

Prairie Protection, Enhancement, and Restoration in Minnesota

A Collaborative Proposal to the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council

Current Status of Prairie and Grasslands

About one-third of Minnesota or over 18 million acres were once tallgrass prairie. The soil developed by prairie plants over thousands of years is now the basis of Minnesota's agricultural economy. Over the last 150 years, nearly every place that could have been plowed has been plowed. The result is that most of the prairie is now gone along with the buffalo, elk and other species that depended on the prairie. In a few places, however, remnants of prairie have survived mostly because the prairie soils were too rocky, wet, sandy, or steep to break.

The Minnesota Biological Survey has spent the last 20 years inventorying prairie and other habitat remnants of the state and has found that only about 169,500 acres (or less than 1%) of the original prairie still survive in 81 counties (see Figure 1). Most of the remaining native prairies of Minnesota are found along the state's western edge in the Prairie Coteau, Minnesota River Valley, Agassiz Beach Ridge and Aspen Parkland landscapes. However, there are also remnant prairies found throughout Minnesota's Prairie Grassland and Deciduous Woods biomes including in the Twin Cities Metro Area. Many of these remnants are in a degraded condition where invasive species or woody plants are in the process of taking dominance

The state has been a large beneficiary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Currently, there are about 1.6 million acres enrolled in 10-year contracts distributed across the state's agricultural region. Much of this is concentrated in the northwest part of the state, and all contracts are for limited duration – 10 to 15 years. As has been largely referenced in the popular press, much of this acreage will be coming out of contract in the next few years (see Figure 2). Recent high commodity prices are encouraging landowners to convert many CRP acres back to crop production, so a huge net loss of CRP acres is looming. The CRP program has also been expanded via a partnership with the state's Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) which also provides 106,000 acres. Through USDA's Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), also in conjunction with BWSR, there are another 73,000 acres under easement. Many of the acres in the CREP and WRP programs are restored grasslands. Finally, between the Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, another 1.5 million acres of land are permanently protected, much of this in grasslands on Wildlife Management Areas and Waterfowl Production Areas.

The state of Minnesota lacks a coordinated and comprehensive program to protect the remaining prairies and grasslands in the state and to restore these back to a healthy condition. The Minnesota County Biological Survey estimates that 56% (about 95,000 acres) of the state's original prairie is unprotected on private lands. Virtually all of the 1.6 million acres of CRP is ultimately threatened with conversion back to croplands. These numbers give us a measure of what success in native prairie and grassland conservation could look like. However, the legal

Figure 1.

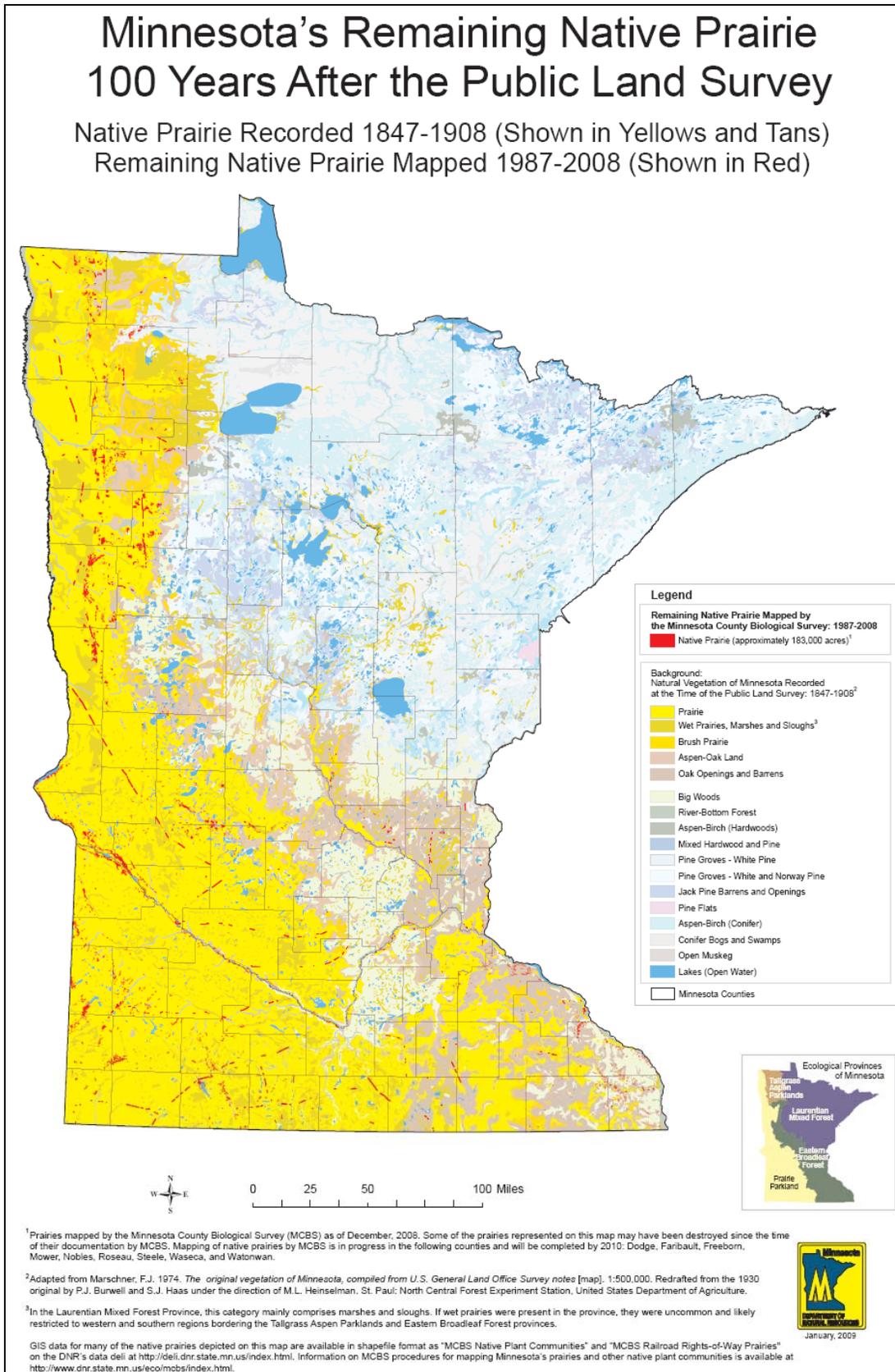
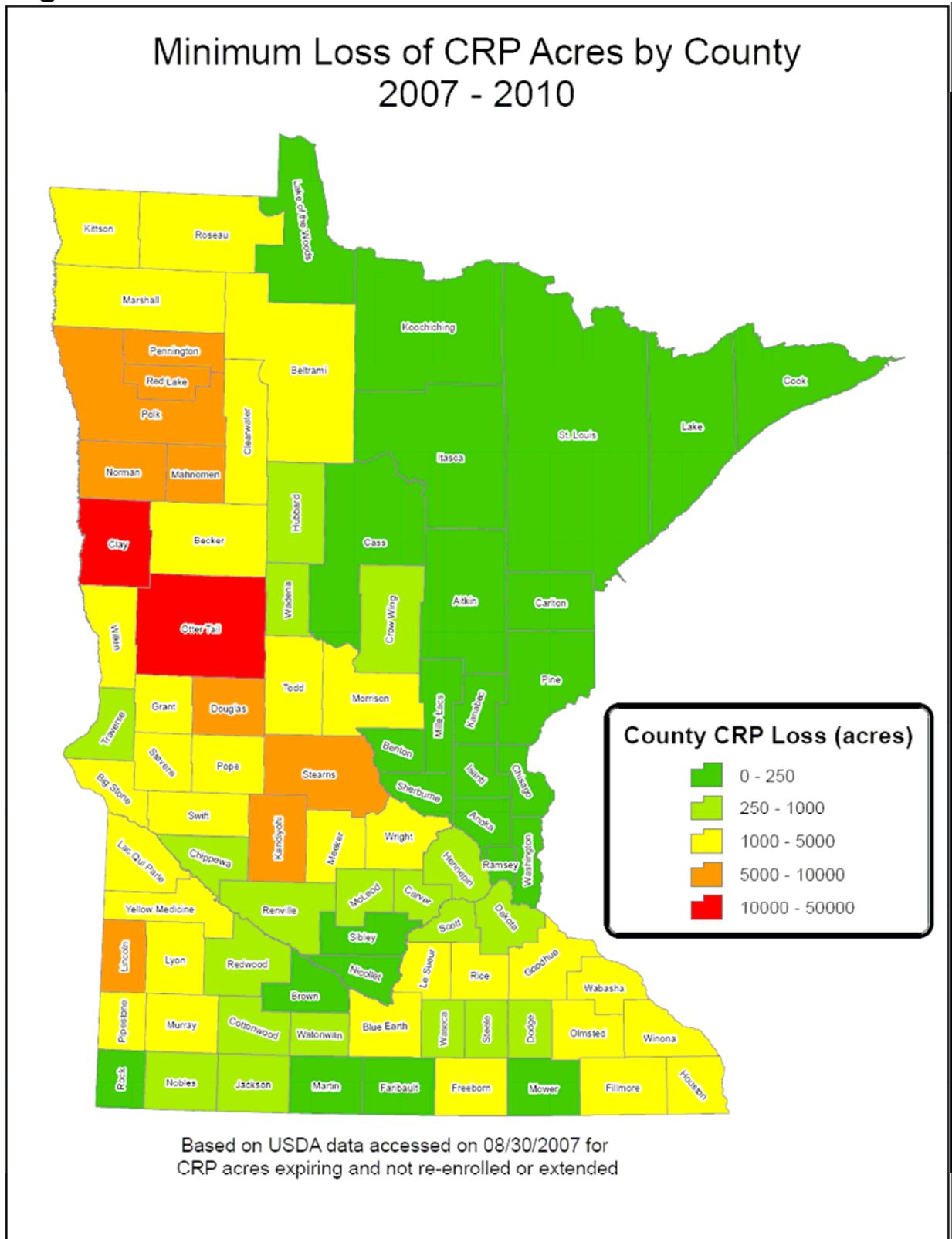


Figure 2.



protection is only the start of the process to effectively conserve prairie habitat. Any protected prairie and grassland also require ongoing management in the form of prescribed fire, haying, or grazing to maintain or enhance its vigor and diversity.

Although a first priority for prairie protection is to conserve the remaining native prairie found on private lands in Minnesota, there are also larger prairie/grassland system conservation issues that need to be addressed. The health of pheasant, waterfowl, and many other grassland birds is determined by more than just native prairie habitats. These bird species depend on planted grasslands and pastures to maintain large populations conducive to hunting. Conservation programs need to maintain a sizeable grassland/prairie component in what will continue to be a predominantly agricultural landscape.

