

Main Request for Funding Form

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council
Fiscal Year 2013**

Program or Project Title: SNA and Native Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Funds Requested: \$ 3,276,027

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County Location: ??

Ecological Planning Regions:

- Northern Forest Forest/Prairie Transition Southeast Forest
 Prairie Metro/Urban

Activity Type:

- Protect - Fee Protect - Easement Protect - Other
 Restore Enhance

Priority Resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands Forests Prairie Habitat

Project Narrative

Design and scope of work

Through this proposed appropriation, the DNR Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) Program will protect sites of biodiversity significance with high game and non-game wildlife habitat value through fee acquisition of about 470 acres to be designated as state SNAs (public use units open to public hunting

within the state Outdoor Recreation System established through M.S. 86A.05, Subd.5) and through conservation easement acquisition on about 580 acres as DNR-held and managed permanent Native Prairie Bank (NPB) Conservation Easements (as authorized in M.S. 84.96).

The Need. In response to legislative direction, the DNR created the state SNA Program to ensure that the state's natural heritage is not lost from any area of Minnesota. This requires protection of all features in sufficient quantity and distribution across the landscape. Protecting multiple sites in each landscape area is a vital means of capturing the full range of genetic diversity and preventing the loss of important species, communities, and features – along with their economic, health, environmental, and scientific value.

The state once had over 18 million acres of prairie. Today, an estimated 169,000 acres of native prairie remain, of which about 94,800 acres are threatened. The remaining remnant native prairies are in jeopardy of being lost forever unless they are protected. Demand for food, fuel and fiber from row crop agricultural production continues to increase. This puts growing pressure on private lands, increasing the need to proactively protect natural and working land and the natural resources and recreational and economic opportunities they provide. For example, nearly 425,000 acres now enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are scheduled to be eligible for release by 2012 and could be returned to row crop production. Conservation of Minnesota's remaining native prairie has statewide significance because native prairies provide significant ecological benefits – they are home to more than 100 species of rare and endangered plants and animals, and provide excellent wildlife habitat for nesting waterfowl, pheasant, and other upland nesting birds. Native prairies also contribute to productive agriculture by supporting grazing, haying, seed production, and providing biomass for energy. With more than 75 percent of Minnesota's land under private ownership, private landowners are crucial partners in the conservation of the state's natural resources.

SNA Acquisitions. To be acquired and designated as SNA, the site must be recommended for SNA designation in an Ecological Evaluation report AND must be part of a Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) biodiversity significance site and/or be a geological feature of statewide significance. All sites designated as SNA are predominantly mapped native plant communities and also contain habitat for game and rare species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. All sites acquired as SNA require county board approval.

The four sites targeted for SNA acquisition in this proposal will each add more public hunting lands and biodiversity protection to lands designated as SNA already (or in progress). Two sites are in the Forest-Prairie Ecological Section – one which is a natural mosaic of savanna, woodland, and wetland locally known for large deer; and the other is part of large 1500-acre wetland forest complex open to all public hunting supporting many game and non-game species. Two sites are in the southern reaches of Northern Forest Ecological Section – one near the Metro Region along the bluffs of the St. Croix River is open to all hunting along with adjoining federal lands; and the other would protect additional land adjoining what will be a new SNA of native hardwood forests with excellent hunting opportunities. This funding request includes costs associated with completing boundary surveys, posting boundaries, other signs, minimal parking areas, and for initial restoration of any agricultural fields acquired to buffer the native plant communities to be protected.

NPB Easement Acquisitions. Generally, NPB acquisitions are at least 90% native prairie (unless the landowner donates additional non-prairie lands or other programs fund its acquisition). Each candidate NPB site is ranked for protection priority through an evaluation of the following factors: (1) size, quality and diversity of the native prairie, (2) occurrence of or suitable habitat for rare species, (3) location of

the tract in relation to other protected prairie, (4) potential for long-term habitat management and enhancement of the site, (5) landowner interest in maintaining the prairie, and (6) additional factors, such as support of Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan 2010 US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) plans, DNR Working Lands Initiative Area, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) eco-regional plans, and/or local watershed partnerships, and jeopardy of tract. After the evaluation is complete, NPB acquisitions are chosen based on the protection priority ranking, available funding, and continued landowner interest. NPB conservation easements provide for public access by pedestrians for nature observation, education, and research; the private landowners retain control of hunting access on their property. The amount the state pays the landowner for the easement, as directed by M.S. 84.96, is 58.5% of the assessed value of cropland in the township in which the easement is located. If landowners so chose at the time the easement is acquired, grazing, haying, and/or seed harvest by the landowner are allowed in the easement for a moderate reduction in payment.

