

**CPL Applications**  
(Total to date: 129)

## Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Application

**CPL1000069**

### Spreadsheet

#### Name and Contact

Project Identifier:	CPL1000069	Street Address 1: 1101 West River Parkway
Project Name:	Tallgrass Aspen Parkland Protection 2009-001	Street Address 2: Suite 200
Organization Name:	The Nature Conservancy	City: Minneapolis
Organization Website:	www.nature.org	State: MN
Organization Contact Person:	Michael Pressman	Zip Code: 55415-1291
Contact Email:	mpressman@tnc.org	
Contact Phone:	612-331-0706	

#### Location

Primary County:	Kittson
Nearest City:	
Township:	McKinley
Project Site Name:	Tallgrass Aspen Parkland
Project Site Land Ownership:	Private
Other Land Ownership:	

#### Project Information

Primary Activity:	Acquisition
Primary Habitat Type:	Wetland
Total Project Acres:	240
Total Project Sites:	1
Total Grant Amount Requested:	\$187279
Total Match Amount:	\$20809
Total Project Cost:	\$208088
Project Completion Date:	10/2010 (MM/YYYY)
Project Summary and Outcomes:	Fee acquisition of 240 acres of primarily wetland and upland native plant communities in the Tallgrass Aspen Parkland landscape. This property is currently listed for sale with a Realtor and is at immediate threat of non-conservation use. Development of this property would adversely impact the conservation values of this property, as well as make management more difficult on the adjacent Nature Conservancy land (400 acres) and Skull Lake WMA (7,010 acres). The collaborative Tallgrass Aspen Parkland Conservation Plan ranked this tract highly because it is largely in native cover, the proximity to TNC and MN DNR lands and impact on fire management.

#### Attachments

- [Project Site Information Form](#)
- [Project Budget and Match Description](#)
- [Partner Commitment Letter](#)
- [Financial Documentation](#)
- [Conservation Easement](#)
- [Supplementary Attachment #1](#)
- [Supplementary Attachment #2](#)

[Back](#)

# Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

## Project Site Information

### Contact information

Project name:

Organization:

Organization contact person (Project Manager):

### Project information

Project site:

Project site land manager  Legal :

or easement holder:

Private land owner  County:

(if applicable):

Activity (may choose more than one): ☐ Enhancement ☐ Restoration ☒ Acquisition

Predominant Habitat (choose one): ☐ Forest ☐ Prairie ☒ Wetland ☐ Fish, Game and Wildlife Habitat

Activity quantity:  ☒ Acres ☐ Miles ☐ Feet ☐ Structures ☐ Wetlands

Project Site #2, if needed.

Project site:

Project site land manager  Legal :

or easement holder:

Private land owner  County:

(if applicable):

Activity (may choose more than one): ☐ Enhancement ☐ Restoration ☐ Acquisition

Predominant Habitat (choose one): ☐ Forest ☐ Prairie ☐ Wetland ☐ Fish, Game and Wildlife Habitat

Activity quantity:  ☐ Acres ☐ Miles ☐ Feet ☐ Structures ☐ Wetlands

Project Site #3, if needed. Use Additional Project Sites form if needed.

Project site:

Project site land manager  Legal :

or easement holder:

Private land owner  County:

(if applicable):

Activity (may choose more than one): ☐ Enhancement ☐ Restoration ☐ Acquisition

Predominant Habitat (choose one): ☐ Forest ☐ Prairie ☐ Wetland ☐ Fish, Game and Wildlife Habitat

Activity quantity:  ☐ Acres ☐ Miles ☐ Feet ☐ Structures ☐ Wetlands

**Project timeline:**

Time frame	Goal	Time frame	Goal
January 2010	Grant contract		
Feb - March 15 2010	appraisal and DNR appraisal review; environmental assessment; title review		
late March 2010	final agreement with landowner based on DNR reviewed and approved appraisal		
March 30, 2010	closing		
April - Sept 2010	signage of boundaries, parking lot		

**Project description and benefits (box will expand as typed into, not to be longer than 2 pages):**

Fee acquisition of 240 acres in the Tallgrass Aspen Parkland landscape (a.k.a. Aspen Parklands). This property is currently listed for sale with a local Realtor and is at immediate threat of non-conservation use. Development of this property would adversely impact the conservation values of this property, as well as make management on the adjacent Nature Conservancy land and Skull Lake WMA more difficult.