High Priority Conservation Projects and Programs

Conservation partners involved in protection, restoration and enhancement of prairie and grassland habitats have developed a portfolio of high-priority projects for consideration by the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council (appended). Collectively, these proposals represent measurable, on-the-ground conservation activities that take a meaningful first step towards a longer-term goal of grassland conservation. During the next year, partners welcome the opportunity to work with the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council to help create a 25-year vision of long-term conservation goals for prairies and grasslands in Minnesota.

At a Stakeholder Forum in January 2009, the following short-term priorities for prairie and grassland conservation were identified (Councilmembers were provided with a summary report in January):

- Find and acquire (in fee or easement) the highest quality prairies as defined by the County Biological Survey.
- Emphasize visibility and success in the first year.
- Focus grassland management and restoration on existing state lands first to show early success (e.g., Wildlife Management Areas [WMA]).
- Emphasize large tract acquisitions to magnify public and natural resource benefits.

For this first round of funding, partners have developed proposals for projects that can be completed in a very short time with existing programs. They are generally very consistent with the priorities identified by the Stakeholder Forum, above. These projects utilize the existing conservation delivery structure of agencies and organizations, using proven conservation practices. While the proposals attempt to address the questions and issues identified by the Council in its guidance document, the abbreviated time available to develop proposals may require the future submission of additional information (at the request of the Council).

Each proposal included in this package identifies specific activities, expenses and goals. We believe appropriate measures of success for the various practices include the following, and will be provided to the Council subsequent to project completion:

- 1. Acquisition of Native Prairie and Grasslands Open to Public Hunting and Fishing (unless otherwise provided by law)**

The most easily understood measures of land acquisition are the acres acquired and the money spent per acre. As projects are closed, details on location of projects, the number of acres purchased, the natural features found on the land, the cost of the project, and the plans for the management of the parcel will be posted to the project website.

2. Conservation Easements on Native Prairie and Grasslands

Since conservation easements cover land held by private owners, some level of confidentiality is required. As easements are signed, the township and county where the easement is located, the total acres eased, and a brief description of the ecological features of the property will be posted to the website.

3. Prairie Enhancement (via Prescribed Fire Management and Woody Plant Removal)

Undertaking fire and shrub management on a site is a multi-year commitment. For purposes of this proposal, we have asked project managers to limit their funding horizon to about 3 years. For each site managed, the location, area covered, current condition, and proposed treatment schedule will be reported. At the conclusion of the grant period, a progress report will include the date, type of management activity undertaken, and the effectiveness of that action.

4. Prairie Restoration

The planting of new prairie grassland is a difficult task. Restoring the full richness of prairie plant species, invertebrates, and soil structure is far more difficult and may be impossible in some cases, but it is possible to create a plant community that approaches the vegetation structure of native prairie. For each prairie restoration attempted, the location, size, timeline, and general plan of how the restoration will be carried out will be available. The success of the restoration will be monitored during the grant period, and a description of the site, actions and response will be provided.

Current Statewide Plans

Minnesota currently does not have a statewide plan to specifically address the protection, enhancement, and restoration of prairies and grasslands in the state. A number of other plans have dealt with prairie and grasslands indirectly, most notably the Duck Plan, Pheasant Plan, Wildlife Management Area Plan, Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, and the Campaign for Conservation Fifty-Year Vision.

The Duck Plan calls for 2.0 million acres of additional habitat (70% in grassland) to restore a breeding population of one million birds producing a fall population of 1.4 million ducks. The Pheasant Plan asks for 1.56 million acres of additional grassland to increase pheasant harvest to 750,000 roosters. The Wildlife Management Area Plan describes the need to add 562,700 additional acres in existing and newly created WMAs within the Prairie Province and Deciduous Transition portion of Minnesota. The Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan makes its first habitat recommendation the restoration of ecoregion-appropriate, landscape-scale complexes of habitat centered on concentrations of existing remnant habitat with a focus on critical lands including native prairie. The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy sets the goal to protect and manage key habitat for Species of Greatest Conservation Need including the 147 species found in the Prairie Parkland Province. The Fifty-Year Vision calls for the protection and management of native prairie on a region by region basis.

Minnesota stands to lose all or most of the 1.6 million acres of CRP lands as contracts expire. Further, only about 74,000 acres of original prairie and grassland is currently protected of the remaining 170,000 acres of remnant prairie in Minnesota. Consequently, we believe that much more land needs to be protected and restored if we are to meet the targets set forth in these plans. We strongly encourage the Council to work with partners to develop a 25-year plan for grassland conservation as a future roadmap to identifying prairie and grassland conservation priorities.

Collaborative Process Described

To develop this collaborative prairie and grassland conservation proposal required the participation of numerous groups and entities working in the western and southern portions of Minnesota including the Twin Cities Metro Area. Known prairie conservation implementation organizations were invited to meetings on January 7 and 27, 2009, to develop a process and guidelines for working as a coalition. A set of ground rules were adopted (Figure 3) and the budgetary needs assessed. The expressed demand for funding by agencies and organizations far exceeded the amount potentially available from the LOHC. The group used the ground rules and an iterative project review process to reduce the original \$60 million of proposals to the approximately \$30 million presented here. The Council should be aware that there is significantly more potential for projects in the prairie region than are presented here, and we would welcome the opportunity to present these if and when funding allows.

Process Participants (Organization and Key Contact)

Metro-based Organizations and Agencies

Anoka County Parks – John VonDeLinde
Belwin Conservancy – Steve Hobbs
Friends of the Mississippi River – Tom Lewanski
Great River Greening – Wayne Ostlie
Minneapolis Parks and Recreation – Mike Kimble
Ramsey County Parks – John Moriarty
St. Paul Parks – Adam Robbins
Three Rivers Park District – Larry Gillette
Washington County Parks – Peter Mott

State Agencies

BWSR – Kevin Lines
DNR Division of Ecological Resources
 County Biological Survey – Carmen Converse
 Native Prairie Bank – Jason Garms
 SNA – Peggy Booth
DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife
 Fisheries – Mike Halverson
 Wildlife – Kim Hennings, Ken Varland

State-wide Conservation Organizations

Audubon Society – Mark Martell
Brandenburg Prairie Foundation – Kim Knutson
Ducks Unlimited – Ryan Heiniger

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts – Sheila Vanney
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association – Kevin Ausland
Minnesota Land Trust – Kris Larsen
Minnesota Native Landscapes – Jim Eckberg
Minnesota River Valley Green Corridor – Brad Cobb
Pheasants Forever – Matt Holland
Prairie Chicken Society – Brian Winter
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation – Ralph Cinfio
Sportsmen for Change – Garry Leaf
The Nature Conservancy – Tom Landwehr
Trust for Public Land – Bob McGillivray

Figure 3.

Prairie Habitat Outdoor Heritage Fund Collaborative

Ground Rules Adopted Jan. 27, 2009

1. Participants should endorse this set of operating guidelines (or an amended version) by consensus.
2. Partners should agree to identify a Collaborative Coordinator for purposes of developing and submitting a FY10 proposal (Tom Landwehr agreed to coordinate through April 1). Since procedures for submitting proposals in FY11 will likely be different, partners agree that the current proposal does not imply any precedent for future proposals.
3. Partners agree to provide information in a timely manner as requested by the Coordinator or lose the opportunity to participate on the proposal (by group consensus).
4. Total dollars available for FY10 is around \$65M (~\$78M anticipated revenue minus a \$5M Conservation Partners allocation and minus \$8M contingency, likely to be declared by Council). We agree to a Prairie Habitat package funding target of about \$25M.
5. All partners should develop programmatic requests (versus project-specific requests) on a standard form approved by the group.
6. Partners agree to not submit identical requests via multiple Outdoor Heritage Fund proposals.
7. No partner should request more than 40% of the funding unless unanimously agreed upon by other partners. Partner is any organization or agency (not a subdivision of same).
8. For programmatic requests less than \$100,000, partners should seriously consider applying for a Conservation Partners grant from LOHC as an alternative; it will be easier and funding would be more certain (most likely!). Otherwise, any partner that can implement on-the-ground conservation should be welcome to participate.
9. For FY10 proposal, partners should only request funding for those projects that can be completed quickly (e.g., for acquisition projects, more than 80% of funding spent by June 30, 2010, for restoration and enhancement projects, mostly completed by June 30, 2011).
10. A goal of the collaborative is to foster public and private participation.
11. All other elements as laid out in Council guidelines (see: http://www.lohc.state.mn.us/materials/2009_rec_dev_proc.pdf) must be complied with or provided.

Prairie Conservation Collaborative Proposal to the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council, Feb. 9, 2009

| | Program | Partner | LOHC request | Other state funds | Other non-state funds | Total | Total acres |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Acquisition | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Three Rivers Park District Acquisition Anoka Sandplain Oak Savanna | Three Rivers Park District | \$2,200,000 | | \$500,000 | \$2,700,000 | 100 |
| 2 | Conservation | Great River Greening | \$1,700,000 | | \$1,080,000 | \$2,780,000 | 750 |
| 3 | Green Corridor Legacy Acquisition | Green Corridor Legacy Program | \$4,800,000 | | \$60,000 | \$4,860,000 | 1,200 |
| 4 | Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR Acquisition | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service | \$2,000,000 | | \$80,000 | \$2,080,000 | 650 |
| 5 | Bluffland Prairie Protection Initiative | MN Land Trust | \$690,000 | | \$450,000 | \$1,140,000 | 400 |
| 6 | Cooperative WMA Acquisition Initiative | Trust for Public Land | \$800,000 | | \$800,000 | \$1,600,000 | 200 |
| 7 | Prairie Heritage Fund - Acquisition | Pheasants Forever Anoka County Parks & Recreation | \$3,000,000 | | \$700,000 | \$3,700,000 | 1,200 |
| 8 | Rum River/Cedar Creek Acquisition | | \$3,800,000 | | \$30,000 | \$3,830,000 | 550 |
| 9 | Accelerated Prairie Grassland WMA Acq. | DNR Wildlife | \$5,600,000 | | | \$8,465,000 | 1,850 |
| | Subtotals | | \$24,590,000 | | \$3,700,000 | \$28,290,000 | 6,700 |
| Restoration and Enhancement | | | | | | | |
| 10 | SNA & Prairie Bank Restoration/Enhancement | DNR Ecological Resources St. Paul Parks and Recreation Dept. | \$310,000 | | | \$310,000 | 280 |
| 11 | Prairie/savanna Remnant Restoration Anoka Sandplain Oak Savanna | | \$217,000 | | \$97,000 | \$314,000 | 33 |
| 12 | Conservation | Great River Greening | \$800,000 | \$112,000 | \$215,000 | \$1,127,000 | 900 |
| 13 | Accelerated Prairie/Grassland Management | DNR Wildlife | \$1,700,000 | \$25,000 | | \$1,725,000 | 7,350 |
| 14 | Prairie/Savanna Management Program | Anoka County Parks & Rec. Dept. | \$275,000 | | \$50,000 | \$325,000 | 225 |
| 15 | Prairie/Savanna Habitat Restoration | Washington County Parks & Rec. | \$305,000 | \$20,000 | | \$325,000 | 325 |
| 16 | Ramsey County Prairie Restoration | Ramsey County Parks & Rec. | \$259,000 | | \$27,000 | \$286,000 | 128 |
| 17 | Prairie Heritage Fund - Restoration | Pheasants Forever | \$200,000 | | \$75,000 | \$275,000 | 900 |
| 18 | Prairie Heritage Fund - Enhancement | Pheasants Forever | \$800,000 | | \$75,000 | \$875,000 | 3,250 |
| 19 | Brandenburg Prairie Restoration | Brandenburg Prairie Foundation | \$250,000 | | | \$250,000 | 808 |
| 20 | Reconstructing State Park Prairies | DNR Parks | \$290,000 | \$31,300 | | \$321,300 | 292 |
| | Subtotals | | \$5,406,000 | \$188,300 | \$539,000 | \$6,133,300 | 14,491 |
| Totals | | | \$29,996,000 | \$188,300 | \$4,239,000 | \$34,423,300 | 21,191 |