Four primary areas of high quality native prairie are targeted for NPB easement acquisition in this proposal – three within areas mapped as either Prairie Core Areas or Prairie Corridors in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan 2010, and one bluff prairie (goat prairie) in the Southeast Forest Section. This funding request includes costs associated with completing baseline property reports and boundary surveys, posting boundaries, contributing towards an ongoing easement stewardship account, and initial restoration of any agricultural fields acquired to buffer the native prairie to be protected.

Planning

Relationship to the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan* and Other Published Resource Management Plans

This project addresses two strategic areas of the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan: Critical Land Protection, and Land and Water Restoration and Protection; and the following recommendations:

- H1: Protect priority land habitats (pg 63)
- H3: Improve connectivity and access to outdoor recreation (pg 74)
- LU 8: Protect large blocks of forested land (pg 130)

Specific elements of other plans are addressed by this proposal as follows.

- The draft Prairie Conservation Plan 2010 identifies the continued loss of prairie to conversion, development, and destruction as a one of the primary threats to Minnesota's remaining native prairie. This project directly targets a key goal of this plan to protect all remaining native prairie in Minnesota that lacks legal protection (final page numbering unavailable at this time).
- Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare - Minnesota's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for species in greatest conservation need has identified significant loss and degradation of habitat as the number one management challenge and one of the principle strategies is to provide protection through selective acquisition of key habitats in each Ecological Section (pg 43). Each site to be acquired through this proposal would permanently protect sites known to have Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and the key habitats which they require.
- The DNR's A Strategic Conservation Agenda 2009-2013 specifically targets natural land protection through acquisition and designation of SNAs (p.35). It also calls for prairie stewardship assistance which includes enrolling lands in NPB and working with their landowners

(p. 43) and it targets land protection and monitoring of DNR-held conservation easements, such as NPB (p.44).

- This proposal implements the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Strategy #1 to: “Acquire, protect and restore Minnesota’s natural resource base, on which outdoor recreation depends. This includes obtaining prime outdoor recreation areas throughout the state prior to anticipated land use changes.” (pg.12).
- The Scientific and Natural Area’s Long Range Plan calls for a system of 500 natural areas by the year 2085 in order to adequately protect all elements of biological diversity in the state (pg. 5).

This proposal addresses the following LSOHC FY13 Call for Funding Request Ecological Section Vision and Priorities:

Northern Forest

Action #1. *Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through acquisition, conservation or access easement.* SNA acquisitions are targeted to lands “adjacent to existing ownership” which “provide important habitat for a wide range of game and non game wildlife” and “habitat for endangered, threatened and species of special concern”.

Forest/Prairie Transition

Action #1. *Protect, enhance and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and non-game wildlife.* SNA acquisitions are targeted to lands which are complexes of “diverse and productive remnant tracts of native prairie [savanna], forests, grasslands, wetlands, ... and their associated ... wildlife habitat”.

Southeast Forest

Action # 3. *Protect, enhance and restore remnant goat prairies.* The SNA acquisition in this Section is specifically targeted to acquisition of a remnant goat prairie (Southern Dry Bedrock Bluff Prairie) with timber rattlesnake habitat to be managed for improved quality.

Prairie

Action # 1. *Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes.* Action # 2. *Protect, enhance and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests and oak savanna.* NPB acquisitions are targeted to sites which are predominantly native prairie with at least one site including wetlands within that native prairie.

Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

Past and current acquisitions of SNAs and NPBs have been funded in part by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). Priority project lists far exceed the funds available from both ENRTF and LSOHC sources combined.

Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

This funding will be supplemental to traditional funding sources, allowing for the acceleration of protection of additional key natural lands beyond that achieved through current state appropriations.

Expenditures in Fiscal Year 2010, not including bonding funds were: DNR total - \$456 million; and Division of Ecological and Water Resources total - \$74.6 million.

Sustainability and Maintenance

SNA field staff will monitor project sites and take any necessary actions to sustain the habitat improvements as part of their public land management responsibilities. Ongoing costs for managing SNA and NPB sites after initial site development are primarily those needed for management of invasive species. Management plans for each site will be developed meeting DNR program standards. Site management and stewardship easement monitoring will be carried out by existing staff, CCM crews, temporary project staffing or through vendor contracting. Periodic enhancements will be funded through annual funding requests from a variety of funding sources, including bonding, gifts, federal sources, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Outcomes

Land protected through this proposal would directly achieve the following examples of “outcome measures” cited in the LSOHC “FY13 Call for Funding Request”:

- # and acreage of native plant communities with high biodiversity significance protected,
- # of public access points,
- connectivity of forest habitats via corridors,
- # and type of grassland bird conservation areas protected,
- # of MCBS sites protected,
- % of remnant goat prairies protected,
- acres/% of priority key parcels protected in fee or permanent easement,
- % of remnant native prairie and wetlands protected, and
- acres of remnant prairie with adequate buffers.

Activity Type Detail

Fee Acquisition Projects

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition?

Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection?

Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Easement Acquisition Projects

Will the eased land be open for public use?

- Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Will the conservation easement be permanent?

- Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Restoration and Enhancement Projects

Is the activity on permanently protected land and/or public waters?

- Yes No, please explain not applicable

If no, please explain here:

Does the activity take place on an Aquatic Management Area (AMA), Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), Wildlife Management Area (WMA), or State Forests?

- Yes, which ones No, please explain not applicable

If so, please indicate which ones:

Past Outdoor Heritage Fund Appropriations Received for this program

ML 2009	ML 2010	ML 2011
\$0	\$2,085,000 (SNA Program part of Departmental appropriation)	\$1,563,950 (SNA Program part of Departmental appropriation)

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date
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Fee & easement acquisition (including baseline reports & boundary surveys)	Acquisition of ~ 310 acres SNA (1 SNA) & ~220 acres NPB (2 NPB)	6/30/13
Fee & easement acquisition (including baseline reports & boundary surveys)Fee & easement acquisition	Acquisition of ~ 160 acres SNA (3 SNA) & ~360 acres NPB (3 NPB)	6/30/14
Boundary signage, initial site development	Signs at all sites (~1050 acres at 9 sites); minimal parking area at 1 SNA	12/31/14
Initial restoration of agricultural fields	Site preparation & planting complete (~ 160 acres)	6/30/15

Attachments:

A. Budget

B. Proposed Output Tables 1-5

C. Parcel List

Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet

Name of Proposal:

SNA and Native Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition

Date:

6/29/2011

[Link HERE to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

Total Amount of Request \$ 3,276,027 *From page 1 on the funding form.*

Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
				Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
<i>Acquisition spec./coord.</i>	0.22	2	\$ 30,800		\$	30,800
<i>Field staff (spec/tech/labor)</i>	0.5	2	\$ 70,000		\$	70,000
<i>Mgmt-contract coordinator</i>	0.06	1	\$ 10,800		\$	10,800
<i>position 4</i>					\$	-
<i>position 5</i>					\$	-
<i>position 6</i>					\$	-
<i>position 7</i>					\$	-
Total	0.78		\$ 111,600	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 111,600

Budget and Cash Leverage *(All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)*

Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash		Total
		Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	
Personnel - auto entered from above	\$ 111,600	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 111,600
Contracts	\$ 111,500			\$ 111,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT (breakout in table 7)	\$ 1,680,000			\$ 1,680,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT (breakout in table 7)				\$ -
Easement Acquisition	\$ 1,184,000			\$ 1,184,000
Easement Stewardship	\$ 92,000			\$ 92,000
Travel (in-state)	\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000
Professional Services	\$ 57,000			\$ 57,000
Direct Support Services	\$ 5,127			\$ 5,127
DNR Land Acquisition Costs (\$3,500 per acquisition)				\$ -
Other				\$ 19,800
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Other Equipment/Tools	\$ 6,300			\$ 6,300
Supplies/Materials	\$ 13,500			\$ 13,500
	\$ 3,276,027	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,276,027

Capital Equipment *(single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)*

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<i>Item 2 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 3 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 4 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 5 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 6 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 7 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 8 enter here</i>		
Total	-	-

Attachment B. Output Tables

Name of Proposal:	SNA and Native Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition
Date:	6/29/2011

Table 1 and Table 3 column totals should be the same AND Table 2 and Table 4 column totals should be the same

If your project has lakes or shoreline miles instead of land acres, convert miles to acres for Tables 1 and 3 using the following conversion:

Lakeshore = 6 acres per lakeshore mile / Stream & River Shore = 12 acres per linear mile, if both sides

Table 1. Acres by Resource Type

Describe the scope of the project in acres (use conversion above if needed)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					0
Protect Fee	160		310		470
Protect Easement		580			580
Protect Other					0
Enhance					0
Total	160	580	310	0	
Total Acres (sum of Total column)					1050
Total Acres (sum of Total row)					1050

These two cells should be the same figure.

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore					\$ -
Protect Fee	\$ 347,340		\$ 1,499,233		\$ 1,846,573
Protect Easement		\$ 1,429,454			\$ 1,429,454
Protect Other					\$ -
Enhance					\$ -
Total	\$ 347,340	\$ 1,429,454	\$ 1,499,233	\$ -	
Total Dollars (sum of Total column)					\$ 3,276,027
Total Dollars (sum of Total row)					\$ 3,276,027

These two cells should be the same figure.

Check to make sure this amount is the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						0
Protect Fee		320			150	470
Protect Easement			20	560		580
Protect Other						0
Enhance						0
Total	0	320	20	560	150	
Total Acres (sum of Total column)					1050	
Total Acres (sum of Total row)					1050	
Total Acres from Table 1.					1050	

These three cells should be the same figure.

Attachment B. Output Tables

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore						\$ -
Protect Fee		\$ 990,981			\$ 855,592	\$ 1,846,573
Protect Easement			\$ 70,580	\$ 1,358,874		\$ 1,429,454
Protect Other						\$ -
Enhance						\$ -
Total	\$ -	\$ 990,981	\$ 70,580	\$ 1,358,874	\$ 855,592	

Total Dollars (sum of Total column) \$ 3,276,027 *These two cells should be the same figure.*
 Total Dollars (sum of Total row) \$ 3,276,027
 Check to make sure these amounts are the same as the Funding Request Amount on page 1 of Main Funding Form.

Table 5. Target Lake/Stream/River Miles

miles of Lakes / Streams / Rivers Shoreline

Table 6. Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in acres)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	160		310		470
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					0
Permanent Easement PILT Liability <i>NO State</i>		580			580
	160	580	310	0	

Table 7. Estimated Value of Land Acquisition by PILT Status (enter information in dollars)

	Wetlands	Prairies	Forests	Habitats	Total	
Acquired in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$ 320,000		\$ 1,360,000		\$ 1,680,000	\$ 1,680,000
Acquired in Fee w/o State PILT Liability					\$ -	\$ -
Permanent Easement PILT Liability <i>NO State</i>		\$ 1,184,000			\$ 1,184,000	\$ 1,184,000
	\$ 320,000	\$ 1,184,000	\$ 1,360,000	\$ -		

FYI: should match total in budget table that is auto entered below

Attachment C. Parcel List

Name of Proposal: SNA and Native Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition
Date: 6/29/2011

