



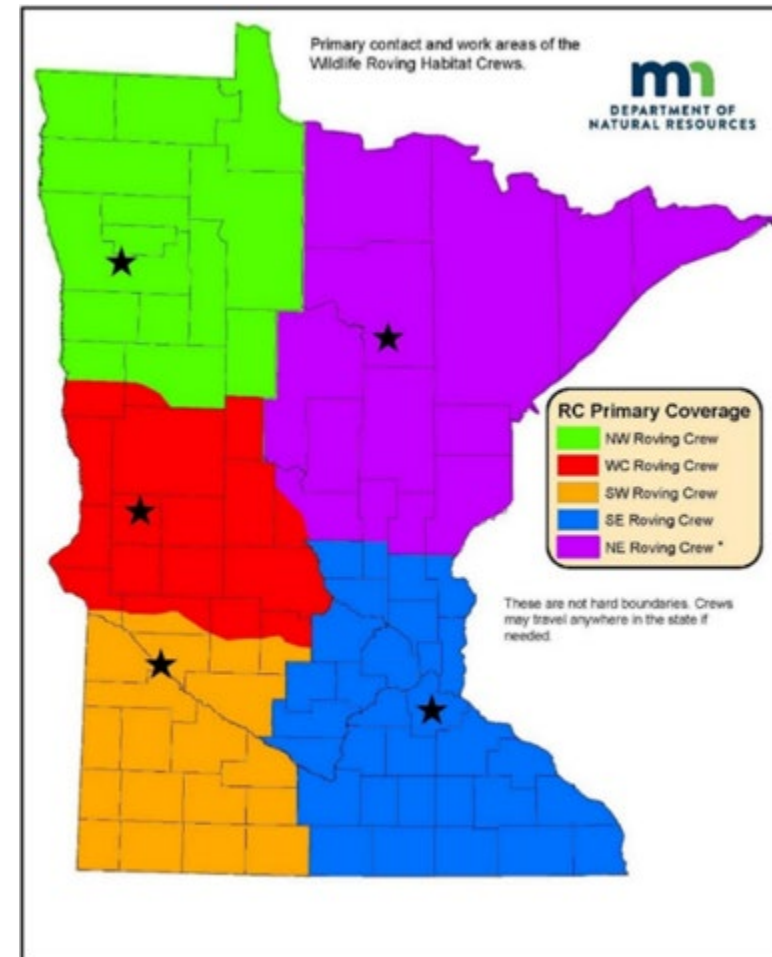
DNR Roving Crews

Kevin Berens | SE Roving Crew Supervisor

Greg Hoch | Prairie Habitat Supervisor

Where and When

- NW Crew -2011
- SW Crew – 2012
- SE Crew – 2013
- WC Crew – 2020
- NE Crew – 2022
- Public Lands, primarily open to hunting
 - WMA, SNA, SF
 - WPA, NWR
 - Easements



Comments from Roving Crew Sups

- With our equipment, we can tackle projects DNR Wildlife couldn't do in the past
- We've put fire into places that have never seen fire
- Others are seeing the benefits and are starting to do more burning
- We can get the area to a place where it's into a basic mgt mode

- Often hear phrases like “we never would have been able to do that in the past” from Area staff



Accomplishments and Outputs – Calendar Year 2022 and 2023

ACTIVITIES	TOTALS
brushland treatment	185
forest diversity enhancement	562
forest management	15
forest wildlife openings	258
forest/brush Rx burns	1,532
grassland diversity enhancement	456
grassland invasive control	166
grassland Rx burns	30,561
grassland woody removal	8,270
prairie establishment	582
wetland enhancement	212
wetland invasive control	1,179
wetland mechanical enhancement	6,685
wetland restoration	10
wetland Rx burning	4,508
wetland woody removal	828
TOTALS	56,008

- But wait, there's more!