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 1
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Laurence N. Gillette, Senior Manager of Wildlife
Your organization: Three Rivers Park District
Mailing address: 12615 Cty. Rd. 9, Plymouth, MN 55441-1248
Phone/fax number: 763-694-7842/763-557-4943
Email address: lgillette@threeriversparkdistrict.org

Program/project short name: Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve Land Acquisition and Prairie Restoration

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$2,200,000

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$500,000 from the Three Rivers Park District Land Acquisition Fund

Expected outcomes at completion: 100 acres of upland habitat would be acquired and added to Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve as permanent open space. This land will be restored to native prairie to complement 400 acres of restored prairie just to the east in the park reserve.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: The parcel proposed for acquisition is agricultural land located on the west side of Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve in northeastern Scott County. The parcel is currently being offered for sale and is within the approved boundary of the park reserve. The park already includes 400 acres of restored prairie. The intent is to acquire the land so it can be included in the park reserve, and since it is already in agricultural production, plant the area to native prairie immediately after acquisition. A maintenance agreement with the contractor would extend for four years before the Park District would assume responsibility, but this would be less than \$50,000 of the total budget.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other Fund \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | | |
| Contracts | \$200,000 | | \$200,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | |
| Materials, supplies | | | |
| Travel | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | \$2,000,000 | \$500,000 | \$2,500,000 |
| Other (list) | | | |
| Total | \$2,200,000 | \$500,000 | \$2,700,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: The parcel will be added to Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve. The Park District manages its prairies through the regular operating budget, which includes burning on a three year rotation, controlling invasive species as necessary and over-seeding to increase diversity.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: Both Scott County and Credit River Township will be included in the decision to proceed with acquisition.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: Acquisition will not provide any jobs. However, \$200,000 is requested to hire a private contractor to restore the prairie and conduct maintenance for the first four years. Over half of the restoration budget will be used to purchase seed from private growers.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: Archery deer hunts have been held in Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve every year for the past 25 years, and shotgun deer hunts are held about every fifth year. Hunting of other species is not allowed in the park reserve. While the Credit River is the east boundary of this parcel, the river is not a fishery. Horse riding and hiking trails traverse the rest of the prairie in this park reserve. These trails would be extended into the newly acquired property.

Other considerations: This parcel of land is bordered by Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve on three sides. It is up for sale for the first time since the park reserve was created over 30 years ago. It is a prime area for development. If this parcel is not acquired now, it will be lost forever, and the park reserve will be reduced in size.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 2 Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Wayne Ostlie

Your organization: Great River Greening

Mailing address: 35 W Water Street, Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55107

Phone/fax number: 651-665-9500 x19

Email address: wostlie@greatrivergreening.org

Program/project short name: Anoka Sandplain Oak Savanna Conservation (Acquisition)¹

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$1,700,000

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$1,080,000. Approximately \$1M from private landowners through easement program (~ half of \$2000/acre land value); \$80,000 from USFWS and \$50,000 for in-kind outreach and publication materials to engage landowners.

Expected outcomes at completion: Acquire fee title and conservation easements on 500-1000 acres of private land within and buffering priority oak savanna complexes in the Sand Plains.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: Oak savanna systems within the Anoka Sandplain are globally imperiled and a state conservation priority (as identified in Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy), with <1% of their historic extent remaining. Development pressure emanating from urban centers is increasingly fragmenting what remains, and are beginning to have major implications on how these public lands are managed, how well they support wildlife, and how they can be used. The urgency for action is acute. However, the Anoka Sandplain offers major conservation opportunities to address these challenges, and through which innovative conservation practices can be piloted for subsequent statewide deployment.

To achieve the desired outcome above, conservation easements will be secured on 500-1000 acres of private lands surrounding Crane Meadows NWR to protect critical wildlife habitat from effects of fragmentation and water quality impairments. BWSR and Morrison SWCD will pursue easements with private landowners using the successful ACUB program used at Camp Ripley (see <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/minnesota/partnership/art18885.html> and http://www.sustainability.army.mil/tools/docs_acub/Camp%20Ripley%20ACUB%20fact%20sheet.pdf). This will be the first pilot of this promising strategy around natural areas. We expect to expand the program around Crane Meadows in 2010, bring it to full implementation across the Anoka Sandplain beginning in 2011 (focusing at Crane Meadows NWR, Sherburne NWR complex, and Cedar Creek/Carlos Avery WMA), and export it statewide as a model of long-term resource conservation by 2013. Timeline (Pilot Phase): September 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010.

¹ Project partners include: Minnesota Forest Resources Council, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Great River Greening, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Morrison SWCD, Anoka SWCD, Sherburne SWCD, Benton SWCD, Onanogozie RC&D, Mid-Minnesota Mississippi River RC&D, and Anoka County Parks).

In addition, up to 4 tracts of lands located within the boundaries of Crane Meadows NWR available from willing sellers will be pursued for acquisition, totaling 260 acres. Each has expressed a desire to sell.

Generalized Budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Funds \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | | \$50,000 | \$50,000 |
| Contracts | | | | |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | | |
| Materials, supplies | | | | |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | \$1,530,000 | | \$30,000 | \$1,560,000 |
| Other (overhead) ² | \$170,000 | | \$1,000,000 | \$1,170,000 |
| Total | \$1,700,000 | | \$1,080,000 | \$2,780,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met:

Easement Acquisition – Easements acquired by BWSR will be held by the state of Minnesota and administered by Morrison SWCD. Monitoring of those easements will be conducted by Morrison SWCD and/or the USFWS.

Fee Simple – Lands acquired by the USFWS within Crane Meadows NWR will be managed by the refuge in line with current management plans; in lieu of taxes will be paid to Morrison County by USFWS for acquired lands.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant:

The project team will actively and regularly communicate the project goals and corresponding progress with townships, counties and SWCDs in the Anoka Sandplain. Anoka County Parks and 3 principle SWCDs are partners in this project. As the project develops, our team will encourage local units to become active participants in the project.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide:

1 FTE. Landowner contacts, easement development, and legal.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation:

Easement acquisition on private lands will not likely contain provisions for public access; however, it is through collaboration with these private landowners that the sanctity of Crane Meadows NWR will be achieved over the long term, so that management activities can occur unabated, so that wildlife can prosper, and so that people can continue enjoy hunting, fishing, and other activities on refuge lands.

Other considerations:

² For administrative costs associated with acquisition (easement program and fee title).

The East Central Regional Landscape Committee of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) strongly supports this project. The Committee is one of six regional committees supported by MFRC, which serves as chief advisors to the Governor and Legislature on sustainable forestry matters in the state. The goals and objectives of this project support the implementation of the MFRC East Central Landscape Plan, and will be a significant and major step in achieving it.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 3

Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Brad Cobb, Contracted Program Manager (telephone 320.493.4695 /email 1231tlc@charter.net)

Your organization: Green Corridor Legacy Program

Name of Fiscal Agent Representative: Nancy Fasching

Organization of Fiscal Agent: Southwest Initiative Foundation, Fiscal Agent

Mailing address: 15 3rd Ave. NW, Hutchinson MN 55350

Phone/fax: 800-594-9480

Email: nancyf@swifoundation.org

www.swifoundation.org

Program Title: *Green Corridor Legacy Program – Creating a Legacy of Connectivity, Habitat Viability and Public Access with the Mid-Minnesota River Watershed*

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$4,800,000 (**Exhibit A**)

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$60,000 In-kind from Southwest Initiative Foundation

It is the intention of this community-based initiative to develop additional funding sources from partners, possible landowner donations, in-kind services, and grass-root fund-raising activities.

Expected outcomes at completion: Acquire 1,200 acres of fee simple title - large block acquisitions (160 acres or greater and/or expansion of current public lands) from willing and supportive landowners.

Program Description/Narrative: The initial emphasis (Phase I) of this phased program is fee simple title acquisitions of public lands. Subsequent program phases will emphasize the top six (6) strategies outlined in the MN Conservation & Preservation Plan and multiple statewide conservation programs (e.g., Duck Recovery Plan, Pheasant Plan, Wild Turkey Plan, and the Wildlife Management Area Acquisition Plan). Partnerships with local and statewide conservation organizations and government agencies are essential to the program's success. Partners will contribute technical support, public relations and outreach, and long-term management of habitat areas on public lands.

Community Partners: Tatanka Bluffs Corridor is a community based coalition of leaders from 26 regional communities and Waukon RIM a local non profit outdoor organization committed to supporting the Green Corridor Legacy Program through complementary fundraising.

Technical Resource Partners: The U of M Southwest Research and Outreach Center, Redwood County SWCD, MDHA, NWTF, PF, MN DNR, and the USFWS.

Program Work Area/Location: Redwood, Renville, Yellow Medicine, Chippewa, Brown, Nicollet, Murray, Lyon, and Cottonwood. Targeted natural resources within the program area will be the Mid-Minnesota River and tributaries, native prairie complexes, wetlands/shallow lakes/riparian areas, large block acquisitions of 160 acres and greater, and/or acquisitions that

will expand current public lands. One source of data used to validate targeted work area is the South Region DNR 2008 Region 4 Conservation Focus Area.

Timeline for Completion: Expected outcomes (acquire 1,200 acres) will be achieved by June 30, 2010. Program completion will depend on title transfer processes to the State of Minnesota.

Measures of Success and Plans to Monitor Outcomes: The measure of success will be the acres acquired in fee title. Outcomes will be monitored by each partner organization and widely publicized through their public information and outreach programs. Website development will be key to providing accountability and transparency to citizens and stakeholders, widespread access to program goals, objectives, progress toward measurable outcomes, and timely information about program activities. This website could be linked to the official LOHC website. As the Green Corridor Legacy Program moves into future phases, the website will also be a tool to help cultivate new and innovative partnerships and program activities.

