



**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
M.L. 2011 Work Plan**

Date of Status Update:

Date of Next Status Update: 5/1/2012

Date of Work Plan Approval: 6/23/2011

Project Completion Date: 6/30/2014

Is this an amendment request? _____

Project Title: HCP VII - Wetlands Reserve Program (3d)

Project Manager: Jon Schneider

Affiliation: Ducks Unlimited Inc

Address: 311 E Geneva Rd NE

City: Alexandria **State:** MN **Zipcode:** 56308

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Location:

Counties Impacted: Statewide

Ecological Section Impacted: Lake Agassiz Aspen Parklands (223N), Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal (222M), North Central Glaciated Plains (251B), Northern Minnesota and Ontario Peatlands (212M), Northern Minnesota Drift and lake Plains (212N), Northern Superior Uplands (212L), Paleozoic Plateau (222L), Red River Valley (251A), Southern Superior Uplands (212J), Western Superior Uplands (212K)

Total ENRTF Project Budget:	ENRTF Appropriation \$:	775,000
	Amount Spent \$:	0
	Balance \$:	775,000

Legal Citation: M.L. 2011, First Special Session, Chp. 2, Art.3, Sec. 2, Subd. 04j3d

Appropriation Language:

\$1,737,000 the first year and \$1,738,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for the acceleration of agency programs and cooperative agreements. Of this appropriation, \$125,000 the first year and \$125,000 the second year are to the commissioner of natural resources for agency programs and \$3,225,000 is for agreements as follows: \$637,000 the first year and \$638,000 the second year with Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; \$38,000 the first year and \$37,000 the second year with Friends of Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District; \$25,000 the first year and \$25,000 the second year with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe; \$225,000 the first year and \$225,000 the second year with Minnesota Land Trust; \$200,000 the first year and \$200,000 the second year with Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, Inc.; \$242,000 the first year and \$243,000 the second year with Pheasants Forever, Inc.; and \$245,000 the first year and \$245,000 the second year with The Trust for Public Land to plan, restore, and acquire fragmented landscape corridors that connect areas of quality habitat to sustain fish, wildlife, and plants. The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, is an authorized cooperating partner in the appropriation. Expenditures are limited to the project corridor areas as defined in the work program. Land acquired with this appropriation must be sufficiently improved to meet at least minimum habitat and facility management standards, as determined by the commissioner of natural resources. This appropriation may not be used for the purchase of habitable residential structures, unless expressly approved in the work program. All conservation easements must be perpetual and have a natural resource management plan. Any land acquired in fee title by the commissioner of natural resources with money from this appropriation must be designated as an outdoor recreation unit under Minnesota Statutes, section 86A.07. The commissioner may similarly designate any lands acquired in less than fee title. A list of proposed restorations and fee title and easement acquisitions must be provided as part of the required work program. An entity who acquires a conservation easement with appropriations from the trust fund must have a long-term stewardship plan for the easement and a fund established for monitoring and enforcing the agreement. Money appropriated from the trust fund for easement acquisition may be used to establish a monitoring, management, and enforcement fund as approved in the work program. An annual financial report is required for any monitoring, management, and enforcement fund established, including expenditures from the fund. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2014, by which time the project must be completed and final products delivered.

I. PROJECT TITLE: Wetlands Reserve Program Technical Assistance

II. PROJECT SUMMARY: Minnesota has lost over 90% of our prairie wetlands and 99% of our native prairie grasslands. Restoring and protecting restored native prairie and wetland complexes is a priority among conservation agencies and organizations in the state and is often recognized as a primary objective in strategic conservation plans. The federal Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a key part of this effort by restoring and protecting prairie wetland complexes on land that remains in private ownership and on which local, county and state taxes are paid.

To accelerate the WRP in Minnesota, Ducks Unlimited (DU) will provide technical assistance to the USDA's NRCS by contracting with approximately six (6) FTE grant-funded wetland restoration specialist consultants to help NRCS promote and secure new WRP applications and plan and implement restorations on WRP easements secured in previous years. In addition, DU may also provide staff engineering services to assist NRCS with survey, design, and construction management tasks on larger restorations that require complex water control structures. The objective of WRP is to restore and permanently protect wetland and associated upland habitats to benefit migratory birds and other wildlife, and improve water quality. To meet this objective, NRCS purchases easements that gives NRCS the right to restore and protect wetland and associated upland habitats.

III. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

Project Status as of January 2012:

Project Status as of July 2012:

Project Status as of January 2013:

Project Status as of July 2013:

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

ACTIVITY 1: Provide Technical Assistance to NRCS to help Implement the WRP in Minnesota.

Description: DU will use grant funds to contract with approximately six (6) FTE wetland restoration specialist consultants to provide technical assistance to the USDA-NRCS and private landowners to help enroll 2,500 acres of private land in new Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easements. DU staff may also provide engineering services to assist NRCS with survey, design, and construction management on one or more larger restorations that require complex water control structures. DU will administer this grant and coordinate WRP partnership activities. The USDA-NRCS will fund the associated easement and restoration costs. The contracted wetland restoration specialist consultants will implement all aspects of the WRP program that will result in lands being enrolled and wetlands and uplands restored under the WRP. This project will be delivered throughout the prairie Minnesota.

