

# Final Abstract

Final Report Approved on January 2, 2025

## M.L. 2021 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 2024

**Project Title:** Phase 2 - Prescribed-Fire Management For Roadside Prairies

**Project Manager:** Nathan Johnson

**Affiliation:** Minnesota Department of Transportation

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**Website:** <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/>

**Funding Source:**

**Fiscal Year:**

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08e

**Appropriation Amount:** \$217,000

**Amount Spent:** \$217,000

**Amount Remaining:** -

### Sound bite of Project Outcomes and Results

This project allowed MnDOT to better protect biodiversity and enhance pollinator habitat by increasing the capacity to carry out roadside prescribed burns.

### Overall Project Outcome and Results

MnDOT increased the number of burn crews from 4 to 7 statewide, which gives us crews in 7 of the 8 MnDOT districts. We added 2 additional burn bosses now totaling 5 statewide. The additional two burn bosses will greatly increase the frequency in which burns will be completed. 70 new burn plans were completed, which provides new locations on which fire is being used. Over 4,000 miles of road ditches were surveyed, providing better data, which is being used for several proposes.

In the last three years MnDOT has made significant progress in building a fire program. Prior to phase one of this project MnDOT was conducting on average 5 burns a year, since the project started MnDOT has been completing 25+ burns a year. We have identified several roadsides needing fire management, trained four prescribed fire crews around the state, and formally adopted MN DNR standards for training and qualifications. Despite this progress, we are currently constrained by a shortage of staff qualified to lead the fire crews. By adopting MN DNR standards, we have set a high

bar for individuals to become qualified to lead prescribed fires, hereafter referred to as a “burn boss.” To become qualified as a burn boss, an employee must take several classes and work with mentors to demonstrate competency with various skills. Depending on the availability of trainings and mentors, this process takes several years. Without enough qualified burn bosses, we are currently forced to rely on two burn bosses and therefore can only implement a small number of prescribed fires each year.

**Project Results Use and Dissemination**

All presentation that pertains to MnDOT fire program will give credit to LCCMR. All research results will be shared with interagency partners. Next to MnDOT logo on burn plans a trust fund logo has be included. Trust Fund logo has be added to Vegetation monitoring sites.



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2021 Approved Final Report

### General Information

**Date:** January 3, 2025

**ID Number:** 2021-065

**Staff Lead:** Noah Fribley

**Project Title:** Phase 2 - Prescribed-Fire Management For Roadside Prairies

**Project Budget:** \$217,000

### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Nathan Johnson

**Organization:** Minnesota Department of Transportation

**Office Telephone:** (612) 723-4288

**Email:** nathan.d.johnson@state.mn.us

**Web Address:** <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/>

### Project Reporting

**Final Report Approved:** January 2, 2025

**Reporting Status:** Project Completed

**Date of Last Action:** January 2, 2025

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2024

### Legal Information

**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08e

**Appropriation Language:** \$217,000 the first year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of transportation to continue to protect biodiversity and enhance pollinator habitat on roadsides by helping to create a self-sufficient prescribed-fire program at the Department of Transportation.

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2024

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** This project will continue to protect biodiversity and enhance pollinator habitat on roadsides by helping to create a self-sufficient prescribed fire program at the Minnesota Department of Transportation

**Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

In the last three years MnDOT has made significant progress in building a fire program. Prior to phase one of this project MnDOT was conducting on average 5 burns a year, since the project started MnDOT has been completing 25+ burns a year. We have identified several roadsides needing fire management, trained four prescribed fire crews around the state, and formally adopted MN DNR standards for training and qualifications. Despite this progress, we are currently constrained by a shortage of staff qualified to lead the fire crews. By adopting MN DNR standards, we have set a high bar for individuals to become qualified to lead prescribed fires, hereafter referred to as a “burn boss.” To become qualified as a burn boss, an employee must take several classes and work with mentors to demonstrate competency with various skills. Depending on the availability of trainings and mentors, this process takes several years. Without enough qualified burn bosses, we are currently forced to rely on two burn bosses and therefore can only implement a small number of prescribed fires each year.

**What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.**

This project will temporarily bring in qualified fire personnel who will train and mentor MnDOT crews and crew leaders. With this mentoring we can continue to train a fully qualified burn boss from within each of our crews, making each crew more self-sufficient. Continuing to have an additional burn boss on staff has increased burning five fold and MnDOT doesn't want to lose that momentum. With phase two MnDOT will have a goal of conducting 40 to 60 burns a year.