Generalized Budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits – SWIF Program Administration | \$120,000 | N/A | \$60,000 | \$180,000 |
| Contracts | \$95,000 | N/A | N/A | \$95,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Materials, supplies | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Travel | \$5,000 | N/A | N/A | \$5,000 |
| Land (fee simple, appraisals/survey) | \$4,560,000 | N/A | N/A | \$4,560,000 |
| Other (website development) | \$20,000 | N/A | N/A | \$20,000 |
| Total | \$4,800,000 | N/A | \$60,000 | \$4,860,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining program, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: In this phased proposal, the initial phase is acquiring land from willing and supportive landowners, to be transferred to the appropriate state agency for long-term habitat conservation, outdoor recreational access, sustainability and monitoring. Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILT) will be established by current or traditional methods.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: The Green Corridor Legacy program will complement current county government comprehensive/land use plans. The program will notify county boards as fee title acquisitions are proposed. The program also has the cooperation of the MN DNR and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: Two (2) FTE jobs are

anticipated in Phase I, based on budgeted salary/benefits and contracts.

Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) will distribute the two (2) FTE program activities and responsibilities to successfully manage and implement the LOHC program proposal within agency departments and/or approved contractor services (e.g. program manager, accounting, auditing, record retention, legal, and various administration support services).

Other Considerations:

Public Input on Program Conservation Needs and Program Stakeholder Meetings:

Prior to submitting this LOHC funding request, numerous partnership/agency and stakeholder meetings were held to establish long-range resource system goals and prioritize conservation and natural resource needs and opportunities within the program area. Representatives of this community based initiative attended many of the broader statewide stakeholder meetings and several LOHC public meetings. On January 29, 2009, a Green Corridor Legacy Informational meeting was held in Redwood Falls MN, with invitations extended to area wildlife groups, local government officials, program partners, civic group leaders, and potential landowners who are willing to participate in program objectives, local/regional business leaders, and local/regional newspapers. The attendance list is available upon request.

As future (long range) phases of the program are funded by the LOHC, the Green Corridor Legacy Program will address: 1) the fragmentation of habitat by connecting existing habitat corridors to provide significant blocks of habitat, 2) goals and objectives of established statewide conservation plans, and 3) renovation of existing conservation lands (public and private) to improve the habitat quality, capacity, and productivity to support increase fish/wildlife populations.

Natural Resource Infrastructure Invigorates Local/Regional Economies: Natural resource infrastructure invigorates local and regional economies by providing outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities. Statewide, communities increasingly recognize the importance of natural and recreational areas to their quality of life. Community leaders, groups, and residents are an essential driving force in economic growth and development, and new business concepts are likely to arise as a direct result of recreation and tourism benefits of the Green Corridor Legacy program.

Criteria for Requesting Organization: *Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF), fiscal agent* SWIF manages a resource base of \$43,000,000 and has a 23-year record of engagement with the region most directly affected by the Green Corridor Legacy Program. The most recent example of SWIF's capacity to successfully manage and implement a conservation project/program similar in scale, scope, and complexity to the Green Corridor Program is a 2008 Minnesota Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund grant for land planning, acquisitions, and easements in the Minnesota River Valley. SWIF has consistently established and employed the financial and managerial controls needed to successfully and fully implement the proposed program, as evidenced by the attached 2008 external financial audit with no negative findings.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 4
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Alice Hanley, Refuge Manager, Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge

Your organization: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Mailing address: 44843 County Highway 19 Odessa, MN 56276

Phone/fax number: (320) 273-2191/ (320) 273-2231

Email address: alice_hanley@fws.gov

Program/project short name: Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR Land Acquisition

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$2,000,000

Additional funds leveraged and source:

\$80,000 of existing USFWS Refuge and Realty operations funding

Expected outcomes at completion:

Protect approximately 650 acres of native prairie through fee title acquisition or 2000 acres through the purchase of habitat easements or a combination of both fee title and easement acquisition. Lands protected will be within the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area in western Minnesota.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success:

The funds will be used to purchase fee title and habitat easements to become units of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge in western Minnesota. The majority of the lands protected will consist of native prairie, however, restoration of wetlands and grasslands will also be completed where needed.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other Fund \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | \$30,000 | \$30,000 |
| Contracts | | | |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | |
| Materials, supplies | | \$50,000 | \$50,000 |
| Travel | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | \$2,000,000 | | \$2,000,000 |
| Other (list) | | | |
| Total | \$2,000,000 | | \$2,080,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met:

Long term costs for restoration, management, and wildlife and habitat monitoring will be funded through annual refuge operations funding. Revenue sharing payments (in lieu of

taxes) will be made for all fee title lands in accordance with federal law. Habitat easement purchases do not impact property taxes as they remain the responsibility of the landowner.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant:

Local MNDNR and USDA offices will be contacted regarding potential fee title/easement purchases to determine if any ongoing programs will affect acquisition.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide:

No new or existing positions will be supported with LOHC funds. Existing Refuge and Realty personnel and funding will be used to assess, appraise, and purchase the lands.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation:

Lands purchased in fee title will be open to hunting, wildlife observation, photography, outreach and interpretation. Lands purchased as habitat easements will not be open to public access.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 5
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Name: Kris Larson

Organization: Minnesota Land Trust

Mailing address: 2356 University Ave., Suite 240, St. Paul, MN 55114

Phone/fax number: 651-647-9590 (phone); 651-647-9769 (fax); 218-722-4641 (Duluth)

Email address: kl Larson@mnland.org

Program/project short name: Bluffland Prairie Protection Initiative

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$690,000

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$450,000--value of donated easement and other private donations.

Expected outcomes at completion: Acquire 4-6 conservation easements on 300-500 acres of properties with native prairie, oak savanna and grasslands.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: Since 1996, the Minnesota Land Trust's has protected more than 3,000 acres of native prairies and grasslands on 175 properties. This initiative will continue this effort by securing 4-6 new conservation easements on private lands with critical prairie and grassland habitat in the Mississippi River Blufflands. The Land Trust has completed a landscape plan for the Blufflands, identifying several priority sites including one along the Root River and one along Bullard Creek near Red Wing. Protection of these sites will provide multiple public benefits—preservation of game and non-game species habitat, prevention of detrimental impacts to cold water trout streams and protection of the region's rich forests and celebrated scenic beauty.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | 80,000 | | | |
| Contracts and Transaction Costs | 50,000 | | | |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | | |
| Materials, supplies | 5,000 | | | |
| Travel | 5,000 | | | |
| Conservation Easement Purchase Price | 450,000 | | | |
| Other (conservation easement stewardship funding) | 100,000 | | | |
| Total | \$690,000 | | \$450,000 | \$1,140,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: These projects will be sustained long term through the Minnesota Land Trust accredited Conservation Easement Stewardship Program. The conservation easement properties will be monitored annually, appropriate easement management and record keeping conducted and any potential violations enforced as appropriate. Funds from this grant will be dedicated to the Land Trust's Stewardship Fund for this purpose. Additionally, ecological management plans will be required for protected properties.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant:

The Minnesota Land Trust has a history of working with local governments in southeast Minnesota to achieve mutual conservation objectives. Where appropriate, these local governments will be informed of the easement acquisitions, while simultaneously respecting issues of landowner confidentiality. The Land Trust routinely consults local plans when evaluating private conservation projects.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide:

Minnesota Land Trust: 1 FTE, spread throughout multiple staff to achieve the necessary tasks. Contracts/others: Other jobs that will benefit are attorneys, appraisers, GIS specialists, resource professionals, title companies, and others.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: Hunting, fishing and other low-impact recreation would be allowed uses within the terms of the easement and landowners can conduct these activities as desired. And while these will be private land conservation easements and public access will not be required, landowners could chose to allow public access if desired.

Other considerations:

The prairies in the southeast, while not as prevalent as the larger expanses of tall-grass prairies found further west, are none-the-less critical as a habit component in Minnesota. The Blufflands ecological subsection has been identified in the State's Wildlife Action Plan as having the highest concentration of species in greatest conservation needs, based in part on the rich diversity of the Blufflands' landcover, which includes eastern broadleaf forest, oak savanna and blufftop prairies. These unique prairie and grassland systems are found on largely on private land, including the majority of remaining prairie in the region as identified on the DNR's map of remaining prairie dated January, 2009.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 6
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Bob McGillivray

Your organization: The Trust for Public Land

Mailing address: 2610 University Ave. W., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55114

Phone/fax number: 651-999-5300

Email address: bob.mcgillivray@tpl.org

Program/project short name: TPL's Cooperative WMA Prairie Acquisition Initiative 2010

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$800,000

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$800,000 donated land value

Expected outcomes at completion: By June 30, 2010, approximately 200 acres dominated by grassland in Olmsted County will be protected as a Wildlife Management Area.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: The Trust for Public Land, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Land Trust recently succeeded in working with this elderly landowner to protect 500 acres of his land at a 50% bargain sale price. A small window of opportunity exists now to protect another 200 acres at a significant discount. The land would be acquired by The Trust for Public Land and conveyed to the DNR by June 30, 2010 for management as a WMA. This land would provide a much-needed solution to on-going resident Canada Goose management issues and would provide close-to-home hunting opportunities near the population center of Rochester.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other Fund \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | | |
| Contracts | | | |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | |
| Materials, supplies | | | |
| Travel | | | |
| Land (fee) | \$800,000 | \$800,000 | \$1,600,000 |
| Other (list) | | | |
| Total | \$800,000 | \$800,000 | \$1,600,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: This acquisition will be accomplished with help from The Trust for Public Land, which uses privately-raised funds to cover its acquisition activities including the due diligence costs associated with the transaction. The land will ultimately be conveyed to the DNR, which will be responsible for making payments in lieu of taxes. TPL will work with the DNR to plan for funding of stewardship costs.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: The City of Rochester and Olmsted County have both been consulted on this project. The City of Rochester has a nature program that uses this property for owl study and that would be supportive of its

protection. Official township notification would be made and County Board approval would be sought.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: This funding would provide a total of approximately 8.5 FTE. It will be used private funds raised by TPL that support approximately 1 FTE, including TPL staff and those who TPL would contract with including appraisers, surveyors, environmental consultants, and title companies. Additionally, the landowner intends to use his proceeds to pay for his attorney and financial consultant and he intends to donate the remainder of the proceeds to a number of local charities (7 FTE). A portion of this property is also currently leased as cropland and will likely continue to be leased for a time after DNR acquisition. This not only provides a livelihood for the farmer, but may also provide a small amount of revenue to the DNR.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation:

The property would be owned and managed by the Department of Natural Resources as a Wildlife Management Area, which by law is open to the public for hunting and other recreation. In addition to hunting, opportunities exist for bird watching, mushroom hunting, and berry-picking.

