

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2019 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

---

**Project Title:**

**ENRTF ID: 223-F**

Restoring 430 acres of the Panicum Prairie WMA

---

**Category:** F. Methods to Protect, Restore, and Enhance Land, Water, and Habitat

**Sub-Category:**

---

**Total Project Budget:** \$ 650,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** June 30, 2022 (3 yrs)

**Summary:**

Restoring the Panicum Prairie WMA will reconnect a fragmented flyway and provide critical nesting and stopover habitat for migratory waterfowl in a safe and efficient manner.

**Name:** Scott Christenson

**Sponsoring Organization:** Shell Rock River Watershed District

**Title:** Conservation Technician

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** 214 West Main Street

Albert Lea MN 56007

**Telephone Number:** (507) 377-5786

**Email** scott.christenson@co.freeborn.mn.us

**Web Address** www.shellrock.org

---

**Location**

**Region:** Southeast

**County Name:** Freeborn

**City / Township:** Albert Lea

---

**Alternate Text for Visual:**

Map depicting the location and size of the project location.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Funding Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge Base	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extent of Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific/Tech Basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urgency	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Capacity Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leverage	<input type="checkbox"/>		TOTAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	%
<input type="checkbox"/> If under \$200,000, waive presentation?								



**PROJECT TITLE:**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

Panicum Prairie Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is the largest WMA in Freeborn County at 955 acres; however, with an extensive open drainage system, nature of the soil types, proximity of adjacent homeowners and associated fire risks, minimal management has occurred on the Panicum Prairie WMA. It is now dominated by invasive plant species and is not reaching its full potential for the benefit of the wildlife that inhabit it and the people that use it. The project includes alteration of water level elevations through construction of ditch plugs, berms, two semi-stationary water pumps and stoplog structures which will manipulate water level elevations within two separate target units of Panicum Prairie; Grass Lake and Shell Rock. Increased water levels of greater than 12 inches will be maintained during the growing season which prevents seed germination and kills rhizomes of invasive plant species. This biannual practice will promote growth of native wetland plants such as native joe-pye weed, marsh milkweed, water plantain, bur-reed and bulrush species. After water levels recede through infiltration and evapotranspiration, native plants will be seeded using a low-compaction utility vehicle (Marsh Master). This UTV will provide efficient, long-term management capability to Panicum Prairie. This process of soil moisture management is a tool for area conservation authorities to manipulate habitat without the risks posed by prescribed burning and aerial spraying.

In the 1990s the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) purchased multiple parcels of a drained and fragmented lakebed known as Goose Lake and they called it the Panicum Prairie Wildlife Management Area. Now classified as a freshwater emergent wetland with a mosaic of oak savanna, wet meadow, temporary and seasonal wetlands, Panicum Prairie attracts user groups abroad because of its size and location in the state. Once a mecca for breeding and migratory waterfowl, the WMA now lacks forage species critical to nesting waterfowl, upland game and other wading bird species. The Panicum Prairie WMA Restoration Project is vital to reconnecting fragmented flyways throughout Southern Minnesota.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

The Shell Rock River Watershed District is seeking funding from the LCCMR for this innovative Panicum Prairie Project, totaling \$650,000.00 for project costs.

**Activity 1: Hydrologic assessments, modification and maintenance.** Funding for Activity 1 will cover hydrologic assessments on two target areas, final construction plans and bid specifications as well as environmental permitting. Design and engineering plans for a reinforced berm, water control structures and hydrologic modeling will occur under Activity 1.

**ENRTF BUDGET: \$113,000.00**

<b>Activity 1: Hydrologic assessments, modification and maintenance</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<i>1. Hydrologic Assessments</i>	<i>September 2020</i>
<i>2. Engineering/ Construction plans and Bid Specifications</i>	<i>September 2020</i>
<i>3. Permit Requirements</i>	<i>September 2020</i>

**Activity 2: Panicum Prairie Habitat Restoration and Management Practices.** Included in this activity are construction materials and construction services for Panicum Prairie habitat restoration; closure of abandoned open drainage ditches, reinforcement of berm for water retention, two pump stations, reverse flow flap gate system and stop log structures. Following soil moisture management guidelines, management will occur biannually including: continual site monitoring, discharge management, pump and utilities costs and maintenance, soil and seed bed management with Marsh Master UTV as well as invasive species control which will occur into the future by DNR and/or WD staff.