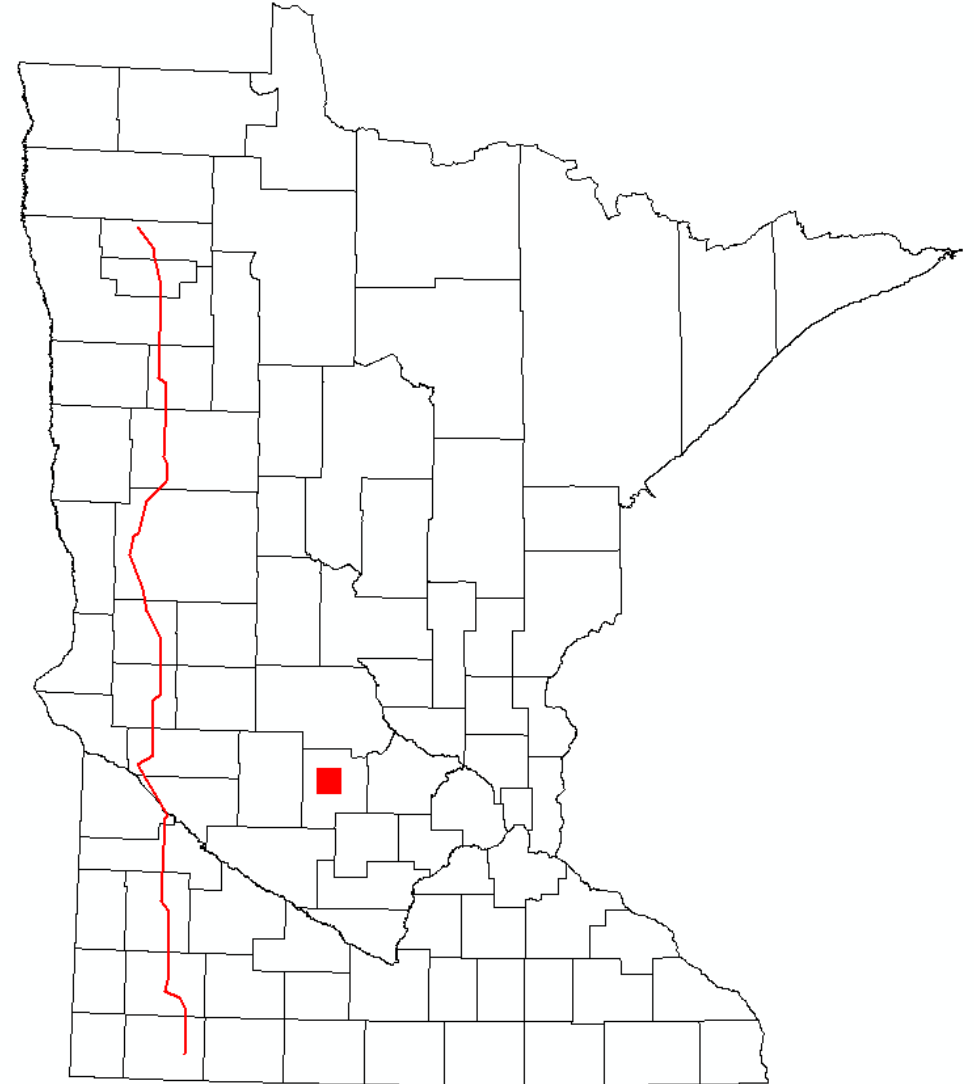
"UNREPORTED" ACTIVITIES	
fence removal	2 miles
firebreak establishment	746 miles
grazing infrastructure maintenance	1 WMA
Rx burn plans	101 plans
seed harvest	5006 pounds
wood pile burning-removal	55 piles

Claiming Acres, or Not



What Does that Mean?

- 56,008 acres equals
- 87.5 square miles
- A square 9.4 miles on a side (red box)
- 2.4 townships
- A strip a quarter mile wide along Hwy 59 from TRF to Worthington
- 3x the combined acreages of Heron, Pelican, Swan Lakes and Lake Christina



Prairie Rising from the Ashes



Outputs to Outcomes

- I was scouting for ducks on my own time. I hit the peak of the monarch migration on an 80 acre addition to Hurricane WMA. The Roving Crew led the prescribed fire, which reinvigorated all the wildflowers on the unit. The unit was a sea of purple with all the blazing star. And every blazing star had at least one if not two (or more) monarch butterflies. After some back of the envelope math comparing the acres of the site, density of blazingstars, and numbers of monarchs on or around each blazingstar, I conservatively estimate this little patch of heaven in Cottonwood County had over 400,000 monarchs!



Outcomes

- In August of 2019, the Roving Crew burned Pool 3 (7,300 acres) on the Roseau River WMA to control brush and remove cattails during the wetland drawdown. The fire produced great effects on brush removal that we can still see 4 years later. The pool came back in wild rice so thick that some duck hunters had issues getting their boats through the rice stalks. We assume the ducks didn't have any problems with the abundant new food source.
- The Roving Crew and our Shallow Lakes Specialists sprayed non-native hybrid cattail multiple times over the years. We are now seeing historic open water areas return to open water, with increased native vegetation. I received numerous reports from duck hunters that the aquatic duck food abundance, especially scuds, was the best in years. Hunters reported more diversity in duck species, and in increase in duck numbers.