Other considerations: The Trust for Public Land has a strong 36-year history of successful land protection efforts across the country. In Minnesota, TPL has worked with public agencies to protect over 84,000 acres of priority lands valued at over \$83 million.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 7
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Matt Holland, Sr. Field Coordinator
Your organization: Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Mailing address: 679 West River Drive
Phone/fax number: (320)354-4377
Email address: mholland@pheasantsforever.org



Program/project short name: Prairie Heritage Fund - Acquisition

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$3,000,000

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$700,000

Expected outcomes at completion: Protect and initially restore 1,200 acres of grassland and associated wetland, riparian or other habitat through fee-title purchase of state Wildlife Management Areas.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: Working with 76 local chapters and 25,000 members across the state of Minnesota, PF will acquire 1,200 acres of state wildlife management areas to enhance grassland and prairie habitat and provide public recreation opportunities for the citizens of Minnesota. All projects are additions to existing Wildlife Management Areas or have a direct connection to resources in the public trust. Purchase will be from willing sellers. Priority will be placed on remnant native prairie and tracts that provide significant grassland habitat protection and restoration. PF has currently identified 19 active projects consisting of 2,300 acres in eleven counties.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | 50,000 | | | 50,000 |
| Contracts | 250,000 | | | 250,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | | |
| Materials, supplies | | | | |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | 2,700,000 | 700,000 | | 3,400,000 |
| Other (list) | | | | |
| Total | 3,000,000 | 700,000 | | 3,700,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Properties will be purchased by PF, Inc. and donated to the State of Minnesota for enrollment into the Wildlife Management Area System. DNR Area Wildlife Managers would be ultimately responsible for the long term habitat management and facility considerations. The DNR would assume PILT payments unless otherwise directed by

LOHC. PF has been a significant partner in the heritage enhancement grant program through DNR that accelerates restoration and management of habitat on WMA lands. PF is seeking additional funds through LOHC and will continue to seek and provide funding in partnership with the DNR and others for the habitat management on WMA lands.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: County boards will be notified of lands purchased as Wildlife Management Areas.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: 0.5 FTE directly to add capacity for land acquisition. PF does not have an economic analysis to determine the impact on jobs and the economy of land transactions, however we do employ surveyors, appraisers, legal counsel, title companies, and various other professionals to complete land acquisition projects.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: All lands acquired will be open to public hunting and recreation consistent with the state wildlife management area system.

Other considerations: PF is a significant partner in protecting, restoring and managing state wildlife management areas. Since inception, PF has participated in acquisitions with dozens of partners accounting for 25,000 acres of WMA's. Pheasants Forever's mission is to improve pheasant and other wildlife populations through habitat protection, restoration and enhancement, public awareness and education, and influencing land and water policy.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 8
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: John VonDeLinde, Director of Parks and Recreation
Your organization: Anoka County
Mailing address: 550 Bunker Lake Blvd. NW, Andover, MN 55304
Phone/fax number: 763-767-2860 / 763-755-0230
Email address: john.vondelinde@co.anoka.mn.us

Program/project short name: Phase 1 - 550 Acre Land Acquisition along the Rum River and Cedar Creek

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$ 3,800,000 for acquisition

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$30,000

Expected outcomes at completion: 550 acres of land protected.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: The proposed project consists of two phases. The first phase is the acquisition of approximately 550 acres located along the Rum River and Cedar Creek in the Cities of Oak Grove and Andover. The second phase will be the restoration of approximately 390 acres to a prairie/grassland habitat. The acquisition of this site will make an excellent conservation area for fishing on the Rum River and Cedar Creek. Public hunting will be provided for through the issuance of permits and could include deer, pheasant and turkey hunting. Currently, the 550 acres is owned by a land development group interested in quickly selling this property. Without immediate action, this opportunity could be lost forever. If awarded funds, land acquisition would begin immediately.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Fund \$\$ | Other Fund \$\$ (Anoka County) | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | | \$20,000 | \$20,000 |
| Contracts | | | \$7,000 | \$7,000 |
| Equipment(> \$5000) | | | | |
| Materials, supplies | | | \$3,000 | \$3,000 |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | \$3,800,000 | | | \$3,800,000 |
| Other (list) | | | | |
| Total | \$3,800,000 | | \$30,000 | \$3,830,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Property tax losses are anticipated to be negated through increases in property values near the protected natural area. Additionally, using the 550 acres as open space vs. the original proposed single family development will reduce future costs to local governments in providing public services.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: The County has been in contact with both the cities of Oak Grove and Andover and has informed them of the County's

proposal. To date, both have been positive in their response. If this proposal proceeds, the cities would be asked to support the project through formal resolution or letter of support. Both the City of Andover and the City of Oak Grove would kept informed throughout the acquisition and restoration process.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: The acquisition portion of this project will help support approximately 3.0 FTE's.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: When acquired and opened for public use, it will provide an excellent conservation resource in an urbanizing area, for public hunting and fishing. Other activities may include walking trails, wildlife observation, scenic rest areas and interpretive features.

Other considerations:

1. The land is currently owned by a development group and the acquisition and protection of these parcels are of utmost concern. Without, immediate action, this opportunity could be lost forever. By acquiring this land, the LOHC has an excellent opportunity to increase and enhance the biological diversity in the area, as well as increase and enhance the hunting and fishing opportunities in the region.
2. Once acquired, the County proposes to restore approximately 390 acres of the 550 acres to a prairie/grassland habitat. The structure and function of the prairie/grassland habitat is such that it provides the necessary biological diversity needed to support game populations, such as ring-neck pheasants, rough grouse, wild turkeys, white tail deer, wood ducks and mallards. The grassland habitat also provides excellent nesting habitat for a variety of species, such as white tail deer, wood ducks and mallards.
3. Existing land that has not been cultivated is recognized by the MnDNR as an area that provides a valuable ecological corridor along two major greenways in which species can move through the area with relative ease. With the acquisition, this corridor would be protected and enhanced to increase the number of game species and increase the ease with which they move through this corridor.
4. The acquisition of these parcels will protect 550 acres of habitat at the confluence of the Rum River and Cedar Creek. There is approximately 1-1/2 miles of shoreline along the Rum River and about 3/4 of a mile of the Cedar Creek that runs through the property. The Rum River provides angling access opportunities for some of the most sought after game fish, such as walleye, northern pike, and small mouth bass. The river also provides exceptional fisheries habitat for these game fish populations.
5. The flood plain and riparian edges along the Rum River and Cedar Creek provide excellent habitat and cover for all migratory waterfowl species and habitat for white tail deer and wild turkeys.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 9
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Kim Hennings
Your organization: DNR Wildlife
Mailing address: 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MM 55155
Phone/fax number: 651-259-5210
Email address: kim.hennings@dnr.state.mn.us

Program/project short name: Accelerated Prairie Grassland - WMA Acquisition Program
FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$ 5,600,000
Additional funds leveraged and source: \$ none
Expected outcomes at completion: 1850 acres acquired

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: This program will accelerate the acquisition of an estimated 1850 acres of State Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) that have a major native prairie and/or grassland component in FY10, primarily in the Prairie Parkland Region. This will provide much needed wildlife habitat for a host of grassland and farmland species. Acquisition and management efforts will center on protecting and restoring lands for wildlife habitat, public hunting/fishing, and other compatible recreational benefits. This effort will be above and beyond grassland WMA acquisition already taking place. Monitoring will take place through out all phases of the project.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other Fund \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | 40,000 | | 40,000 |
| Contracts | | | |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | 3,000 | | 3,000 |
| Materials, supplies | | | |
| Travel | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | 5,557,000 | | 5,557,000 |
| Other (list) | | | |
| Total | 5,600,000 | | 5,600,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Project areas will be seeded to a diverse mixture of native prairie vegetation (using local eco-type seed as much as possible as per guidelines) using funds for LOHC funds requested under prairie restoration program. The land will be managed by DNR Section of Wildlife staffs and will be part of the State's WMA system. All current policies and directives will provide management guidance. DNR receives separate appropriations for PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) expenditures.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: WMA acquisitions will follow Minnesota law and will require notification of local township officials as well as approval through the County Board of Commissioner resolution process.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: There will be 0.50 FTE of “temporary” help (Natural Resource Specialist of equivalent) requested to assist with acquisition “leg work”.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: These lands will be open to public hunting and fishing as well as other compatible recreational activities appropriate for WMA lands.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 10
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Peggy Booth (for Steve Hirsch)
Your organization: DNR Division of Ecological Resources
Mailing address: 500 Lafayette Rd, Box 25, St Paul, MN 55155-4025
Phone/fax number: 651-259-5088
Email address: peggy.booth@dnr.state.mn.us

Program/project short name: SNA & Native Prairie Bank Restoration & Enhancement
FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$310,000
Additional funds leveraged and source: \$0 (unless federal funding is obtained to increase outcomes)

Expected outcomes at completion

- Prairie & savanna reconstruction: 110 acres
- Woody encroachment removal on native prairie: 170 acres
- Prescribed burning: 1,000 acres
- Other prairie management: 250 acres

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: Restoration and enhancement will be done on state Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) and on Native Prairie Bank (NPB) permanent conservation easements to improve ecological function of native prairie, savanna, and rock outcrop communities and to reconstruct native communities as needed. This will provide habitat for Species in Greatest Conservation Need and other rare species. Restoration activities will include prairie/savanna reconstruction (i.e. seed collection, site preparation, planting, and post-seeding management) and woody encroachment removal. Enhancement activities will include prescribed burning as well as other prairie management (prescribed grazing and haying and non-woody invasive species control).

Generalized budget:

RESTORATION

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits – 0.9 FTE for 1.5 yr | \$66,000 | | | \$66,000 |
| Contracts | \$50,000 | | | \$50,000 |
| Equipment (Fleet Charges) | \$11,000 | | | \$11,000 |
| Materials, supplies | \$3,000 | | | \$3,000 |
| Travel | \$1,000 | | | \$1,000 |
| Other: | | | | |
| Landowner cost-share | \$10,000 | | | \$10,000 |
| Office-indirect | \$11,000 | | | \$11,000 |
| Total | \$152,000 | | | \$152,000 |

ENHANCEMENT

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits – 0.9 FTE for 1.5 yr | \$72,000 | | | \$72,000 |
| Contracts | \$30,000 | | | \$30,000 |
| Equipment (Fleet Charges) | \$10,000 | | | \$10,000 |
| Materials, supplies | \$2,000 | | | \$2,000 |
| Travel | \$4,000 | | | \$4,000 |
| Other: | | | | |
| Landowner cost-share | \$10,000 | | | \$10,000 |
| Office-indirect | \$30,000 | | | \$30,000 |
| Total | \$158,000 | | | \$158,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Ongoing monitoring and management of NPBs and SNAs is the responsibility of the DNR Division of Ecological Resources. Basic property oversight is accomplished by base-funded DNR staff. But, all restoration and enhancement work is achieved through non-regular project funding (e.g. bonding, LCCMR, RIM Critical Habitat, federal funds, etc). The State makes PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) payments for all state-owned SNAs and the private landowners with NPB easements are responsible for any local property taxes.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: NA

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide:

1.8 FTEs of DNR positions over the 18-month project period – these would be region-based SNA project crews (classified and unclassified paid almost exclusively with special project funds) and seasonal burn crews. In addition, private sector jobs would be supported through \$80,000 in contracts and \$20,000 in landowner cost-share payments.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: SNAs have public access and are open to hunting if compatible with resource protection goals. NPB conservation easements allow walk-on public access, but the fee landowner retains hunting rights.