Protection of this property will have significant impact on conservation goals at the local level (final 19% of burn unit not in conservation ownership) and Skull Lake macrosite level (tract represents 4% of land in non-conservation status in the macrosite). The collaborative Tallgrass Aspen Parkland Conservation Plan (TNC, MN DNR, and other NGOs) ranked this tract highly because it is largely in native cover, the proximity to TNC and MN DNR lands and impact on fire management. The Conservancy owns the remainder of the section (400 acres) and abuts MN DNR lands to the west (Skull Lake WMA 7,010 acres). This tract is primarily covered by upland and wetland native plant communities. The Conservancy shares 6,700 feet of border with this tract. Conservation ownership will make management practices (primarily controlled burning and conservation grazing) more efficient for 400 acres of adjacent Conservancy land and an additional 600 acres of MN DNR WMA land while serving as habitat for mobile mammals such as elk, bear and wolves. It is also suitable habitat for any parkland species identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan that require sedge meadow, aspen woodland or upland plant communities, including Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, American Bittern, American Woodcock, Ovenbird, and Sharp-tailed Grouse.

The Tallgrass Aspen Parkland (TAP) comprises one of two very large blocks of native prairie identified as a Very High priority in The Nature Conservancy's Northern Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregional Plan. This plan, a collaboration of private conservation groups and state and federal agencies, spans portions of MN, ND, SD, IA, and Manitoba. The TAP represents the northernmost expression of the transition between tallgrass prairie and forest ecosystems. Intact areas are characterized by a mosaic of trembling aspen groves, prairie, sedge-dominated wet meadows, marshes, peatlands, and riparian areas. Fire historically shaped and reshaped the mosaic of woodland, open prairie, and shrubland on upland sites. Big bluestem often dominates drier upland areas, occurring with cordgrass, tufted hairgrass and northern reed grass. Shrub diversity can be quite high (greater than 25 species), with willow, rose, and hazelnut most often encountered. Sedge meadows often occupy low areas adjacent to big bluestem prairies, and are usually characterized by dense shrub cover (typically willow and bog birch), several sedge and rush species, and cordgrass. These meadows are often flooded for 2-6 weeks in the spring, and after heavy rains. The coarse soils of the Glacial Lake Agassiz beach ridges that wind through portions of the TAP support strings of oak savannah and xeric prairie.

Regarding the TAP, Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare – An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife notes: "the vast expanses of natural landscape in this province provide a spectacular setting for viewing sharp-tailed grouse, American elk, moose, greater prairie chickens, marbled godwits, bobolinks, and upland sandpipers. Large state and federal refuges provide homes for wetland wildlife like the sandhill crane, horned grebe, Franklin's gull, American white pelican, yellow rail, Forster's tern, trumpeter swan, and American bittern. Today, well over 60 percent of this landscape is in agriculture, mostly in the southern half. In the northern half, large areas have recently been cleared for farming. However some remnants of large contiguous patches of native plant communities, including wetlands, remain."

The plan goes on to note that "85 Species in Greatest Conservation Need [SGCN] are known or predicted to occur within the Aspen Parklands. These SGCN include 30 species that are federal or state endangered, threatened, or of special concern." 2 species are unique to that subsection. 32% of all mammal SGCN in the state are known or predicted to occur in the Aspen Parklands. Tomorrow's Habitat lists the township where this tract is located as having 51-100 validated records of SGCN. The four key Aspen Parkland habitat types identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan are all located on this tract – wet prairie, prairie, grassland, and brush prairie. P.233 in Tomorrow's Habitat shows the township within which this property is located as in the heart of the greatest concentration of large blocks of key habitats remaining in the Aspen Parklands.

The Conservancy owns two key parcels that lie between Skull Lake and Caribou WMAs in McKinley Township. This acquisition will increase the size of the Conservancy's preserve that lies adjacent to Skull Lake WMA and reduce the approximately two-mile private land gap between Skull Lake and Caribou WMAs. The south edge of the property

includes 2,640 feet adjacent to State Ditch #84 and lies about two miles upstream from the flood storage impoundment in Skull Lake WMA. The Two Rivers Watershed District made improvements to the Skull Lake impoundment in 2007 by replacing the former fixed water level dam with a weir that can be used to control water levels within the impoundment. Impoundment wetlands, covering about 1,050 acres, are characterized by nearly complete loss of original sedge meadow to invasive hybrid cattail, reed canary grass, and common reed. Changes in the dam and improvements in the State Ditch 84 watershed, however, suggest that habitat loss can now be reversed and wetlands improved in some areas. Ownership of this tract would add to the Conservancy's efforts in the watershed to mitigate the transport of sediment and agricultural nutrients into the ditch and impoundment. In addition, a feature important to consider in Skull Lake WMA is the unusually diverse and rare dry, sandy uplands west of the impoundment. Any improvement in the large wetland east within the impoundment will help re-establish the continuum of habitat within the WMA.

