners. One more prairie stewardship plan will be completed fall of 2020. Work continues on the Prairie Landowner Handbook, once completed and printed, copies will be distributed to prairie managers and landowners across the state.

Status as of February 22, 2021: 13 prairie stewardship plans have been completed and copies given to the landowners. One more prairie stewardship plan will be completed spring of 2021. Work continues on the Prairie Landowner Handbook, once completed and printed, copies will be distributed to prairie managers and landowners across the state.

Status as of August 18, 2021: 14 prairie stewardship plans have been completed and copies given to the landowners. 3,500 copies of the “Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook” book have been distributed across the state to landowners and conservation professionals. Conservation professionals will continue to give the book to landowners managing prairies for years to come. A digital version of the book can be found here: <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/prairierestoration/prairie-handbook.pdf>

All prairie stewardship plans and the handbook followed ENRTF acknowledgement guidelines. Special thanks was given to ENRTF in the back cover of the book.

Final Report Summary: Prairie Stewardship Plans were completed and distributed to 14 landowners providing site specific management recommendations. The “Prairies of Minnesota Landowner Handbook” was completed, printed, and distributed in June 2021. To-date 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed across the state to landowners and conservation professionals. Conservation professionals will continue to give the book to landowners managing prairies for years to come. A digital version of the book can be found here: <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/prairierestoration/prairie-handbook.pdf>.

All outreach materials, prairie stewardship plans and the handbook produced through this appropriation followed ENRTF acknowledgement guidelines. Special thanks was given to ENRTF in the back cover of the book.

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:

***This section represents an overview of the preliminary budget at the start of the project. It will be reconciled with actual expenditures at the time of the final report.**

Budget Category	Original Budget	Current Budget	Final Amount Spent	Overview Explanation
Personnel:	\$685,000	\$813,500	\$642,041	<p>Acquisition and Management Coordinators & Prairie Biologist (0.3 FTE spread across 4 people for 2-yrs) = ~\$49,800 Final Report: Acquisition and Management Coordinators & Prairie Biologist (0.1 FTE spread across 3 people for 4-yrs) = \$44,788</p> <p>Specialist and Technician (3.8 FTE spread across 6 people for 2-yrs) = ~\$553,200 Final Report: Specialist and Technician (1.8 FTE spread across 29 people for 4-yrs) = \$530,478</p> <p>Laborer and seasonal crews (1.1 FTE spread across 3-5 people for 2-yrs)=~\$82,000 Final Report: Laborer and seasonal crews (0.2 FTE spread across 2 people for 4-yrs) = \$66,775</p>
Professional/ Technical/Service Contracts:	\$ 417,000	\$347,500	\$216,614	<p>Professional/technical Contractors: the state bid process will be used for adaptive management monitoring, landowner handbook writing services and the development of Prairie Stewardship Plans (~\$170,000). Final Report: Professional/technical Contractors-\$101,965</p> <p>Service contracts: will use CCM or the state bid process for completing woody encroachment removal & exotics control, and prescribed burning/mowing projects (\$247,000). Final Report: Service Contracts-\$114,649</p>
Equipment/Tools / Supplies:	\$ 32,400	\$28,406	\$14,932	Supplies, parts, tools, repair costs & supplies for enhancement, including safety items, hand tools, etc.; signs & posts; workshop & event supplies
Easement Acquisition:	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$523,185	<p>Estimate securing about 6 easements for 250 acres that will be held by the MN DNR - SNA Program Final Report: Secured 5 easements for 287 acres that will be held by the MN DNR - SNA Program.</p>
Long-Term Easement Stewardship	\$ 132,000	\$ 132,000	\$100,095	Funds will be deposited into conservation easement account dedicated to the perpetual monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements
Professional Services for Acquisition:	\$ 134,000	\$134,000	\$94,908	Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition; anticipate about 6 transactions; cost/transaction vary between projects.