**ENRTF BUDGET: \$537,000.00**

<b>Activity 2: Panicum Prairie Habitat Restoration and Management Practices</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
3. <i>Berm stabilization, construction of water control structures, construction of pump station pads, utilities installation and road access.</i>	<i>December 2022</i>
4. <i>Management equipment; non-stationary pump, two pump stations and low compaction utility vehicle (Marsh Master).</i>	<i>December 2022</i>
5. <i>Construction materials and native seed.</i>	<i>December 2022</i>

**III. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

**A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Role</b>
Scott Christenson	Conservation Technician	Shell Rock River Watershed District	Project Manager

**B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Role</b>
Jeanine Vorland	Area Wildlife Manager	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Technical Advisement
Winston Beiser	Freeborn County	Freeborn County	Technical Advisement

**IV. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

Long term goals of the project are to restore habitat management to the 955 acre Panicum Prairie Wildlife Management Area as well as establish a wetland complex that has individual water retention structures and pumping abilities. In doing so, a long term monitoring and maintenance plan will be implemented to assure all constructed habitat restoration measures are adequately functioning as designed for the project.

**V. TIME LINE REQUIREMENTS:**

The goal for timeline requirements of the overall project and funding timeline is approximately three years.

**VI. SEE ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL COMPONENTS:**

- A. Proposal Budget Spreadsheet
- B. Visual Component or Map
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements
- E. Research Addendum (not required at proposal stage)
- F. Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description
- G. Letter or Resolution
- H. Certified Audit or 990 Tax Information

## 2019 Proposal Budget Spreadsheet

**Project Title: Restoring the Panicum Prairie**

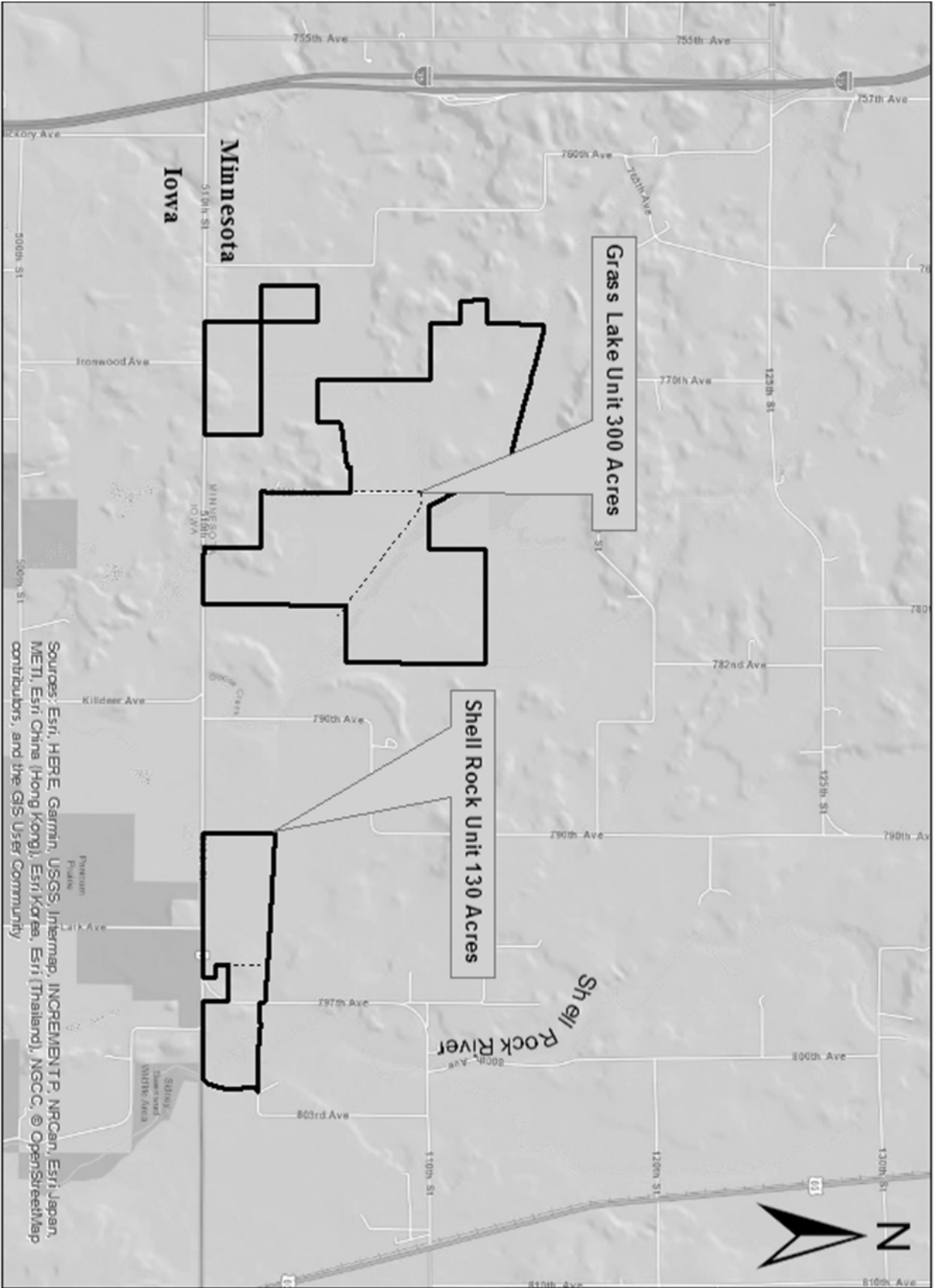
### IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