This proposal supplements existing efforts by The Nature Conservancy, MN Department of Natural Resources and other partners to conserve valuable wildlife habitat in the Tallgrass Aspen Parklands. Potential funding for this critical acquisition is complementary and additive to existing efforts to protect land. As a result, CPL funding for this project will provide a direct increase in total land protected in the area. It will not supplant existing funding sources.

The Nature Conservancy will manage this property as an addition to its Tallgrass Aspen Parklands properties. As such, the Conservancy will provide ongoing management to ensure that the property's conservation values and wildlife habitat are well managed. These management practices can include such things as controlled burns, conservation grazing with local producers, control of invasive species and mechanical treatments to improve habitat for wildlife. All of these practices have been used on the adjacent WMAs in the recent past and would be considered complementary to the stated habitat goals in the management plans for Skull Lake and Caribou WMAs. Approximately 40 acres of non-native cover will be restored to native vegetation using local ecotypes native to Minnesota. This will be done with non-grant funds. The property will be open to public hunting and fishing during open seasons. It will also be open to other forms on non-motorized public recreation throughout the year.

Typically, The Conservancy funds its ongoing management and stewardship of lands in large part through income from a stewardship endowment. This is a pooled fund for all of The Conservancy's properties in Minnesota. At the time of each acquisition, the Conservancy adds 20% of the fair market value of the property to the endowment. An annual draw of 5% of the corpus provides income for land management needs while ensuring the stability and modest long-term growth of the corpus (to allow for inflation). For this proposal, we have completed a project specific budget and estimate that an endowment of \$32,000 will provide the necessary annual management funding (\$1,600) based on a 5% draw. We propose to establish a distinct endowment fund for similarly funded LSOHC projects now and in the future.

The Nature Conservancy has a long track record of acquiring and managing conservation lands in Minnesota and of managing public grants. TNC currently owns and manages 72,325 acres in Minnesota. The Conservancy has the appropriate systems and departments in place to capably manage government funds. The Conservancy is subject annually to the federal A-133 audit and is deemed a low-risk recipient.

Acquisition of this tract will benefit not only management of adjacent Conservancy and MN DNR conservation lands, but serves as a key addition to our efforts to protect the watershed and improve on-site and downstream wetlands. Although the contribution is small from a regional perspective, keeping this tract out of agricultural production (which would be marginal anyway) will provide habitat improvement and help mitigate downstream flood potential by storing and slowing runoff. It also helps create a more continuous wildlife corridor between Skull Lake and Caribou WMAs.

Minnesota's Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan lists "Protect priority land habitats" as the top objective under the Critical Land Protection strategic area. The plan recommends "Focus protection on critical lands the SPP has identified by township (p.66)." Statewide habitat assessment maps in that plan support this area of Kittson County as among the top terrestrial habitat priorities in Minnesota (e.g. see especially page 53 as well as pp. 39-40, and 44). The plan goes on to recommend restoration of "ecoregion-appropriate, landscape-scale complexes of habitat centered on concentrations of existing remnant habitats with a broader goal of developing/maintaining conservation corridors between existing and restored habitats (p.66)." Further in the report, the plan recommends "Prioritization for acquisition, protection, and restoration of the natural resource base that supports outdoor recreation should focus on large, contiguous land areas.... (p.76)."

**Please provide the answers to the following questions. Boxes will expand as typed into.**

**1. For lands acquired in fee title that will be turned over to a public agency for long-term management:**

- a. Provide a description of the work necessary to bring the land up to agency standards and an estimate of the associated cost.

n/a - land will be owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy and open to public hunting and fishing during open seasons unless otherwise provided by state law.