Printing:	\$16,000	\$23,994	\$20,502	Printing of ~10,000 Landowner Handbooks (~\$16,000) Final Report: Printing of 3,500 Landowner Handbooks (\$20,502)
Travel Expenses in MN:	\$137,150	\$103,650	\$64,209	Fleet charges for trucks, cars, & equipment, e.g. mowers, skid steers; mileage, lodging & meals as per state contracts
Other: Landowner Handbook	\$15,000	\$15,500	\$11,895	DNR Creative Services Graphic Design for creation of Landowner Handbooks (Activity 4 Outcome 3)
Other: Prairie Tax Exemption Online System	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	MNIT Services assistance in the creation of an online application system (Activity 4 Outcome 5) Final Report: No online application system was developed due cost estimates and a cost vs reward review. Perhaps in a few years, when technology advances, it will become more cost effective.
Other: Direct & Necessary Costs:	\$76,450	\$76,450	\$76,450	*DNR costs for the appropriation, see below
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$2,675,000	\$2,675,000	\$1,764,831	

*Direct and Necessary expenses include Department Support Services (Human Resources, IT Support, Safety, Financial Support, Communications Support, Planning Support, and Procurement Support). Department Support Services are described in the agency Service Level Agreement, and billed internally to divisions based on rates that have been developed for each area of service. These services are directly related to and necessary for the appropriation. Department leadership services (Commissioner's Office and Regional Directors) are not assessed. Those elements of individual projects that put little or no demand on support services such as large single-source contracts, land acquisitions (landowner payments & transaction costs), and funds that are passed-thru to other entities are not assessed Direct and Necessary costs for those activities. For this work plan, CCM contracts (~\$55,000), MNIT service level agreement (~\$30,000) and DNR Creative Services (~\$15,000), Long-Term Easement Stewardship (~132,000), Easement Acquisition (~\$1,000,000) and Professional Services for Acquisition (~\$134,000) have not been assessed Direct and Necessary costs. In addition to itemized costs captured in our proposal budget, direct and necessary costs cover HR Support (~\$15,092), Safety Support (~\$4,227), Financial Support (~\$17,256), Communication Support (~\$5,264), IT Support (~\$30,175), Planning Support (~\$3,648), and Procurement Support (~\$788) that are necessary to accomplishing funded programs/projects.

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.

Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000: NA

Total Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation: A total of 10.4 FTE's spread across 13-15 different people.

Final Report: A total of 8.5 FTEs spread across 34 different people. The increase in number of people is associated to the adaptive management monitoring, often many people help for a very short period collecting data in the field since time is of the essence.

Total Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation: How many employees a future contractor will use, the hours they will work, or what salary they may pay their employees is not known. What is known is that \$417,000 in contracts will be executed.

Final Report: \$216,614 in contracts was executed.

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state	\$30,000	\$0 Final Amount Spent: \$0	Federal forestry match of \$30,000 will be used in the creation of the 3 Prairie Section Landowner Handbooks. Additionally, landowners often contribute towards management activities, these costs will not tracked. Final Report: Federal forestry dollars will be used to print additional copies of the Landowner Handbook in the future but have not been spent to-date. The goal is to order as needed, so storage does not become an issue. In-Kind support from Forestry staff was also received throughout the creation of the handbook.
State	\$0**	\$0**	Some NPB acquisitions are funded with a combination of state appropriations (e.g. OHF and Critical Habitat Match). If any other funds are used for landowner payments for acquisitions funded in part with this appropriation, accomplishments will be pro-rated by the actual expenditures per funding source.
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$30,000	\$0 Final Amount Spent: \$0	

** As indicated below, Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations for acquisition and prairie restoration and enhancement occur concurrently with this ENRTF appropriation. These OHF funds are used for similar but separate projects as the ENRTF funding. As of June 1, 2017, LSOHC, state legislature and the governor have approved \$2,481,000 to Native Prairie Bank for acquisition and \$130,160 for prairie restoration and enhancement for ML 2017.