Securing a WRP easement with a willing seller typically takes a year or more from the time a landowner expresses interest, and the application and easement process involves many steps. Once an easement is closed, NRCS begins and funds the restoration of wetland and upland habitats within the easement, a process that takes 2-3 years to fully complete. Often, WRP easements are combined with RIM easements to leverage state and federal resources. All restoration details are documented in an NRCS restoration plan for each easement. This complicated federal WRP easement application and restoration process relies heavily on the assistance and expertise of specialists contracted by DU, which have been supported by Trust Fund grants since 2005.

The contracted DU wetland specialists funded through this grant will make it possible for USDA-NRCS to secure WRP easements on approximately 2,500 acres in prairie areas of Minnesota at an estimated cost of approximately \$4 million to NRCS. Once secured under a WRP easement, NRCS will restore wetlands and grasslands in future years. Restoring these wetlands and native prairie grasslands is critical to maintaining continued federal funding for the WRP in Minnesota into the future, and will significantly improve and expand existing blocks of habitat and help improve downstream water quality.

Grant funds will be used by DU for approximately six (6) FTE contracted wetland restoration specialist consultants (\$695,000), for DU staff engineering services to USDA-NRCS (\$70,000), and for DU grant administration and partnership coordination that includes managing contractors and coordinating with USDA-NRCS field, area, and state office personnel (\$30,000). NRCS alone does not have enough technical assistance to implement the WRP at the accelerated levels described in this proposal without the technical assistance help provided by DU contracted wetland restoration specialist consultants.

Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:

ENRTF Budget: \$ 775,000
Amount Spent: \$ 0
Balance: \$ 775,000

Activity Completion Date: June 30, 2013

Outcome	Completion Date	Budget
1. Technical and engineering assistance provided by six (6) FTE contracted specialists and DU engineering to help USDA-NRCS secure WRP easements. Ongoing technical assistance will include landowner contacts, WRP applications submitted, easement restoration plans submitted, wetland restoration designs, and restoration project oversight/management.	June 30, 2013	\$ 775,000
2. Secure 2,500 acres of new WRP Easements by USDA-NRCS	June 30, 2013	\$ 0

Activity Status as of January 2012:

Activity Status as of July 2012:

Activity Status as of January 2013:

Activity Status as of July 2013:

Final Report Summary:

V. DISSEMINATION:

Description: DU consultants, the USDA’s NRCS, and SWCD’s will periodically issue news releases about WRP sign-ups and the success of the program. Consultants may also be asked to speak at DU’s Minnesota state convention, and DU may also feature information about the WRP in our electronic state newsletter “Cattails”.

Status as of January 2012:

Status as of July 2012:

Status as of January 2013:

Status as of July 2013

Final Report Summary:

VI. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:

A. ENRTF Budget:

Budget Category	\$ Amount	Explanation
Personnel:	\$ 90,000	DU staff to administer grant and engineer projects.
Professional/Technical Contracts:	\$ 675,000	Approximately six (6) FTE wetland restoration specialist contract consultants to provide technical assistance to NRCS over two years to process WRP applications and plan restorations.
Service Contracts	\$	
Equipment/Tools/Supplies:	\$ 2,000	GPS survey equipment rental.
Capital Equipment over \$3,500:	\$	
Fee Title Acquisition:	\$	
Easement Acquisition:	\$	
Professional Services for Acq:	\$	
Printing:	\$	
Travel Expenses in MN:	\$ 8,000	In-state travel for grant admin and engineering.
Other:	\$	
TOTAL ENRTF BUDGET:	\$ 775,000	

Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:

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

Number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) funded with this ENRTF appropriation: Approx. 6.5 FTE

B. Other Funds:

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	\$ Amount Spent	Use of Other Funds
Non-state			
USDA NRCS federal funds	\$4,000,000	\$ 0	USDA NRCS easement payments
State			
	\$ 0	\$ 0	
TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:	\$4,000,000	\$ 0	

VII. PROJECT STRATEGY:

A. Project Partners: DU is a member of the Habitat Conservation Partnership. Jon Schneider from Ducks Unlimited and Tim Koehler from USDA NRCS will be the Co-Managers of this project. WRP easements will be secured as stand alone and in conjunction with Reinvest In Minnesota Reserve program easements administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and funded through State Capital Investment (Bonding) funding. Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other conservation partners also may assist the implementation of the WRP.