- b. What short- and long-term work is required to manage the land you acquire?

n/a

**2. For enhancement/ restoration projects on public lands:**

- a. Who is/will be the long-term manager for the project site?

n/a

- b. What short- and long-term maintenance work is required to sustain the habitat work you will do?

n/a

- c. Who will complete this maintenance work, and how will it be funded?

n/a

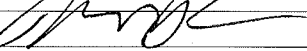
- d. Will the CPL funds supplant any existing funds?

n/a

As required by 2009 MN Session Law, Chapter 172 subd. 10 (8), "any agency or entity receiving an appropriation must, for any project funded in whole or in part with funds from the appropriation, give consideration to and **make timely written contact with the Minnesota Conservation Corps** for consideration of possible use of their services to contract for restoration and enhancement services". Contact MCC at [cplg@conservationcorps.org](mailto:cplg@conservationcorps.org), or email a copy of this form to the same address. For more information on costs, crew capabilities, etc., visit MCC's website at <http://www.conservationcorps.org/useacrew.html>.

**Signature:**

☒ I certify that I have read the Conservation Partners Legacy Grants Program **Request for Proposal, Program Manual** and other program documents, and have discussed this project with the appropriate public land manager, or private landowner and easement holder. I am authorized to apply for and manage these grant and match funds, and the project work by the organization or agency listed below. I have made timely written notification to MCC regarding my project.

Signature: 	Organization/ Agency: The Nature Conservancy
Title: Director of Habitat Protection	Date: 11/3/2009

**Please save this document to your computer or electronic storage device and attach this document as specified on the online submittal form when ready to apply. Contact CPL Grant Staff with any questions.**

## CPL Project Application Review and Approval Form

### REVIEWER INFORMATION

Land manager/ easement holder name:	Tom Landwehr - The Nature Conservancy Natural Heritate Review conducted by The Nature Conservancy using DNR data		
Title:	Assistant State Director	Date of meeting:	
Phone:	612-331-0705	Proposal ID #:	
Email:	tlandwehr@tnc.org	(assigned by agency, optional )	

### PROJECT INFORMATION:

Project Name:	Tallgrass Aspen Parkland Protection 09-001	Organization:	The Nature Conservancy
Contact Person:	Michael Pressman		
Email:	mpressman@tnc.org	Daytime Phone:	612-331-0706

Please check the appropriate boxes:

- ☒ I have read the application and discussed this proposed project with the above listed Organization Contact Person.
- ☐ For work on easements, the private landowner has been contacted and has given support and approval for this project.

### I have performed a Natural Heritage Database review and found:

- ☐ this project to have no features within one mile.
- ☒ this project to have features within one mile, but project is not likely to adversely affect those features. I have recommended the following minimization strategy:

This project will benefit Natural Heritage Database features within one mile by protecting habitat important to those features. Both individual species occurrences and native habitat occurrences were documented.

- ☐ this project is likely to adversely affect Natural Heritage features. I feel that this project is important and should be forwarded to DNR Ecological Resources staff for further review.

- ☐ I do not have access to the Natural Features database and will forward this completed form to DNR within 3 business days to [CPL Staff](#) at [LSCPLGrants.DNR@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:LSCPLGrants.DNR@dnr.state.mn.us) for review.

I have discussed what role my office will be expected to have in this project and find that the project, as described will require:

- ☐ minimal or no involvement from my office for completion.



- ☒ a commitment of involvement by staff that is reasonable and can be accomplished with current staffing levels and workload.
- ☐ an amount of staff involvement that cannot be committed during the project time period with current staffing levels. Unless additional staffing can be committed from other offices, Divisions or appropriate partners, I feel this project cannot be completed within the project timeline to our desired standards.

## CPL Project Application Review and Approval Form

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☒ I have discussed permits and applications that the applicant may be responsible for using the Working on DNR Lands and Working on Public Lands, or Working on Private Lands documents.

### Upon final review of this project:

- ☒ I find this project to be consistent with sound conservation science. This work will benefit area fish, game and wildlife by restoring, enhancing or protecting forests, wetlands, prairies and habitat and is consistent with the management or stewardship plan for this land. (APPROVAL)
- ☐ I find that this project does not follow the management or stewardship plan for this land and does not fit within the long range goals for this land at this time on the local level. (DECLINE)
- ☐ I find that this project should be sent up to a higher level within the agency for further review and decision. I have forwarded the Project Planning Form and this Review and Approval Form for further review to:

Name:		Phone:	
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☒ By checking this box and typing my name below I certify that I have met with the above applicant and discussed the proposed project and have provided feedback to the applicant.