Other considerations:

SNAs and NPBs are established to protect in perpetuity native prairie resources. These sites include areas of outstanding and high biodiversity with mapped native plant communities as identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey and often contain rare animal and plant species.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 11

Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Adam Robbins

Your organization: Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

Mailing address: 1100 Hamline Ave North, Saint Paul, MN 55108

Phone/fax number: 651-632-2457(phone)/651-632-5115(fax)

Email address: adam.robbins@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Program/project short name: Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, Prairie and Savanna Remnant Restoration Program

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$217,000

Additional funds leveraged and source:

- \$40,000 City and partner in-kind salary match
- \$7,000 materials and equipment in-kind
- \$50,000 in-kind volunteer labor
- \$150,000 *National Park Service (pending approval)*

Expected outcomes at completion: Protect and restore 33 acres of prairie and savanna habitat.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success:

This program will focus on significant land parcels within the Mississippi River Critical Area. Restorations will occur within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) and the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge Important Bird Area. Projects will occur on or adjacent to land with a high significance of biodiversity as identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey. Prairie remnants within the project area contain rare plant species; kitten-tails (*Besseyia bullii*) (threatened) and purple twayblade (*Liparis liliifolia*). Projects will be completed by June 30, 2011. The expansion and restoration of land buffers surrounding these remnants will define our success.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | | \$40,000 | \$40,000 |
| Contracts | \$217,000 | | | \$217,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | \$4,000 | \$4,000 |
| Materials, supplies | | | \$3,000 | \$3,000 |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | | |
| Other (list) | \$217,000 | | \$50,000 (volunteer labor) | \$50,000 |
| Total | | | \$97,000 | \$314,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met:

- Saint Paul Parks Natural Resource staff, along with various partnering agencies, engaged over 3,200 volunteers totaling 11,000 hours in our natural areas in 2008, our goal is to increase this volunteer commitment.
- Saint Paul Parks and Recreation has previously received funding from the MN DNR and the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District to initiate restoration of eleven acres of parkland adjacent to the proposed project locations. Current management activities can be easily modified to include new acreage created through this program.
- Management plans exist for these sites. These plans identify well-timed maintenance, site monitoring activities, and overall ecological goals and objectives.
 - Cherokee Park Prairie Ecological Inventory and Management Plan (2002)
 - West Side Bluff Ecological Inventory and Vegetation Management Plan (2001)
 - Natural Resource Inventory and Management Plan of Indian Mounds Park (2007)
 - Crosby Farm Regional Park Ecological Inventory and Management Plan (2005)
 - Highwood Park Nature Preserve Management Recommendations (2001)
 - Lilydale Regional Park Natural Resources Management Plan (2009)
 - Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary at Lower Phalen Creek Natural Resource Management Plan (2001)

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: The Saint Paul City Council, affected district councils, and district council committees will be notified and encouraged to participate in the marketing of this program. As Saint Paul Parks and Recreation relies on volunteer involvement to maintain the natural areas within our park system, we will solicit volunteers from the surrounding neighborhood and the greater Saint Paul community through press releases, on-site publicity, postcard mailings, and through partnering agencies.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: 3 ¼ FTE (contractor)

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: City of Saint Paul ordinance prohibits hunting on parkland unless authorized through special permit. All city parkland is open to public fishing. Specifically, these projects will improve fish and wildlife habitat through the expansion of prairie and savanna ecosystems, they will provide erosion and sediment control adjacent to impaired waterbodies, and provide for enhanced wildlife viewing opportunities.

Other considerations: \$150,000 in project proposals have been submitted to the federal government, by the National Park Service, for lands adjacent to our proposed project areas. These funds could be used as a direct cash match for this program.

Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan (11/01/2008) recommendations fulfilled by this program:

- H1 – Protect priority land habitats
- H3 – Improve connectivity and access to recreation
- H4 – Restore and protect shallow lakes
- H5 – Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- H7 – Keep water on the landscape

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 12
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Wayne Ostlie
Your organization: Great River Greening
Mailing address: 35 W Water Street, Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55107
Phone/fax number: 651-665-9500 x19
Email address: wostlie@greatrivergreening.org

Program/project short name: Anoka Sandplain Oak Savanna Conservation³
FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$800,000
Additional funds leveraged and source: \$327,000 (\$215K non-state; \$112K additional state)
Expected outcomes at completion (e.g., XX acres protected, restored, enhanced):
 Restore and enhance – through introduction of prescribed fire, removal of woody and alien invasive species, and planting of native plants/seeds – 800-1000 acres of priority oak savanna habitat within publicly-owned managed areas.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: Oak savanna systems within the Anoka Sandplain are globally imperiled and a state conservation priority (as identified in Minnesota’s Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy), with <1% of their historic extent remaining. Years of management neglect – both on public and private lands – have seriously degraded much of what is left. Development pressure emanating from urban centers is increasingly fragmenting what remains, and over time will have major implications on how public lands are managed, how well they support wildlife, and how they can be used. The urgency for action is acute. However, the Anoka Sandplain offers major conservation opportunities to ameliorate these impacts, and through which innovative conservation practices can be piloted, brought to scale, and delivered for statewide implementation.

To achieve the desired outcome above, project partners will collaborate in achieving restoration goals across at least 8 priority MCBS quality sites (WMAs, SNAs, USFWS refuges, etc.) through prescribed fire, invasive exotic and woody species control, and native plant seeding. When feasible, partners will engage local communities through volunteerism to achieve significant components of overall project goals. Timeline: September 1, 2009 – June 30, 2011.

Generalized Budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Funds \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | \$250,000 | \$10,000 | \$80,000 | \$340,000 |
| Contracts | \$280,000 | | | \$280,000 |

³ Anoka Sandplain Partnership partners include: Minnesota Forest Resources Council, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Great River Greening, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Morrison SWCD, Anoka SWCD, Sherburne SWCD, Benton SWCD, Onanegozie RC&D, Mid-Minnesota Mississippi River RC&D, and Anoka County Parks.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | \$40,000 | \$20,000 | \$60,000 |
| Materials, supplies (seed, plants, herbicide, etc.) | \$260,000 | \$60,000 | \$15,000 | \$335,000 |
| Travel | \$10,000 | \$2,000 | | \$12,000 |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | | |
| Other (volunteers) | | | 100,000 | |
| Total | \$800,000 | \$112,000 | \$215,000 | \$1,127,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met:

Since wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement is an ongoing need at these sites, it is critical that strong partnerships develop to deliver funding and expertise to ensure long-term benefits in line with management goals. After initial restoration work is completed, respective management agencies will maintain these areas over the long term in line with current management plans. Project partners will continue to work with these agencies to secure funds and continue enhancement of these lands for the benefit of wildlife populations. Project partners and respective agencies will include long-term monitoring plans within site management plans to ensure efforts are producing desired results and to adaptively manage their respective sites.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant:

The project team will actively and regularly communicate the project goals and corresponding progress with townships, counties and SWCDs in the Anoka Sandplain. Anoka County Parks and 3 principle SWCDs are partners in this project. As the project develops, our team will encourage local communities to become active participants in the project. Linking local communities to the restoration and management of oak savannas and their wildlife is a goal of the project.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide:

10 FTE. Restoration Crews (8 FTE); Restoration project management and coordination (2 FTE). In addition to staff of collaborating partners, the project team will encourage private vendors to work on restoration and management activities in this project, and the associated FTEs related to this are not insignificant.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation:

All lands the focus of restoration activities are open for public access, and most if not all for hunting and fishing in line with respective management plans. Restoration actions are designed to enhance the quality of habitat to the benefit of associated wildlife; as such, the quality of the experience – particularly for hunters, bird watchers, and other recreational users – will be significantly enhanced.

Other considerations:

The East Central Regional Landscape Committee of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) – the state agency responsible for implementing the Minnesota Sustainable Forest Resources Act of 1995, and which serves as chief advisors to the Governor and Legislature on sustainable forestry matters in the state – strongly supports this proposal as a major step in achieving the goals of its Landscape Plan.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 13
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Bill Penning
Your organization: DNR Wildlife
Mailing address: 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MM 55155
Phone/fax number: 651-259-5230
Email address: Bill.Penning@dnr.state.mn.us

Program/project short name: Accelerated Prairie Grassland Restoration and Management Program

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$ 1,700,000

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$ none

Expected outcomes at completion: 2000 acres restored, 5,350 acres enhanced

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: This program will accelerate the restoration, enhancement and management of approximately 7,350 acres of native prairie vegetation on public lands (Wildlife Management Areas and Roadsides) in FY10, primarily in the Prairie Parkland Region. This will provide much needed wildlife habitat for a host of grassland and farmland species. Prairie restoration efforts will center on site preparation, seeding of local ecotype seed, post-seed management to assure success, and seed harvest of local ecotype seed for prairie restoration at other public land sites. Prairie enhancement efforts will center on prescribed burning, managing woody cover encroachment, grazing management, and biomass harvest. This effort will be above and beyond grassland work already taking place. A significant portion of this work will be improvement of existing grasslands. Monitoring will take place through out all phases of the project.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | 40,000 | | | 40,000 |
| Contracts | 1,657,000 | | | 1,657,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | 3,000 | | | 3,000 |
| Materials, supplies | | | | |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | | |
| Other (list) | | 25,000 * | | 25,000 * |
| Total | 1,700,000 | | | 1,725,000 |

* Salaries / Benefits for existing state wildlife personne: staff time for Section of Wildlife staff to identify parcels for land management work (restoration and/or enhancement) as well as site inspections and assistance with site-specific contract "specs".