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners:

Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding

To accelerate efforts, the Native Prairie Bank Program coordinated with Minnesota Prairie Plan partners and used the network of established Local Technical Teams (LTT's) to reach out to landowners and increase program enrollment. The LTT's are local staff from SWCD's, NRCS, DNR, USFWS, The Nature Conservancy and Pheasants Forever - to name a few. Funds from this appropriation will not be used to fund these partner activities.

Federal forestry match will be used in the printing of the Prairie Landowner Handbooks in the future.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: Currently, DNR holds 11,600 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 on-going active natural resource management prairie values will be lost.

C. Funding History:

Funding Source and Use of Funds	Funding Timeframe	\$ Amount
ENRTF ML13, Ch52, Sec. 2, Subd4c: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Acquisition	July 2013-June 2016	\$750,000
ENRTF ML15, Ch76, Sec2, Subd9d: Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Acquisition	July 2015-June 2018	\$3,325,000
OHF ML13, Ch137, Art1, Sec2, Subd4g: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2013-June 2018	\$ 96,110
OHF ML13, Ch137, Art1, Sec2, Subd4c: SNA & NPB acquisition (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2013-June 2018+	\$ 753,500
OHF ML14, Ch256, Art1, Sec2, Subd4h: Accelerated Prairie – SNA prairie restoration & enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2014-June 2019	\$ 285,650
OHF ML14, Ch256, Art1, Sec2, Subd2e: NPB acquisition	July 2014-June 2019+	\$ 3,000,000
OHF ML15, First Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd2e: Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection	July 2015-June 2018	\$3,740,000
OHF ML15, First Sp. Session, Ch. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd2k: Accelerated Prairie Restoration & Enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2015-June 2020	\$125,000
OHF ML16, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd2f: Accelerated Native Prairie Bank Protection	July 2016-June 2019	\$2,541,000
OHF ML16, Ch. 172, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd2j: Accelerated Prairie Restoration & Enhancement (estimated NPB portion only)	July 2016-June 2021	\$215,000

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- The project is for 5 years, will begin on 07/01/2017, and end 06/30/2022.
- Periodic project status update reports will be submitted March 1 and September 1 of each year, with the first status report being submitted by November 1, 2017.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and September 1, 2022.

IX. VISUAL COMPONENT or MAP(S): See attached priority area map. A final map will be created once parcels are acquired and specific locations are known.

X. FEE TITLE ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION EASEMENT/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS:

A. Parcel List: See attached Parcel List

B. Acquisition/Restoration Information:

Conservation Easement Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.

Eligibility for Native Prairie Bank is established in both M.S. 84.96 and MN Rule 6136.09. To qualify, land must be covered by native prairie vegetation and have never been plowed. 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.

2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.

- [Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan](#)
- [Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025](#)
- [Minnesota DNR Strategic Conservation Agenda](#)
- [Minnesota's Statewide Conservation Plan](#)

3. For any conservation easement acquired, a restoration and management 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 be 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 which 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.

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 assessor 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. A copy of the written approval should be provided to LCCMR.

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 enforcements 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 lands 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 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. Specifically, 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 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 CCM under which the SNA Program often does project or activity specific agreements. For restoration projects, CCM has been and will continue to be used when appropriate for hand seed harvest. CCM also does some invasive species control on NPBs and will be considered on restoration projects for post-planting weed control.

- 6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.**

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.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
M.L. 2017 Final Project Budget

Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. E

Project Manager: Judy Schulte

Organization: MN DNR – SNA Program

M.L. 2017 ENRTF Appropriation: \$ 2,675,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 5 Years, June 30, 2022