**What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

This project will also address several administrative constraints on our fire program. These include roadside vegetation inventory, site prioritization, planning, and monitoring. The increased assistance provided through would be temporary, but we are focusing it on areas that can create lasting change. This project will overcome hurdles and continue to build the capacity of our fire program. This will allow fire to become more regular and sustainable part of our vegetation management work. By increasing the long-term use of prescribed fire we will more effectively protect the biodiversity of prairie remnants, enhance existing native plantings, and restore additional roadside habitat.

## Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Region(s): NW, Central, SE, SW, Metro,

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Region(s): Central, Metro, NW, SE, SW,

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Prescribed fire program support & Implementation

**Activity Budget:** \$182,000

**Activity Description:**

Prior to conducting a prescribed fire we require a detailed plan that has been reviewed by qualified fire personnel and signed by relevant department officials. The time required to write these prescribed fire plans has limited their number and therefore has limited the number of roadsides on which fire can be used. As part of this activity the employee will assist and mentor burn boss trainees in preparing plans. Plans will be written for roadsides that have been identified as priorities using data gathered in Activity 3. This has a dual impact on increasing self-sufficiency in that plans will be useful for several years and burn boss trainees will gain skills needed to write new plans (or update existing plans) as needed.

Implementing a prescribed fire requires a great deal of preparation. This includes creating and maintaining fire breaks, arranging for and preparing equipment, obtaining burn permits, notifying local authorities and neighbors, preparing press releases, and reporting accomplishments. The employee will assist district crews with this coordination, helping to do the work when necessary but empowering crews to do it themselves as much as possible.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete 10 new and update 20 prescribed fire plans across the state	June 30, 2023
Conduct 20-50 prescribed burns (20-100 miles/80-500 acres of roadside) per year	June 30, 2023

### Activity 2: Hiring, Training, and Mentoring Prescribed Fire Crews

**Activity Budget:** \$5,000

**Activity Description:**

MnDOT currently has four prescribed fire crews, in process of adding another crew, it has only two burn bosses. This shortage results in several days each season during which one or more crews are unable to burn despite favorable weather and fuel conditions. To continue the growth of our fire program, we will use project funds to continue to employ the person who was hired under Phase One of this program.. This employee is qualified as a burn boss and able to lead prescribed fires and mentoring crewmembers. This employee will work directly with existing crews to conduct prescribed fires on roadsides.

MnDOT prescribed fire policy requires that fire personnel follow the same training and qualification standards as the MN DNR. These rigorous standards are important to ensuring the safety and effectiveness of roadside prescribed fire, but they present a major obstacle to developing a self-sufficient fire program. While all existing crew members are trained to the basic level (that of Wildland Firefighter Type 2), at least one member of each crew needs to become qualified as a burn boss to lead that crew on prescribed fires.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Increase crewmembers level of experience by working on 10-20 burns per year.	June 30, 2023
Qualify at least 2 MnDOT employees as MN Burn Boss Type 2.	June 30, 2023
Qualify at least 4 MnDOT employees to the level of MN Ignition Specialist Type 2.	June 30, 2023

### Activity 3: Roadside prairie inventory and fire effects monitoring

**Activity Budget:** \$30,000

**Activity Description:**

There are hundreds or thousands of miles of roadsides that could benefit from prescribed fire. These need to be prioritized to promote the most efficient use of resources. The project staff will inventory and map roadsides with native vegetation. Roadsides with prairie vegetation will be ranked using various factors to prioritize them for burning. Ranking criteria will include quality of native plant communities, remnant or planted status, conduciveness to use of fire, etc.

The employee will continue fire effects monitoring program to evaluate results. This information will be used to ensure that fires are meeting vegetation management objectives while limiting negative impacts on wildlife, including insects. With this information we will be able to adjust the timing, frequency, and intensity of fires as needed. Monitoring data will also be used to demonstrate accomplishments.

Inventory and monitoring data will be stored in GIS format in a geodatabase.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Monitor fire effects at 20-40 sites across the state.	September 30, 2022
1. Inventory prairie remnants and native plantings on 2000 miles (30,000 acres) of roadside.	September 30, 2022

## Dissemination

**Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.**

All presentation that pertain to MnDOT fire program will give credit to LCCMR. All research results will be shared with interagency partners. Next to MnDOT logo on burn plans a trust fund logo has be included. Trust Fund logo has be added to Vegetation monitoring sites.

## Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?**

By the end of this project MnDOT will have a self-sufficient prescribed fire program. The result will be an increased use of prescribed fire, enabling MnDOT to more effectively protect the biodiversity of prairie remnants, enhance existing native plantings, and restore additional roadside habitat.

## Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Prescribed Fire Management for Roadside Prairies	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 08f	\$345,000

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
<b>Personnel</b>										
pay district staff's overtime when working outside there district.		Help build MnDOT Prescribed Fire Program			0%	3		\$180,000	-	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>										
	Tools and Supplies	Fire handtools and supplies	To provide fire fighters with tools necessary to effectively fight fire.					\$7,000	\$7,000	-
	Equipment	ATV tank, pump, sprayers (5 spray units).	Provide ATVs with sprayers to increase productivity and safety.					\$15,000	\$15,000	-
	Equipment	Personal protective equipment, Fire Shelters, Fire coats, web gear, etc. (12+ sets).	To provide safety for fire fighters					\$5,000	\$5,000	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$27,000</b>	<b>\$27,000</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>										



							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>										
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	25 overnight trips at approximately \$200 per night	To get to and from burns, inventory, monitoring, etc.					\$5,000	\$5,000	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>										
	Conference Registration Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Travel, meals, lodging, registration feed. This will be used for 4 peoples extended training.	To get into fire trainings outside of MN.	X				\$5,000	\$5,000	-
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
<b>Other Expenses</b>										
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-	-	-
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$217,000</b>	<b>\$217,000</b>	-

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>	Conference Registration Miles/Meals/Lodging	Travel, meals, lodging, registration feed. This will be used for 4 peoples extended training.	The higher burn class required to be a burn boss are only offered once every couple of years in Minnesota. These classes are hard to get into, so by being allowed to take these classes out of state gives a higher chance of being accepted to classes.

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount	\$ Amount Spent	\$ Amount Remaining
<b>State</b>						
In-Kind	General Fund	MnDOT currently has a Prescribed Fire Coordinator which spend 50% of his time on fire and 8 district staff that spend 5% to 10% of there time on fire. The LCCMR funded staff will work directly with these people to meet our overall goal.	Secured	\$125,000	\$125,000	-
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Non-State</b>						
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	<b>-</b>

# Acquisition and Restoration

## Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Fire Region	Statewide	prairie	Restoration	-	-	-	Public	No	In Progress
<b>Totals</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	-			

## Restoration

**1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.**

All restoration associated with the project will occur on state of MN property.

**2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.**

MnDOT goal is to burn 80 to 500 acres of right-of way per year and all burns will be recorded in ARCMAP and in MnDOT burn summary worksheet.

**3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.**

All restored prairie will follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources guidelines.

**4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.**

Long term maintenance and management needs will be picked up in the districts the restoration occur. Once burn crews are self sufficient with a burn boss, they will be able to maintain these parcels long term.

**5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.**

If contracting occurs for the project consideration will be given to Conservation Corps of Minnesota.

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

Monitoring of fire effects will be conducted on 20+ burns annually and 10+ on a three year basis.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

File: [4e308bca-965.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

Attachment has map of Remnant prairies in Minnesota, photo of what a MnDOT right-of-way looks like after a burn, photo of a prescribed fire in progress....

### Supplemental Attachments

*Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
Background check form	<a href="#">5ac04976-94f.pdf</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

### *Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage*

Budget is less than what was original submitted, dollar amount changed to match what was approved by LCCMR, updated Project Location and area of project will affect. \*\*I will not need to hire any new staff, this funding is to keep 1 FTE supported (I deleted that field). When I enter 2 years in for 1 FTE the number 200 is auto filed and I can't change that. I changed dates on Roadside Prairie inventory and fire effects monitoring to Sept of 2022. Burns completed after that time will not be monitored with this funding. I added description for why out of state travel is requested.

## Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

**Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?**

N/A

**Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?**

No

**Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?**

N/A

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?**

N/A

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

Yes

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

## Work Plan Amendments

Amendment ID	Request Type	Changes made on the following pages	Explanation & justification for Amendment Request (word limit 75)	Date Submitted	Approved	Date of LCCMR Action
1	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination</li> <li>• Budget - Non-ENRTF Funds Contributed</li> </ul>	Due to not having anyone on staff for this position, for most of the past year. I would like a one year extension for the appropriations. All budgets will stay the same.	July 15, 2022	Yes	July 18, 2022
2	Completion Date	Previous Completion Date: 07/31/2023 New Completion Date: 06/30/2024	To continue to use funds to get a close to zero as possible.	June 13, 2023	Yes	June 13, 2023
3	Amendment Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Information</li> <li>• Budget - Personnel</li> </ul>	I will be using remaining budget to pay for employee's overtime working outside there district. This will help get people more experience working with people they are not familiar with.	February 7, 2024	Yes	May 6, 2024



# Status Update Reporting

## Final Status Update August 14, 2024

**Date Submitted:** May 28, 2024

**Date Approved:** August 23, 2024

### Overall Update

We currently have four qualified burn bosses working for MnDOT. We had two people able to complete the training requirements to become a burn boss during the last couple of years, increasing the number of burns we complete. Gaining more qualified people has had an increase on number of burns we complete every year.

### Activity 1

We have completed 81 new burn plans statewide during the last three years. These new plans have giving us lots of opportunity to burn new locations that have never been burned before. We have trained five employees on how burn plans are created, reviewed, and stored; these 5 employees will continue to write burn plans and train new personnel. *(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 2

With the hiring on one part-time employee, we were able to add burn crews to three new districts, having crews in seven of the eight MnDOT districts. Before the LCCMR funds we had four burn crews. Now three of them are self-sufficient and can burn on their own without any additional help. The three new crews have identified burn coordinators in each district and those individuals are at the beginning stages to become a burn boss. Within another seven to ten years, MnDOT should have burn bosses in seven districts. *(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete. *(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Dissemination

All presentation that pertains to MnDOT fire program will give credit to LCCMR. All research results will be shared with interagency partners. Next to MnDOT logo on burn plans a trust fund logo has been included. Trust Fund logo has been added to Vegetation monitoring sites.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update June 1, 2024

**Date Submitted:** May 28, 2024

**Date Approved:** August 23, 2024

### Overall Update

We currently have four qualified burn bosses working for MnDOT. We had two people able to complete the training requirements to become a burn boss during the last couple of years, increasing the number of burns we complete. Gaining more qualified people has had an increase on number of burns we complete every year.

### Activity 1

We have completed 81 new burn plans statewide during the last three years. These new plans have giving us lots of opportunity to burn new locations that have never been burned before. We have trained five employees on how burn plans are created, reviewed, and stored; these 5 employees will continue to write burn plans and train new personnel. *(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 2

With the hiring on one part-time employee, we were able to add burn crews to three new districts, having crews in seven of the eight MnDOT districts. Before the LCCMR funds we had four burn crews. Now three of them are self-sufficient and can burn on their own without any additional help. The three new crews have identified burn coordinators in each district and those individuals are at the beginning stages to become a burn boss. Within another seven to ten years, MnDOT should have burn bosses in seven districts. *(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete. Over 4,000 miles of Minnesota roadsides have been surveyed and mapped for native vegetation. This information has been helpful in deciding if fire would be a useful tool. This information has also been used by the permits department when making decisions on allowing people to preform work on MnDOT ROW. *(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Dissemination

All presentation that pertains to MnDOT fire program will give credit to LCCMR. All research results will be shared with interagency partners. Next to MnDOT logo on burn plans a trust fund logo has been included. Trust Fund logo has been added to Vegetation monitoring sites.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update December 1, 2023

**Date Submitted:** February 7, 2024

**Date Approved:** May 6, 2024

### Overall Update

We lost our part-time employee at the beginning of the July, so new work has come to a stop. We are not planning on rehiring, with so little time left until the deadline. We will use the rest of the personnel money to pay overtime on people working outside their district. This will increase the amount of burning my staff gets, increasing there comfort level of working with people they are not familiar with.

### Activity 1

Salary which is still left will be used to pay District employees OT to work in other districts other than their own. This will help use the remaining salary still left in the budget.

### Activity 2

One employee will reach the training required to become Burn Boss in February. I will be sending the one Burn Boss we already have to help get this person's final task book signed off and approved. Having another Burn Boss will greatly increase the amount of prescribed fire being conducted for MnDOT.

### Activity 3

This activity was previously marked complete.  
*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Dissemination

No update.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update June 1, 2023

**Date Submitted:** June 15, 2023

**Date Approved:** June 15, 2023

### Overall Update

MnDOT has added burn crews in another two Districts. This brings a total of 7 of the 8 districts with crews. MnDOT conducted one burn in the district this spring, which has already started a conversation about adding the 8th district.