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Project areas will be incorporated into DNRs normal WMA management procedures and MN/DOTs normal ROW management. DNR receives separate appropriations for PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) expenditures.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: These lands are already owned by DNR/DOT in fee title thus there is little need for local government involvement. However, if local government involvement is appropriate they will be included in the process.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: There will be 0.50 FTE of “temporary” help (Natural Resource Specialist of equivalent) requested to administer contracts. All other FTEs will be private contractors.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: These lands are already open for public hunting, fishing, and other access.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 14
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: John VonDeLinde, Director of Parks and Recreation
Your organization: Anoka County
Mailing address: 550 Bunker Lake Blvd. NW, Andover, MN 55304
Phone/fax number: 763-767-2860 / 763-755-0230
Email address: john.vondelinde@co.anoka.mn.us

Program/project short name: Phase 2 - Prairie/Grassland Habitat Restoration and Enhancement
FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$ 500,000 restoration; \$500,000 public access development
Additional funds leveraged and source: \$ 100,000 in-kind labor and equipment – Anoka County
Expected outcomes at completion: 390 acres restored to prairie/grassland habitat type.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success :

This proposed project will be the second of two phases. The first phase of the project is the acquisition of approximately 550 acres located along the Rum River and Cedar Creek in the Cities of Oak Grove and Andover. Upon acquisition, public hunting will be provided for through the issuance of permits and could include deer, pheasant and turkey hunting. The second phase of this project is the restoration of approximately 390 acres to a prairie/grassland habitat and access development. Current habitat types include crop land, grassland, savanna, wetlands, floodplain and upland forest. If awarded funds, restoration planning would begin immediately. Potential partners for the restoration include the Friends of the Mississippi River and Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC). Success of the restoration will be measured over the next few years based on the Minnesota County Biological Survey rankings for high quality prairie/grassland habitat and the use of the site for public fishing and hunting.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Fund \$\$ | Other Fund \$\$ (Anoka County) | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | | \$50,000 | \$60,000 |
| Contracts | \$100,000 | | | \$100,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | \$50,000 | \$60,000 |
| Materials, supplies | \$500,000 | | | \$500,000 |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Other – Access Development | \$1,000,000 | | | \$1,000,000 |
| Total | \$1,600,000 | | \$100,000 | \$1,720,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Long-term monitoring and maintenance costs for the prairie/grassland restoration and access development will be funded through the County’s Annual Operations and Maintenance Budget. Property tax losses are anticipated to be negated through increases in property values near the protected natural area. Additionally, using the 550 acres as open space vs. the original proposed single family development will reduce future costs to local governments in providing public services.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: The County has been in contact with both the cities of Oak Grove and Andover and has informed them of the County’s proposal. To date, both have been positive in their response. If this proposal proceeds, the cities would be asked to support the project through formal resolution or letter of support. Both the City of Andover and the City of Oak Grove would be kept informed throughout the acquisition and restoration process.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: This restoration portion of this project will support approximately 5 FTE’s, consisting of a Natural Resource Specialist, Natural Resource Technician and Seasonal Natural Resource Technicians.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: When acquired and opened for public use, it will provide an excellent conservation resource in an urbanizing area, for public hunting and fishing. To allow for ease of access an entrance road and parking lot will be developed. Other activities may include walking trails, wildlife observation, scenic rest areas and interpretive features.

Other considerations:

- The land is currently owned by a development group and the acquisition and protection of these parcels are of utmost concern. Without, immediate action, this opportunity could be lost forever. By acquiring this land and restoring the habitat, the LOHC has an excellent opportunity to increase and enhance the biological diversity in the area, as well as increase and enhance the hunting and fishing opportunities in the region.
- Of the 550 acres, approximately 390 acres would be restored to a prairie/grassland habitat. The structure and function of the prairie/grassland habitat is such that it provides the necessary biological diversity needed to support game populations, such as ring-neck pheasants, rough grouse, wild turkeys, white tail deer, wood ducks and mallards. The grassland habitat also provides excellent nesting habitat for a variety of species, such as white tail deer, wood ducks and mallards.
- Existing land that has not been cultivated is recognized by the MnDNR as an area that provides a valuable ecological corridor along two major greenways in which species can

move through the area with relative ease. With the prairie/grassland restoration of approximately 390 acres, the number of species and the ease with which they can move through this corridor will be significantly increased.

- The restoration of these parcels will enhance the wildlife habitat at the confluence of the Rum River and Cedar Creek. There is approximately 1-1/2 miles of shoreline along the Rum River and about 3/4 of a mile of the Cedar Creek that runs through the property. The Rum River provides angling access opportunities for some of the most sought after game fish, such as walleye, northern pike, and small mouth bass. The river also provides exceptional fisheries habitat for these game fish populations.
- The flood plain and riparian edges along the Rum River and Cedar Creek provide excellent habitat and cover for all migratory waterfowl species and habitat for white tail deer and wild turkeys.

When restored and opened for public use, it will provide an excellent conservation resource in an urbanizing area, for public hunting and fishing. Other activities may include walking trails, wildlife observation, scenic rest areas and interpretive features.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 15
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Peter Mott
Your organization: Washington County
Mailing address: 11660 Myeron Road North, Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone/fax number: (651) 430-4300
Email address: peter.mott@co.washington.mn.us

Program/project short name: Prairie/Savanna Habitat Restoration
FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$305,000
Additional funds leveraged and source:
Expected outcomes at completion: 325 acres restored & enhanced

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success (100 words or less): The goal of this program is to restore diverse native prairie/savanna environments throughout Washington County. Washington County has restored and currently manages 286 acres of prairie. Locations have been identified in approved stewardship plans to restore an additional 325 acres. Site preparation would occur in the fall of 2009, followed by seeding in the spring of 2010. Maintenance mowing and spot spraying would occur in the two subsequent years. The new plots would be incorporated into the County's current prairie management program, which includes periodic controlled burns. Success will be measured by the species diversity (at least 25) and acreages restored.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Fund \$\$ | Other Non-State Fund \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | | | |
| Contracts | \$160,000 | | | \$160,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | \$20,000 | | | \$20,000 |
| Materials, supplies | \$125,000 | | | \$125,000 |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | | |
| Other (list) | | | | |
| Total | \$305,000 | | | \$305,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: All lands proposed for restoration are county-owned. The projects will be monitored and sustained through the County's Natural Resource Management Program. Activities include maintenance mowing, spot spraying of invasive species, and planned controlled fire. Cost efficiencies are realized because County staff is trained in prairie management and the County owns appropriate equipment including a drill seeder, tractors, cultivators, and water trucks.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: Washington County has an excellent working relationship with local units of government and will inform and involve them when applicable. Local units of government are currently working in partnership with the Washington County on similar projects.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: This project will involve the use of some existing staff, however, the bulk of the restoration work will involve private sector contractors and other local businesses. The exact number of FTEs is not known.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: Local laws do not allow for hunting on these lands, however, other outdoor recreation activities such as wildlife watching and education would be enhanced by this project. Washington County also works collaboratively with local sportsmen groups including the Minnesota Waterfowl Association (St. Croix Chapter) to improve habitat for upland and waterfowl game species and educate the public. Public access for hunting is located nearby.

Other considerations: This proposal is consistent with Goal # 1.4 of the DNR's Tomorrow's Habitat program which identifies prairies as a key habitat supporting the most species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). Substantial investment is needed to halt the ecological decline of these habitats. Once re-established, the restoration areas will require far less investment to maintain.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 16
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: John Moriarty
Your organization: Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department
Mailing address: 2015 N. Van Dyke St., Maplewood, MN 55109
Phone/fax number: (651) 748-2500 / (651) 748-2508
Email address: john.moriarty@co.ramsey.mn.us

Program/project short name: Ramsey County Prairie Restoration
FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$ 259,000.00
Additional funds leveraged and source: \$ 27,000.00 (Ramsey County)
Expected outcomes at completion: 128 acres of restored prairie in Battle Creek Regional Park and Rice Creek Regional Trail

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: Prairie restorations will be done at two locations. Rice Creek in Shoreview will have 80 acres and Battle Creek in St. Paul will have 48 acres. These are part of a larger 790 acre prairie/savannah restoration program within Ramsey County Parks' Natural Resources Management Plan. Restorations will start in the fall of 2009 with brush clearing, followed by prescribed burn and herbicide treatments in early spring of 2010, then soil prep and seeding in June 2010. Follow up mowing, weed control and burns will be done in the summer of 2010 and during the growing seasons of 2011 and 2012.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other Fund \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | 12,000 | 12,000 |
| Contracts | 259,000 | 15,000 | 274,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | |
| Materials, supplies | | | |
| Travel | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | |
| Other (list) | | | |
| Total | 259,000 | 27,000 | 286,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Long-term management and monitoring funding will be through Ramsey County Parks operations budget, Metropolitan Council Grants and supplemental requests to OHF.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: Restoration work is being done on County property. Municipalities have reviewed and approved park master plans.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: Unknown- no new FTEs will be created within the county. The time and labor involved from the contractor would be approximately 3 FTEs

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: The parks where these projects are planned are open to special archery deer hunts under Ramsey County Parks Deer Management Program. The restored prairies will provide better habitat for birds and other wildlife. Park users will have better opportunities for encountering and viewing wildlife.

Other considerations: The County has a non net lose of park and open space property. These improvements will be maintained inot perpetuity. These restorations meet the DNR's Tomorrow's Habitat Goal 1.4 to restore prairie habitat.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 17
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Matt Holland, Sr. Field Coordinator
Your organization: Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Mailing address: 679 West River Drive
Phone/fax number: (320)354-4377
Email address: mholland@pheasantsforever.org



Program/project short name: Prairie Heritage Fund - Restoration
 FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$200,000

Additional funds leveraged and source: \$75,000

Expected outcomes at completion: Complete initial restoration of 950 acres of grassland and associated wetland, riparian or other habitat.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: 950 acres of grassland habitat on permanently protected lands will be restored.

Restoration activities include but are not limited to site preparation, herbicide application, seed purchase, planting, clipping. PF has identified 1,100 acres for grassland restoration in eight counties. Priority will be placed on restoring parcels that provide significant grassland habitat in conjunction with existing investments in habitat protection. Landson which restoration projects would occur include Wildlife Management Areas (3 – 504 acres), waterfowl production areas (3-100 acres), private lands protected by easements (multiple – 504 acres), and a county park (75 acres). We anticipate that several priority restorations will surface between now and when LOHC funds could become available. Work would commence in the Fall of 2009 and be completed by June 30, 2011.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | 7,500 | | | 7,500 |
| Contracts | 192,500 | | 75,000 | 267,500 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | | |
| Materials, supplies | | | | |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | | |
| Other (list) | | | | |
| Total | 200,000 | | 75,000 | 275,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Properties will be restored by PF, Inc. by working in partnership with local land managers, contractors, PF staff, and volunteers. PF will see that the

restoration work prescribed by land managers gets completed to standard. This proposal will accelerate our ability to restore habitat on permanently protected lands and enhance grassland wildlife populations.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: NA

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: 0.1 FTE directly to add capacity for project management and delivery. PF does not have an economic analysis to determine the impact on jobs and the economy of restoration activities, however much of the work completed through this proposal would be through private contractors being employed to deliver restoration activities.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: All lands restored are permanently protected for habitat with a majority open to public hunting and/or recreation. This includes three projects for 504 acres on state wildlife management areas, 3 projects for 100 acres on waterfowl production areas, and one project for 75 acres at a county park. The remainder of the restoration projects are found on private land where landowner permission is required for access.