Date of Report: February 17, 2022



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Revised Activity 1	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
	Budget (2022-2021)						
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET							
BUDGET ITEM							
NPB Acquisition							
Long-Term Easement Stewardship							
Restoration & Enhancement							
Landowner Assistance & Incentives							
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)							
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.	\$227,832	\$196,709	\$31,123			\$813,500	\$171,459
Acquisition and Management Coordinators & Prairie Biologist (0.3 FTE for 2- yrs) Final Report: Acquisition and Management Coordinators & Prairie Biologist (0.1 FTE spread across 3 people for 4- yrs) = \$44,788							
Specialist and Technician (4.3 FTE spread across 6 people for 2- yrs) Final Report: Specialist and Technician (1.8 FTE spread across 29 people for 4- yrs) = \$530,478							
Laborer and seasonal crews (1.1 FTE spread across 3-5 people for 2- yrs) Final Report: Laborer and seasonal crews (0.2 FTE spread across 2 people for 4- yrs) = \$66,775							
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$0			\$347,500	\$130,886
Professional/Technical Contracts (Final Report: \$101,965)							
Activity 3-Outcome 4 (~\$30,000) Adaptive Management Monitoring (~4 NPBs).							
Activity 4-Outcome 4 (~\$125,000) Prairie Stewardship Plans (~14 plans) Contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding processes							
Service Contracts (Final Report: \$114,649)							
Activity 3-Outcome 1 (~\$222,000) Woody removal & exotic species treatment (~ 200 ac.) Priority given to CCM; contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding processes							
Activity 3-Outcome 2: (~\$25,000) Prescribed Burns (~360 ac) Priority given to CCM; contractors to be selected following state procurement & bidding processes							
Equipment/Tools/Supplies							
Supplies, parts, tools, repair costs & supplies for restoration and enhancement, including safety items, hand tools, etc; signs & posts; workshop & event supplies	\$900	\$490	\$410			\$28,406	\$13,474
Easement Acquisition			\$0				
Estimate securing about 6 easements for 250 acres that will be held by the MN DNR - SNA Program Final Report: Secured 5 easements for 287 acres.	\$1,000,000	\$523,185	\$476,815			\$1,000,000	\$476,815
Easement Stewardship			\$0				
Long-Term Easement Stewardship Funding			\$0	\$132,000	\$100,095	\$132,000	\$31,905
Professional Services for Acquisition			\$0				
Attorney General's Office and DNR Lands and Minerals costs associated with completing an acquisition; anticipate about 6 transactions; cost/transaction vary between projects.	\$134,000	\$94,908	\$39,092			\$134,000	\$39,092
Printing			\$0				

Printing of ~10,000 Landowner Handbooks (~\$16,000) Final Report: Printing of 3,500 Landowner Handbooks (\$20,502)			\$0							\$23,994	\$20,502	\$3,492	\$23,994	\$3,492
Travel expenses in Minnesota			\$0											
Fleet charges for trucks, cars, & equipment, e.g. mowers, seeders; mileage, lodging & meals as per state contracts	\$14,400	\$7,996	\$6,404				\$78,000	\$52,077	\$25,923	\$11,250	\$4,136	\$7,114	\$103,650	\$39,441
Other			\$0											
Landowner Handbook -DNR Creative Services Graphic Design for creation of Landowner Handbooks (Activity 4 Outcome 3)			\$0							\$15,500	\$11,895	\$3,605	\$15,500	\$3,605
Direct & Necessary Costs: DNR's direct and necessary costs pay for activities that are directly related to and necessary for accomplishing appropriated programs/projects. This includes HR Support (~\$15,092), Safety Support (~\$4,227), Financial Support (~\$17,256), Communication Support (~\$5,264), IT Support (~\$30,175), Planning Support (~\$3,648), and Procurement Support (~\$788)	\$12,867	\$12,867	\$0				\$37,530	\$37,530	\$0	\$26,053	\$26,053	\$0	\$76,450	\$0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$1,389,999	\$836,155	\$553,844	\$132,000	\$100,095	\$31,905	\$752,698	\$528,711	\$223,987	\$400,303	\$299,870	\$100,433	\$2,675,000	\$910,169

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 17 Final Parcel List

Project Title: Native Prairie Stewardship & Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. E