B. Project Impact and Long-term Strategy: The USDA' NRCS estimates that \$4,000,000 will be spent to acquire WRP easements on approximately 2,500 acres as a result of the technical assistance provided by the wetland restoration consultants contracted through this grant. Jon Schneider from Ducks Unlimited and Tim Koehler from USDA NRCS will be the Co-Project Managers. WRP easements will be secured as stand alone and in conjunction with Reinvest In Minnesota Reserve program easements administered by The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and funded through State Capital Investment (Bonding) funding. Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other partners assist the implementation of the WRP

C. Spending History:

Funding Source	M.L. 2005 or FY 2006-07	M.L. 2007 or FY 2008	M.L. 2008 or FY 2009	M.L. 2009 or FY 2010	M.L. 2010 or FY 2011
ENRTF	\$450,000, ML 2005, Chapter 1, Article 2, Sec. 11, Subd. 5a.	\$350,000, ML 2007, Chapter 30, Sec. 2, Subd. 4b.	\$267,500, ML 2008, Chapt. 367, Sec. 2, Subd. 3c3d.	\$420,000, ML 2009, Chapt. 143, Sec. 2, Subd. 4e3d.	\$350,000, M.L. 2010, Chap. 362, Sec. 2, Subd. 4f3d.

VIII. ACQUISITION/RESTORATION LIST: This grant funds technical assistance only. No actual acquisitions or restorations are being directly funded with ENRTF grant funds, and all USDA NRCS WRP easement locations are confidential due to federal privacy act regulations.

IX. MAP(S): This grant funds technical assistance only. No actual acquisitions or restorations are being directly funded with ENRTF grant funds, and all USDA NRCS WRP easement locations are confidential due to federal privacy act regulations.

X. RESEARCH ADDENDUM: n/a

XI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Periodic work plan status update reports will be submitted not later than February 1, 2012, August 1, 2012, and February 1, 2013. A final report and associated products will be submitted by August 1, 2013 as requested by the LCCMR.

2011-2012 Acquisition List for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Proposal

Project Title: HCP7-3d Wetlands Reserve Program

Project Manager Name: Jon Schneider (Ducks Unlimited) & Tim Koehler (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service)

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$775,000

Final Title Holder(s): USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee-Title OR Conservation Easement)	County	Estimated # of Acres	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM-Y)			
					Latitude	Longitude	UTM-X	UTM-Y
1	Becker County Easements (6)	Conservation Easement	Becker	412.7	Easement specific locations are not available due to data privacy act restrictions.			
2	Big Stone County Easements (4)	Conservation Easement	Big Stone	301.6				
3	Douglas County Easements (3)	Conservation Easement	Douglas	152.1				
4	Freeborn County Easements (7)	Conservation Easement	Freeborn	463.3				
5	Kandiyohi County Easements (3)	Conservation Easement	Kandiyohi	237.3				
6	Marshall County Easements (1)	Conservation Easement	Marshall	737.1				
7	Meeker County Easements (1)	Conservation Easement	Meeker	118.4				
8	Murray County Easements (1)	Conservation Easement	Murray	190.8				
9	Steele County Easements (2)	Conservation Easement	Steele	912.8				
10	Swift County Easements (1)	Conservation Easement	Swift	78.9				
11	Waseca County Easements (2)	Conservation Easement	Waseca	31.1				
<p>NOTES: WRP easements will be purchased by USDA's NRCS using federal funds, and this list is only an estimate of easements that might be closed during the grant period. Specific locations are not available due to federal data privacy act restrictions.</p>								

Attachment A: Budget Detail for M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Projects

Project Title: Wetlands Reserve Program Technical Assistance					
Legal Citation: Pending					
Project Manager: Jon Schneider (DU) & Tim Koehler (NRCS)					
M.L. 2011 (FY 2012-13) ENRTF Appropriation: \$775,000					
Project Length and Completion Date: 2 years ending June 30, 2013					
Date of Update: June 7, 2011					
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Activity 1 Budget	Amount Spent	Balance	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BALANCE
BUDGET ITEM	Provide Technical Assistance to NRCS				
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)					
DU professional engineering staff to survey and design one or more complex water control structures for NRCS. 0.3 FTE/year over two years, 60% salary 40% benefits.	60,000	0	60,000	60,000	60,000
DU conservation program manager to administer grant and manage grant activities. 0.2 FTE/year over two years, 60% salary 40% benefits.	30,000	0	30,000	30,000	30,000
Professional/Technical Contracts Approximately six (6) FTE wetland restoration specialist contract consultants to provide technical assistance to NRCS over two years to process WRP applications and plan restorations.	675,000	0	675,000	675,000	675,000
Service contracts				0	0
Equipment/Tools/Supplies GPS survey equip rental	2,000	0	2,000	2,000	2,000
Capital equipment over \$3,500				0	0
Fee Title Acquisition				0	0
Easement Acquisition		0	0	0	0
Professional Services for Acquisition				0	0
Printing				0	0
Travel expenses in Minnesota In-state mileage and lodging for DU engineering survey and design staff, and grant management/coordination.	8,000	0	8,000	8,000	8,000
Other				0	0
COLUMN TOTAL	\$775,000	\$0	\$775,000	\$775,000	\$775,000