Name:	Thomas Landwehr
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Comments:

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Name:	Thomas Landwehr	Phone:	612-331-0705
Title:	Assistant State Director	Email:	tlandwehr@tnc.org

Additional  
necessary):

Comments( including approval or denial, reasoning):

review (if

# Conservation Partners Legacy Grant

## Project Budget and Match Worksheet, Application Requirement

Project name: Tallgrass Aspen Parkland Protection 2009-001

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Organization contact person (Project Manager): Michael Pressman

Please complete all sections and be as detailed as possible for all descriptions under the Details sections. Limit entries in large tables to numbers only, **round to the nearest dollar**. Do not edit table categories, only enter values or text into the table. The tables will adjust to accommodate additional text in each box. If all categories are not needed, please leave those fields blank.

### BUDGET: amounts being requested

Budget Item	Fiscal Year 2010	Fiscal Year 2011	Fiscal Year 2012	Total
Personnel	\$3,588.00			\$3,588.00
Contracts	\$8,800.00			\$8,800.00
Grant Administration				
Administration/ Environmental Compliance				
Fee Acquisition	\$163,200.00			\$163,200.00
Easement Acquisition				
Easement Stewardship				
Equipment/Tools/Supplies	\$500.00			\$500.00
Travel				
Additional Budget items	\$32,000.00			\$32,000.00
Total	\$208,088.00			\$208,088.00

### DETAILS: detail the amounts listed in the above table.

#### Personnel Details:

Name	Title	Amount
Michael Pressman	Director of Habitat Protection	\$2,570.00
Sandi Edmunds	Conservation Data Manager	\$332.00
	Land Steward	\$283.00
	Field Steward	\$403.00

#### Contract Details:

Contractor Name	Contracted Work	Amount
to be determined	appraisal	\$1,800.00
EDR	Government Environmental Records Search	\$250.00
to be determined	parking lot development for public access	\$5,000.00
to be determined	design, construct preserve sign including funding source acknowledgement	\$1,750.00

**Grant Administration:**

Administrative Activity	Description/ Amount	Amount
	Because The Nature Conservancy has a federally approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, we cannot charge distinct administrative costs to this agreement. Accordingly, the state's disallowance of indirect costs prevents us from fully recovering the cost of staff time directly spent managing the grant.	

**Administration/ Environmental Compliance**

Activity	Description	Amount
	The only anticipated environmental compliance for this acquisition project is a pre-acquisition Environmental Hazards Assessment. Direct staff time costs for that element are including in the staff costs above.	

**Fee Acquisition/ Easement Acquisition/ Easement Stewardship Details:**

**Additional Budget Details (see Project Site Information Form for property details):**

Acquisition costs include purchase price, closing costs, title insurance, recording costs, etc.

Contract expenses include government database search for environmental hazards assessment, appraisal, installation of an approximately 50' x 50' parking lot, and design and construction of a preserve sign to welcome visitors and acknowledge the funding source (sign installation to be done by staff).

Equipment/Tools/Supplies - \$500 for gate.

Staff time is on acquisition related activities - negotiations, due diligence, etc., coordinating with contractor on parking lot installation, and initial site protection (posting signs, etc.).

Included under Additional Budget Items is \$32,000 to meet the legislative and LSOHC goals of ensuring adequate resources for ongoing property management. The Nature Conservancy seeks \$11,192 in LSHOC funding for this item and will contribute the balance (\$20,808) as our 10% grant match. We propose, subject to further internal approvals, to endow the ongoing management of the property by annualizing the necessary costs and developing an endowment with sufficient corpus such that a 5% annual draw (\$1,600 per year) will adequately cover ongoing management costs. This calculation is based on prescribed fire every 4 years and weed treatment annually. By using it as an endowment, the annual draw will not diminish the corpus, allowing for long-term management needs.

**Equipment/Tools/Supplies Details:**

Item	Use	Amount

**Travel Details:**

Miles	Purpose	Amount

**Additional Budget Items Details:**

The acquisition budget of \$163,200 includes an estimated \$1,200 in title insurance and closing costs.

\$5,000 under contracts is for installation of an approximately 50' x 50' parking lot to facilitate public use.