Project Manager Name: Judy Schulte

Organization: MN DNR-SNA

M.L. 17 ENRTF Appropriation: \$2,675,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 5 Years, June 30, 2022

Date of Report: February 17, 2022

#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status
		Latitude	Longitude									
1	Chanarambie Creek Prairies	43° 55' 12.9"	96° 1' 8.0"	\$2800/ac	Murray, Pipestone	Dry gravel, mesic & wet prairies in biggest grassland complex with the highest quality prairie parcels in SW MN	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
2	Lac Qui Parle Prairies	43° 12' 10.4"	96° 10' 32.1"	\$2300/ac	Big Stone, Lac qui Parle	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, as well as prairie chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
3	Antelope Hills Prairie	44° 56' 0.5"	96° 20' 29.8"	\$2300/ac	Lac qui Parle	Mixture of dry hill, sand-gravel, mesic and wet prairies. Expands habitat for many rare plant and bird species	Conservation easement acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
4	Glacial Lakes & Moraine Prairie	45° 25' 20.0"	95° 14' 34.5"	\$2800/ac	Pope, Kandiyohi, 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 acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
5	Prairie Coteau/Rock River Prairies	44° 4' 59.4"	96° 10' 23.8"	\$2600/ac	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 acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed

6	Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairies	44° 11' 36.9"	96° 19' 1.8"	\$2600/ac	Pipestone, Lincoln	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 acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
7	Shakotan Prairies	44° 23' 1.9"	96° 25' 25.4"	\$2600/ac	Lincoln	Dry hill prairie, prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
8	Upper MN River Prairies	44° 40' 21.2"	95° 19' 2.0"	\$2900/ac	Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville, Redwood	MN River Valley native prairie including oak savanna, wet prairie, rock outcrops; expands habitat for many rare plants, butterflies and birds	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
9	Yellow Medicine Coteau Prairie	44° 43' 42.7"	96° 25' 47.0"	\$2500/ac	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 acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
10	Des Moines River Valley	43° 50' 31.2"	95° 7' 7.6"	\$3000/ac	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 acquisition	100		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
11	Blue Mounds/Touch-The-Sky Prairies	43° 43' 16.2"	96° 12' 43.3"	\$4000/Ac	Rock	Mesic to wet prairie with rock outcrops; provides habitat for many rare rock outcrop plants	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
12	Big Stone Moraines	45° 19' 7.5"	96° 20' 2.4"	\$1800/ac	Big Stone	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 acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
13	Big Stone Lake Prairie (north & south)	45° 25' 33.7"	96° 40' 41.0"	\$1800/Ac	Big Stone	Dry Hill, mesic and wet prairies along Big Stone Lake next to DNR state park and SNA parcels	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
14	Rothsay Prairies	46° 29' 27.0"	96° 21' 23.4"	\$1600/ac	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 acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed

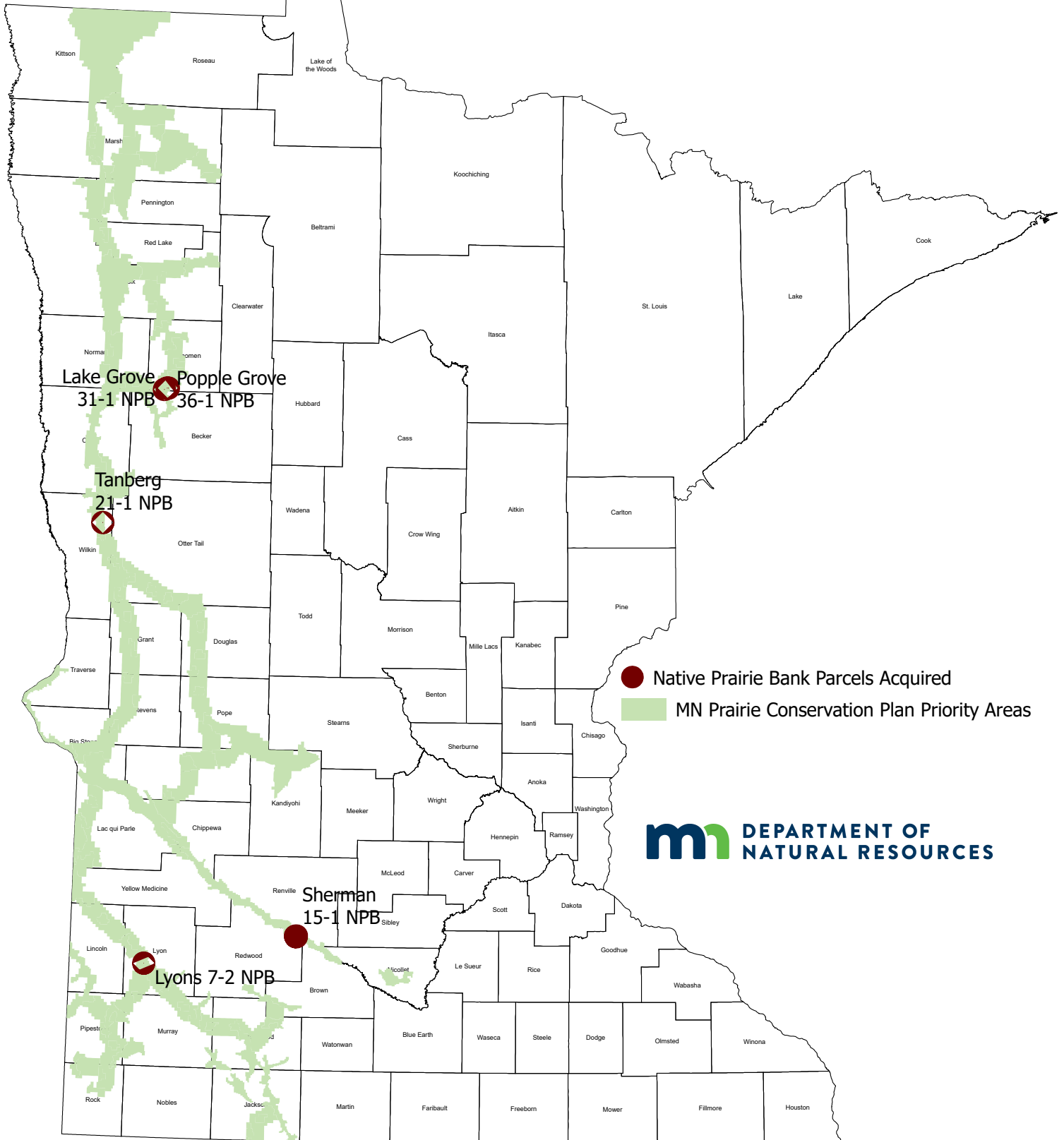
15	Glacial Ridge Prairies	47° 41' 46.9"	96° 18' 43.9"	\$1600/ac	Polk	Prairie meadow, wet prairie, rare species; part of a large, contiguous prairie macrosite, expands habitat for many rare species as well as prairie chickens	Conservation easement acquisition	160		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
16	Felton Prairies	47° 3' 48.0"	96° 24' 53.7"	\$1800/ac	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 acquisition	100		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
17	Lake Christina Hills Prairies	46° 6' 33.3"	95° 41' 33.8"	\$1800/ac	Ottertail, Douglas, Grant	Dry hill to wet prairies; part of the rolling topography of the Alexandria moraine	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
18	Sherburne Sands Prairies	45° 23' 40.7"	93° 39' 49.8"	\$1600/ac	Sherburne	A mosaic of prairie, wetlands and oak savanna set in an important transition zone	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
19	Frontenac Hay Creek Bluffs	44° 30' 20.5"	92° 25' 6.1"	\$2600/ac	Goodhue	Southern dry bedrock bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
20	Kellogg-Weaver Dunes Prairies	44° 16' 10.6"	91° 56' 2.8"	\$2500/ac	Wabasha, Winona	Rolling sand dune topography, mature dunes with dry, mesic, or wet prairie as well as oak savanna	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
21	Root River Valley Prairies	43° 46' 14.6"	91° 39' 51.8"	\$2400/ac	Houston, Filmore, Winona	Southern dry bedrock bluff (goat) prairies in a complex of bluff prairies and cold streams; habitat for timber rattlesnakes	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
22	Lake Bronson and Aspen Parkland Prairies	48° 50' 39.1"	96° 30' 53.5"	\$1000/ac	Kittson, Roseau, Marshall	Aspen parkland complex-many prairie dominated aspen complexes are succeeding to woodland in absence of fire	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
23	Agassiz Dunes	47° 29' 8.3"	96° 20' 14.3"	\$1,800/ac	Polk, Norman	Dry barrens oak savanna-rare prairie plant community in northern MN	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
24	Wambach Santee Prairie	47° 24' 55.7"	95° 56' 36.3"	\$1,000/ac	Mahnomen	Prairie meadow complexes, prairie rich fens and other rare northern plant communities	Conservation easement acquisition	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
25	Blanket Flower Prairies	46° 42' 5.4"	96° 11' 37.1"	\$1500/ac	Clay, Becker, Otter Tail	Dry sand-gravel prairie in Alexandria Moraine and Hardwood Hills subsection	Conservation easement acquisition	200		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
26	Blue Stem Prairie	46° 49' 50.0"	96° 26' 56.0"	\$1800/ac	Clay	Mesic, wet meadow/carr, & wet prairie parcels intermixed with DNR SNA and Audobon preserves	Conservation easement acquisition	80		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed

27	Lake Traverse Prairies	45° 42' 2.0"	96° 40' 48.2"	\$2000/ac	Traverse	Dry prairie and prairie- woodland complex	Conservation easement	150		Private	DNR-SNA	Proposed
28	Popple Grove 36-1	47° 09' 24.8"	95° 56' 47.0"	\$1400/ac	Mahnomen	High quality wet prairie, upland prairie and prairie wetland complex located in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Waubun Prairie	Conservation easement acquisition	40		Private	DNR-SNA	Closed-Final Acreage 40.0 acres.
29	Lake Grove 31-1	47° 09' 50.0"	95° 55' 8.3"	\$1000/ac	Mahnomen	Mesic prairie, wet meadow and calcareous fen located in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Waubun Prairie Core Area.	Conservation easement acquisition	70		Private	DNR-SNA	Closed-Final Acreage 70.6 acres
30	Sherman 15-1	44°30' 10.5"	94° 54' 25.7"	\$2900/acre	Redwood	Dry Hill Prairie, Rock outcrop and Mesic Oak-Basswood Forest located in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Upper	Conservation easement acquisition	121		Private	DNR-SNA	Closed-Final Acreage 116.0 acres.
31	Tanberg 21-1	46°29' 43.6"	96° 20' 44.79"	\$1500/acre	Wilkin	High quality wet prairie and seepage wetland complex of outstanding biodiversity. Located within the MN Prairie	Conservation easement acquisition	35		Private	DNR-SNA	Closed-Final Acreage 35.0 acres.
32	Lyons 7-2	44°21' 2.4"	95° 56' 36.2"	\$2600/acre	Lyon	Mosaic of dry and wet prairie located within the MN Prairie Conservation Plan Camden-Prairie Marshes Core Area. Parcel is ranked outstanding	Conservation easement acquisition	27		Private	DNR-SNA	Closed-Final Acreage 24.8 acres.

NOTES: NPB acquisition will be targeted at high quality native prairie parcels in the areas listed above. These are named Prairie Core Areas identified in the MN Prairie Conservation Plan, plus priority areas in SE MN.



ML17 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Final Report Native Prairie Bank Acquisitions



● Native Prairie Bank Parcels Acquired
■ MN Prairie Conservation Plan Priority Areas