Other considerations: PF is a significant partner in restoring grassland habitats. PF has two habitat temas that are professionally restoring approximately 2,000 acres of native grassland habitats annually. We actively restore grasslands through partnerships with agencies, landowners, and private contractors on an annual basis.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal -18
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Matt Holland, Sr. Field Coordinator
Your organization: Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Mailing address: 679 West River Drive
Phone/fax number: (320)354-4377
Email address: mholland@pheasantsforever.org



Program/project short name: Prairie Heritage Fund - Enhancement
FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$800,000
Additional funds leveraged and source: \$100,000

Expected outcomes at completion: Enhance or manage 3,250 acres of grassland and associated wetland, riparian or other habitat on lands in public ownership or permanently protected by a conservation easement.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: 3,250-acres of grassland habitat on permanently protected lands will be enhanced or managed. Enhancement activities include but are not limited to site preparation, herbicide application, seed purchase, planting, clipping, undesirable tree removal, prescribed fire, prescribed grazing. PF has identified over 5,300 acres for grassland enhancement in thirteen counties. Priority will be placed on enhancing parcels that provide significant grassland habitat. Lands on which enhancement projects would occur include Wildlife Management Areas, Waterfowl Production Areas, and Private Lands Protected by Easement. We also anticipate that several priority enhancements will surface between now and when LOHC funds could become available. PF would also propose to build capacity to do undesirable tree removal by adding needed equipment and seasonal help to do mechanical tree removal work. A majority of this work would commence in Fall of 2009, with full completion June 30, 2011.

Generalized budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other State Funds \$\$ | Other Non-State Funds \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | 10,000 | | | 10,000 |
| Contracts | 606,000 | 100,000 | | 706,000 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | 184,000 | | | 184,000 |
| Materials, supplies | | | | |
| Travel | | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | | |
| Other (list) | | | | |
| Total | 800,000 | 100,000 | | 900,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: Grassland habitats will be enhanced by PF, Inc. by working with local land managers, contractors, PF staff, and volunteers. PF will see that the enhancement work prescribed by land managers gets completed to standard. This proposal will accelerate our ability to enhance habitat on permanently protected lands and enhance grassland wildlife populations

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: NA

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: 0.15 FTE directly to PF to add capacity for project management and delivery. Also, \$27k would be to provide seasonal labor to operate acquired ASV PT-100 Forestry package skid loader with attached 68" Fecon carbide cutter head. PF does not have an economic analysis to determine the impact on jobs and the economy of enhancement projects, however much of the work completed through this proposal would be through contractors being employed to deliver enhancement activities. Equipment purchase would be from Minnesota manufacturers and distributors.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: All lands enhanced are permanently protected for habitat with a majority open to public hunting and/or recreation. Enhancement projects completed on private land would be open to the public with landowner permission required for access.

Other considerations: PF is a significant partner in restoring grassland habitats. PF has two habitat teams that are professionally enhance approximately 2,500 acres of native grassland habitats annually. We actively enhance grasslands through partnerships with agencies, landowners and private contractors on an annual basis.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 19
Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: David Smith
Your organization: Brandenburg Prairie Foundation
Mailing address: 405 S Fairview Drive, Luverne, Minnesota 56156
Phone/fax number: (507) 283-2877
Email address: truffles@iw.net

Program/project short name: Touch the Sky Prairie
FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$250,000
Additional funds leveraged and source:

Expected outcomes at completion: Continue restoration of 808 acres of the Touch the Sky Prairie Unit of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge located in Rock County in southwest Minnesota. The funds will help us continue the prairie restoration project by improving our native seed harvest, continue the prescribed burns on a regular basis, improve our invasive species control, and help us promote the native species and unique species found only at Touch the Sky prairie. We will see more visitors to the prairie sight through increased public access and education.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success (100 words or less): We presently have a partnership with US Fish and Wildlife Service to preserve and continue to restore the current 808 acres that are part of the Touch the Sky Prairie. Since its inception, the Touch the Sky prairie has developed over 170 prairie plant species on the property where there were only 17 when the project began in 2002, a remarkable increase. We will continue to monitor the growth of native species and hope for even greater success in the future. The control of invasive species is a primary concern and will continue to be an area we will monitor on a regular basis. We need to make the site more accessible, including areas for handicapped and others. As this site continues to be developed we will provide more educational information for these visitors.

Generalized Budget:

| Budget Item | Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$ | Other Fund \$\$ | Total Funds \$\$ |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | | | |
| Contracts | | | |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | | | |
| Materials, supplies | \$150,000 | | \$150,000 |
| Travel | | | |
| Land (fee, easement) | | | |
| Other (Accessibility) | \$70,000 | | \$70,000 |
| (Info sites) | \$30,000 | | \$30,000 |
| Total | \$250,000 | | \$250,000 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring and/or addressing property tax implications will be met: As in the past, we have partnered with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. They have developed a fifteen year restoration program. The Foundation provides funds to USFWS and we are both able to leverage additional funds that are used for a variety of prairie projects. We meet with USFWS regularly and are provided with a summary of their progress and how the money has been spent. We will both continue to monitor the project.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: We work closely with our county and township governments to make sure they know what is happening. There have been issues regarding weed control in the past and we have been able to resolve those concerns by working with the various governmental entities. We continue to work with the local weed board, cattleman's associations, and other ag related entities in Rock County and southwest Minnesota.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: 3.5 FTE

Other considerations: This project is a unique partnership between the Brandenburg Prairie Foundation and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Foundation continues to provide funding that is matched by USFW dollars to help with seed harvest, prescribed burns, weed control, and the development and monitoring of native species on the Touch the Sky Prairie. This project is part of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. The goal is to return 70,000 acres back to native prairie in the areas of Iowa and Minnesota that once were part of the original tallgrass prairie. Today with less than 1/2 of 1% of native prairie left, this project is of immense importance. With the increased use of ethanol and wind power, land that may have been available for prairie restoration are becoming more difficult to secure.

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposal - 20

Prairie/Grassland Habitat Type

Your name: Edward M. Quinn – Natural Resource Management Program Coordinator
Your organization: MNDNR – Division of Parks and Trails
Mailing address: 500 Lafayette Road, Box 39, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone/fax number: Fax: 651-297-1157
Email address: Ed.quinn@dnr.state.mn.us

Program/project short name: Reconstructing State Park Prairies for Minnesota’s Species of Greatest Conservation Need

FY10 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars requested: \$290,000

Additional funds leveraged and source:

- Approximately \$70,000 in replacement value seed collected at Wild River State Park will be used to increase the diversity of the seed mix planted.
- Sentenced to Service crews will provide approximately 20 days of time assisting with brush clearing (about \$11,500 value).
- MNDNR Division of Parks & Trails staff will provide about 1,000 hours of time (\$31,300) over-seeing STS crews, administering contracts, conducting prescribed burns and assisting with brush removal.
- Approximately \$50,000 in mowing and spot invasives control will be used in 2012 and 2013 to insure successful establishment of the reconstructed prairies. The monies will come from MNDNR Division of Parks & Trails general funds allocated for resource management or resource project dollars.

Expected outcomes at completion:

The outcome of this project will be 292 acres of prairie reconstructed (restored) within Afton and Wild River state parks. At Afton, 140 acres will be reconstructed at the north end of the park between existing prairie remnants or reconstructions forming a contiguous block of over 300 acres of prairie/savanna habitat. At Wild River, one area of 107 acres will be reconstructed at the southern end of the park re-establishing prairie within a larger matrix of fire dependent forest and 45 acres will be reconstructed adjacent to a previously completed 48 acres prairie reconstruction forming a block of contiguous habitat of > 100 acres.

Short narrative of program/project, location(s), timeline for completion and measures of success: Eight Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) have been documented at Afton and Wild River State Parks and will benefit from increased prairie habitat (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Prairie SGCN Which Will Benefit from Prairie Reconstruction at Afton & Wild River State Parks

| <u>Common Name</u> | <u>Scientific Name</u> | <u>Common Name</u> | <u>Scientific Name</u> |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Field Sparrow | <i>Spizella pusilla</i> | Eastern Meadowlark | <i>Sturnella magna</i> |
| Grasshopper Sparrow | <i>Ammodramus savannarum</i> | Dickcissel | <i>Passerina cyanea</i> |
| Henslow’s Sparrow | <i>Ammodramus henslowii</i> | Gopher Snake | <i>Pituophis catenifer</i> |
| Bobolink | <i>Dolichonyx oryzivrous</i> | Eastern Hognose Snake | <i>Heterodon platirhinos</i> |

In addition, prairie invertebrates of greatest conservation need, such as Leonard’s skipper (*Hesperia leonardus*) and regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) may colonize these sites. Leonard’s skipper is known from both Washington & Chisago counties where these parks are located and regal fritillaries have been documented in the adjacent counties of Dakota and St. Croix (WI).

Experiences of MNDNR staff and numerous studies, such as Ries et al (2001), Perkins et al (2008) and Blankespoor (1980) have documented increases in both vertebrate and invertebrate habitat-sensitive wildlife species composition and abundance as a result of prairie reconstruction efforts.

Timeline:

| <u>Time of Year</u> | <u>Activity</u> | <u>Time of Year</u> | <u>Activity</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Spring 2009 | Brush-clearing | Fall 2009 | Planting |
| Spring-summer 2009 | Herbicide application | Spring 2010 | Establishment mowing |
| Spring-summer 2009 | Prescribed burn | Summer/fall 2010 | Spot invasives control/mowing |
| Fall 2009 | Herbicide application | Spring 2011 | Establishment mowing |
| Fall 2009 | Prescribed burn | | |

Generalized budget:

| <i>Budget Item</i> | <i>Outdoor Heritage Fund \$\$</i> | <i>Other Fund \$\$</i> | <i>Total Funds \$\$</i> |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Salaries/benefits | \$68,140 | \$31,300 | \$99,440 |
| Contracts | \$129,860 | | \$129,860 |
| Equipment (> \$5000) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Materials, supplies (seed & herbicide) | 92,000 | | \$92,000 |
| Travel | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Land (fee, easement) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other (list) | | | |
| Total | \$290,000 | \$31,300 | \$321,300 |

Describe how long-term costs for sustaining project, monitoring &/or addressing property tax implications will be met: State parks are legislatively mandated (MS 86A.05 subd. 2c) to preserve & restore natural features that were present in the area of the park at the time of European settlement. Resource specialists, park staff and others responsible for natural resource management in the division will maintain the acres reconstructed under this project in perpetuity. Funding will be provided through resource management standards hours (allocated directly to the park) or through annual project funding.

Describe how local governments will be involved/informed if relevant: Local communities near each park will be notified of plans for prescribed burns. Temporary signs and the parks web page will be used to communicate to the public about the reconstruction efforts taking place.

Describe how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs this will provide: The salaries funding will provide approximately 2.4 FTE’s. In addition, there will likely be four contracts of

>\$20,000 each for herbicide application and seed purchases of \$92,000 which will support MN prairie seed producers.

Describe how this project will provide public access for hunting, fishing and other recreation: These parks already provide fishing, horseback riding and a variety of other outdoor recreation opportunities, such as hiking, camping and geocaching. Both parks administer special permit hunts for deer when the DNR Commissioner determines that a hunt is needed.