- The Roving Crew does some brush shearing at Roseau Lake WMA in most winters. Often within a few weeks people report seeing moose in these project areas.
- Recently the Roving Crew conducted a 670-acre prescribed fire on Carp Swamp WMA. A couple of weeks after the fire, DNR staff flushed a brood of sharp-tailed grouse in the now open, freshly green and growing grassy area. A couple of months later staff flushed a dozen sharp-tails from the tall grass in the burned area.



Project Process

Build relationships with Area Managers

- What's been done before?
- What are your long-term objectives?

Examine how the Roving Crew can most effectively complete the work

- Is our equipment up to the challenge?
- How can we most efficiently use our time?

The Final Product

- What does success look like for this project?
- Did we meet the identified end state objectives?



Tools of the Trade



Where we started, where we are

- Small acreage invasive brush removal by hand
- Spring and some Fall Rx Burns
- Hand collection of Native Seed
- Lake drawdowns with high-capacity pump
- Backpack spraying of invasive/exotic species



- Large acreage mechanical brush removal
- Aerial Cattail Spraying
- Rx burning during all seasons
- Wild Rice Seeding
- Mechanical Native Seeding harvest/planting
- Large Landscape Burns
- Large acre tree shearing operations
- More training opportunities to broaden our skill set
- Larger and more capable equipment
- Larger scale wetland management work
 - Cattail chopping
 - Tillage

Some Highlights

- Returned fire to the landscape in areas that have never seen fire before
- Continually demonstrate and expand our abilities to complete a larger variety of projects
- Broaden our relationships between agencies and across divisions allowing us to do more quality habitat work



- “Never would have got this done without the Roving Crew”
- “I can’t believe how much was completed in such a short time”
- “We had no idea that was something you could do!”



Vermillion Highlands WMA



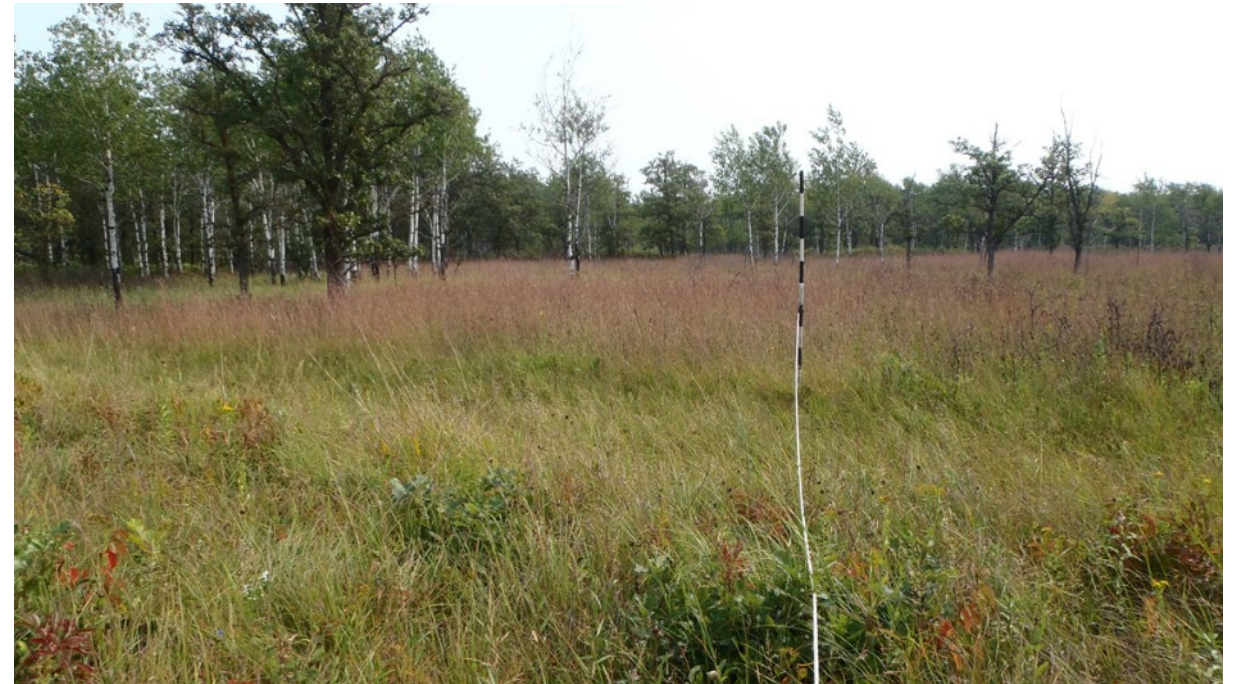
Manomin Lake – Beltrami County



John Peter Hoffman WMA



Twin Lakes WMA



Archerville WMA



Thank You!