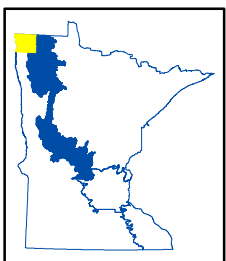
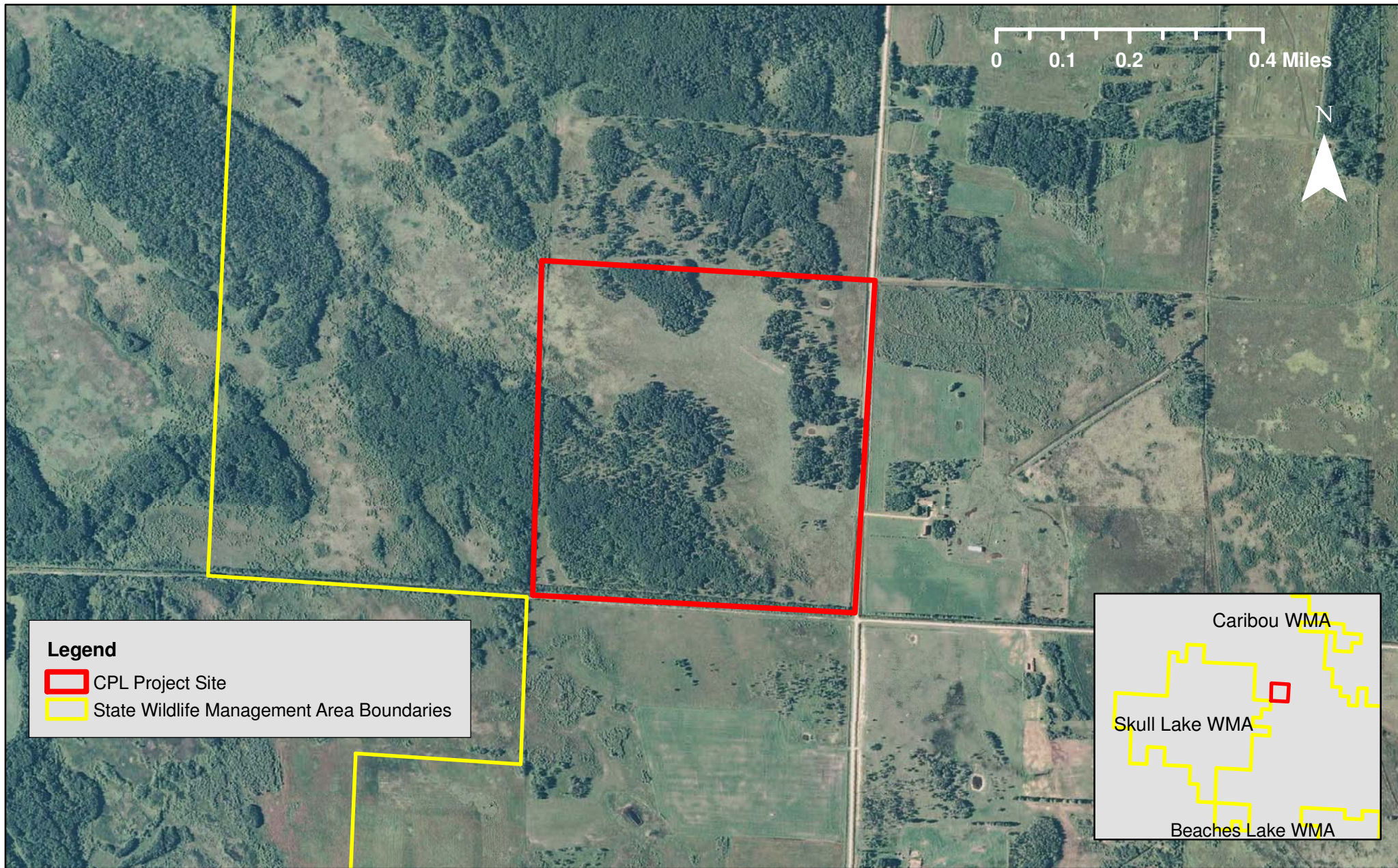
**MATCH:** Required 10% of total project funds, to be fulfilled by end of Fiscal Year 2012. Use provided rate sheet to determine unit rate and total value of in-kind services to be used as matching funds if applicable.