BUDGET ITEM (See "Guidance on Allowable Expenses")	AMOUNT
<b>Personnel:</b> Shell Rock River Watershed District Staff, Administrative costs.	\$ 65,000
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:</b> Hdrologic Assessments, RFP will be sought.	\$ 12,000
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:</b> Engineering, construction plans, bid specifications and environmental permitting, RFP will be sought.	\$ 36,000
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts:</b> Excavation, embankment, grading and utilities trenching. RFP will be sought.	\$ 175,800
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Water Control Structures (Agri-Drain).	\$ 6,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Marsh Master LX-2 low compaction utility vehicle (UTV) with mower, tiller and spraying implements.	\$ 171,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Two variable-speed pump controls and concrete pads.	\$ 36,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> 75hp mobile Godwin Pump and Piping.	\$ 80,000
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Construction Materials (riprap, revetment, aggregates, seeding and mulching)	\$ 68,200
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b>	n/a
<b>Travel:</b>	n/a
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b>	n/a
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =</b>	<b>\$ 650,000</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS (This entire section must be filled out. Do not delete rows. Indicate "N/A" if row is not applicable.)

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>	n/a	
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>	n/a	
<b>In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b> Technical Advisement	\$ 20,000	<i>secured</i>
<b>Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b>	n/a	
<b>Other Funding History:</b>	n/a	

# Restoring 430 acres of the Panicum Prairie MMA





**F. Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description**

Scott Christenson holds a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. He has worked on habitat management and restoration projects across the upper Midwest. His responsibilities in Restoring the Panicum Prairie will be as Project Manager. Construction site management and installation oversight will be his main responsibilities in the first phases of the restoration. After construction is complete and adheres to the scope of design, Scott will be actively involved in the management of these units.

The Shell Rock River Watershed District (SRRWD) was established in June 2003 at the request of local citizen's petition for the purpose of improving water quality. The District encompasses 246-square miles located entirely within Freeborn County. The SRRWD is home to Albert Lea, Hayward, Glenville, Twin Lakes, Manchester and the southern portion of Clarks Grove.

The Shell Rock River Watershed District mission is to implement reasonable and necessary improvements to the water-related and other natural resources of the District. Many water related issues are currently being addressed by one or more local, state and federal government agencies. The Board will review current levels of enforcement, funding, and labor available to fully achieve stated goals. The Board may increase the extent or pace of implementation by providing leadership, assisting with funding, volunteer support and services necessary.