### Activity 1

A total of 14 burn plans were updated and 93 new plans were written, far exceeding our goal of new plans. Over the past two years we burned a total of 208 miles of right-of-way, which was approximately 2,425 acres burned, which was double our goal for numbers.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 2

We were not able to get anyone qualified as a burn boss, but we have 2 employees that are one class and a completed task book away from accomplishing this goal. All of our crew received a decent amount of experience this spring, with several crew members from four districts crossing lines and helping other districts.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 3

Surveys on roadsides were conducted in 6 districts over the past year. Miles survived was over 3,000 miles eclipsing our goal of 2,000 miles. 30 sites were set up for monitoring during the first stage of the grant and continued monitoring every summer continued.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Dissemination

I gave a presentation on MnDOT Prescribed Fire Program at an Iowa Roadside Conference, highlighting our progress over the past several years. I had a slide at the beginning with the LCCMR logo stating how the funding provided was crucial to our programs success and key to our growth over the past 5 years.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update December 1, 2022

**Date Submitted:** November 18, 2022

**Date Approved:** November 23, 2022

### Overall Update

We were able to hire someone into this position on a part time basis. Finding full time staff for a short duration has been extremely difficult, so our focus shifted to a part time position. This person has been critical in burn plan writing and will increase the number of burns MnDOT conducts in the spring of 2023.

### Activity 1

19 new and four old burn plans have been completed. This will increase the opportunities for burning in the future. During the 2022 fire season, MnDOT completed 31 burns, which totaled 79 miles of ROW burned for a total of 1,2018 acres. These burns were on rights-of-way, rest areas, wetland mitigation ponds, and snow fence areas. One fire fighter participated in a 2-week deployment to California on a wildfire detail, bringing back knowledge and experience on how wildfires are managed.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 2

MnDOT started a new fire crew in District 4, which is in the Benson, Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes area. This crew was able to conduct 4 prescribed burns this fall and are set up to burn in the spring of 2023. We have had discussion with two more districts in the S and SW part of the state and they will be starting burn crews in 2024 and 2025.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Activity 3

3,460 miles of roadsides have been surveyed since July 1st. These surveys are critical to finding suitable areas on were to conduct prescribed fires in the future. Two extensive vegetation surveys were also conducted to survey rare and endangered species in state highway rights-of-way.

*(This activity marked as complete as of this status update)*

### Dissemination

I did one presentation at the Iowa Roadside Conference on MnDOT's prescribed fire program and credit was given to LCCMR for the funding it provided to move the fire program to the next level and beyond.

# Status Update Reporting

## Status Update June 1, 2022

**Date Submitted:** July 15, 2022

**Date Approved:** July 18, 2022

### Overall Update

The fall fire season of 2021 was shortened due to high fire danger statewide. The spring of 2022 has been wet and windy. With these unfavorable weather conditions MnDOT still managed to complete 23 burns. Three MnDOT staff assisted DNR on wildfire suppression duties last fall and several staff assisted with weekend staffing for wildfires around the state. The current LCCMR position has been vacant for almost a year. We have a new hire starting June 1st.

### Activity 1

In the last year MnDOT has completed 23 burns of 75 miles of right-of-way and 975 acres completed. We have completed burns on several wetland mitigation sites, rest areas, and living snow fence areas. MnDOT has assisted MnDNR on several of these prescribed fires. We have burned in two MnDOT districts that doesn't have burn crews. This has started conversations about one of the districts starting a crew. 11 new burn plans have been completed, which gives more opportunities for fires to occur.

### Activity 2

We have gone almost an entire year without someone in this position. The person who hired for this left MnDOT in early July 2021. It was difficult to find a replacement, but after posting the position several times, we have a new employee starting June 1st. This person will work part-time (20-30 hours per week). This person is fully training to operate burns on their own and will increase the number of burns MnDOT conducts annually. One new district in MnDOT is in the process of starting a new burn crew, but has been delayed due to back order of PPE. The crew will be operating in the fall of 2022.

### Activity 3

33 burns completed in 2021 were surveyed and documentation taken on how vegetation responded to fire. 500 miles of roadside were surveyed and mapped and ranked on quality of prairie. Three of our burns completed took place in our research sites, with extensive surveys completed. These surveys measure density of vegetation over time.

### Dissemination

Due to no staff on board for most of the year, very little outreach has been done. This will increase, now that we have a person on staff on a part-time basis.