Source	Description	Units	Unit Rate	Total Value
The Nature Conservancy	Private Funds - 10% of project costs			\$20,809.00

**Matching description/ comments:** if needed

**The Nature Conservancy will use privately raised dollars or funds from eligible sources to match this grant. Funds are immediately available for this purpose. We propose to use our match to pay for most of the endowment necessary for long-term management of the property and seek a modest LSOHC contribution to complete that package.**

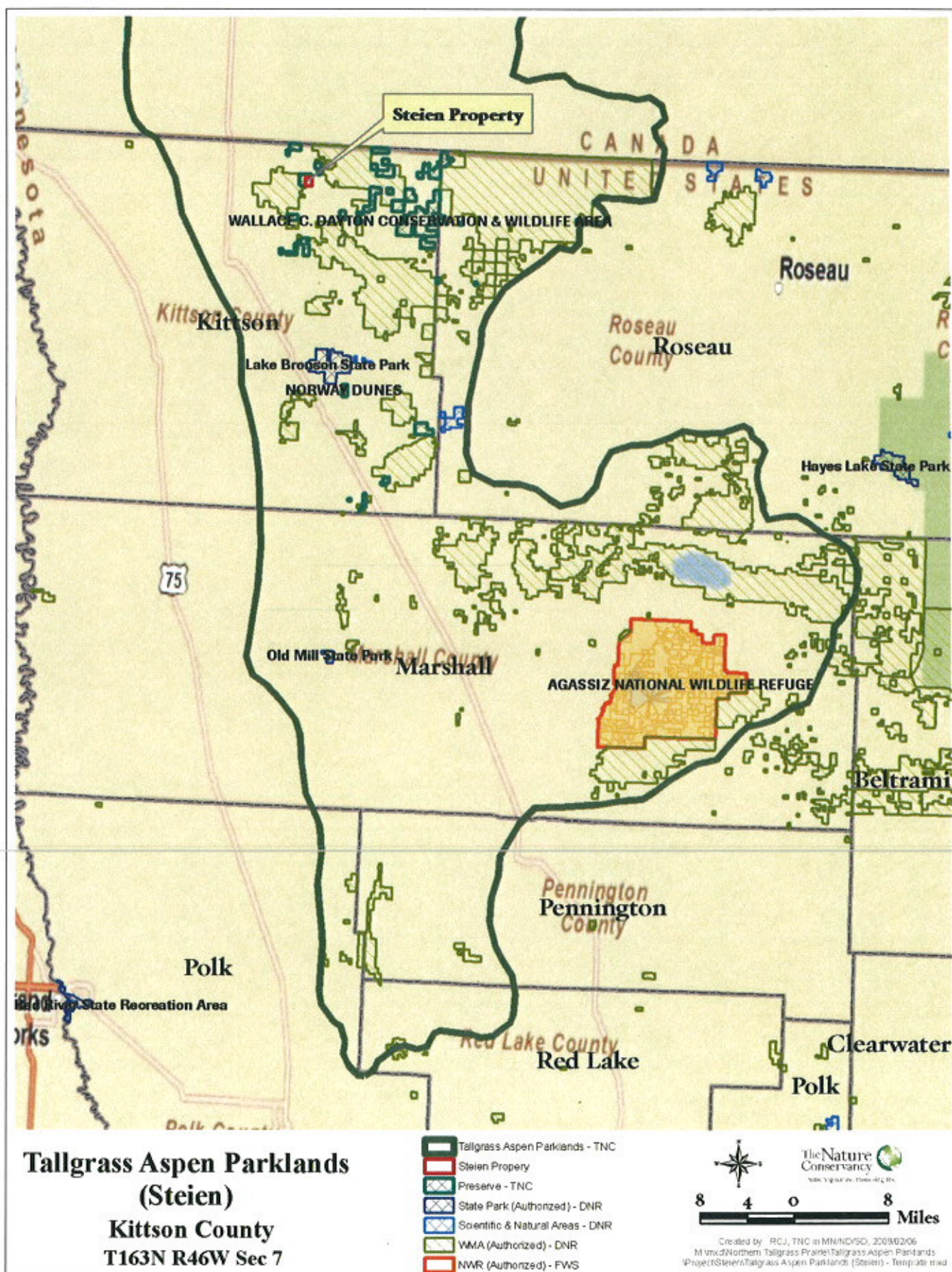