County	Township (25-258)	Range (01-51)	Direction most parcels are 2 with the exception of some areas of Cook County which is 1	Section (01 thru 36)	TRDS	# of acres	Budgetary Estimate (includes administrative, restoration or other related costs and do not include matching money contributed or earned by the transaction)	Description	Activity PF=Protect Fee PE=Protect Easement PO=Protect Other R=Restore E=Enhance	If Easement, what is the easement cost as a % of the fee acquisition?	Any existing protection? (yes/no)	Open to hunting and fishing? (yes/no)
Parcel Name												
Englund Ecotone SNA addition	Benton	37N	31W	2	14	3731214	160 \$ 643,641	Mosaic of MCBS high biodiversity significance area with mapped Pin Oak-Bur Oak Woodland, Sedge Meadow, and Dry Barrens Oak Savanna and 4 rare plants species. Site, known for large deer will be open to deer hunting. Wildlife benefited includes deer, fox, furbearers, & rare-SGCN butterflies & songbirds (e.g. sedge wren, indigo bunting, eastern kingbird, & great crested flycatcher). Proposed addition to existing SNA.	PF			YES
Franconia Bluffs SNA addition	Chisago	33N	19W	2	10	3319210	70 \$ 601,314	MCBS high biodiversity significance area with mapped Mesic Oak Forest, Maple Basswood Forest, & Oak Woodland-Brushland within six-mile corridor of St. Croix bluff habitat targeted for protection. Site is open to all hunting along with the adjoining St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Wildlife benefited includes deer, fox, turkey, red shouldered hawk, & rare-SGCN songbirds (e.g. cerulean warbler). Proposed addition to existing SNA.	PF			YES
Mille Lacs Moraine	Crow Wing	44N	28W	2	21	4428221	80 \$ 254,278	MCBS outstanding biodiversity significance area with mapped Red Oak-Basswood Forest, Willow-Dogwood Shrub Swamp, Low Shrub Poor Fen, & Black Ash-Yellow Birch-Red Maple-Basswood Swamp as well as rare aquatic vegetation. Site will be open to all hunting. Wildlife benefited includes deer, fox, furbearers, red-shouldered & rare-SGCN songbirds (e.g. cerulean warbler). Proposed addition to site currently being acquired as SNA.	PF			YES

Attachment C. Parcel List

St. Wendel Tamarack Bog addition	Stearns	125N	29W	2	9	1252929	160 \$	347,340	MCSB outstanding & high biodiversity significance area of over 1500 acres with the best and largest remaining Minerotrophic Tamarack Swamp in central Minnesota that contains numerous orchids & rare plant species. Site is open to all hunting. Wildlife benefited includes deer, fox, furbearers, & rare-SGCN amphibians & migratory songbirds. Proposed addition to existing SNA.	PF			YES
Big Stone Lake & Moraine	Big Stone	121N	45W	2	6	1214526	120 \$	348,147	Surrounded on three sides by Big Stone County WPA & within WLI focus area & Prairie Plan core area/prairie corridor with MCBS-mapped Southern Dryhill Prairie, Southern Mesic Prairie as well as associated wetlands.	PE	58.5% of assessed cropland value in township		NO
Glacial Lakes	Pope	123N	36W	2	31	12326231	240 \$	553,819	Within WLI focus area & Prairie Plan core area/prairie corridor with MCBS-mapped Dry Sand-Gravel Prairie that harbors state threatened Dakota Skipper and special concern Regal Fritillary.	PE	58.5% of assessed cropland value in township		NO
Root River Valley	Houston	103N	6W	2	20	1036220	20 \$	70,580	SE MN bluff prairie of MCBS-mapped Southern Dry Bedrock Bluff Prairie with state threatened timber rattlesnake.	PE	58.5% of assessed cropland value in township		NO
Yellow Medicine Coteau	Yellow Medicine	115N	46W	2	20	11546220	200 \$	456,908	Within Prairie Plan core area/prairie corridor with a mosaic of dry prairie, mesic prairie, wet prairie, and wet seepage meadow supporting rare plant species and populations of SGCN species, e.g. northern pintail, Richardson's ground squirrel, & upland sandpiper.	PE	58.5% of assessed cropland value in township		NO

Information provided will be used to map project locations. Incomplete or inaccurate information will result in that parcel or program not being mapped.