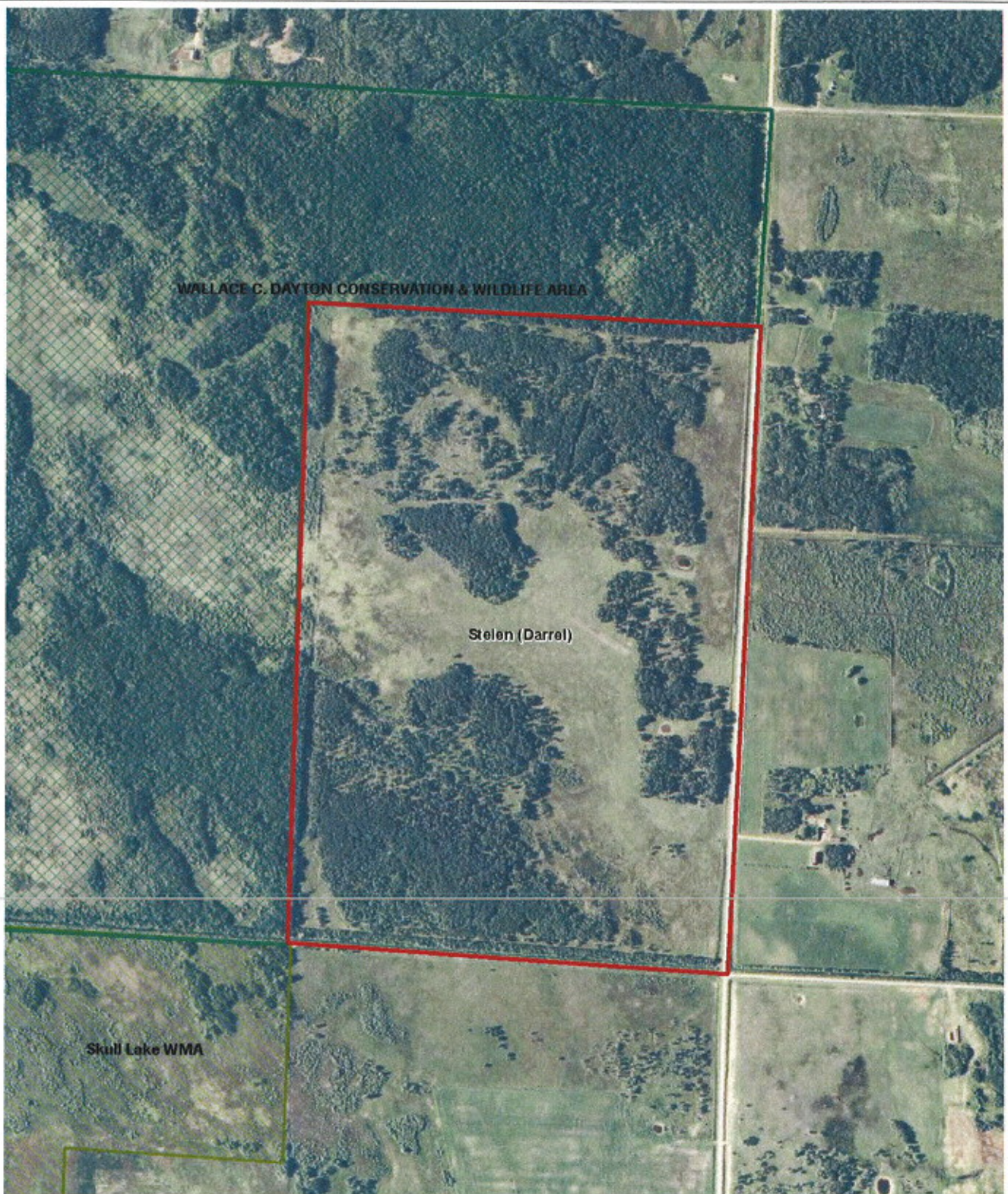
CPL100-069  
Tallgrass Aspen Parkland Protection 2009-001  
Kittson County, LSOHC Forest/Prairie Transition Planning Section











# **Tallgrass Aspen Parklands (Steien)**

**Kittson County  
T163N R46W Sec 7**

## **Legend**

- Steien Property
- Preserve - TNC
- WMA (Authorized) - DNR

Image: NAIP, 1-Meter Resolution  
Aerial Photo, Summer 2008



0.1 0.05 0 0.1 Miles

Created by: RCJ, TNC in MN/DNDSD, 2008/02/06  
M:\mxd\Northern Tallgrass Prairie\Tallgrass Aspen Parklands  
Project\Steien\Tallgrass Aspen Parklands (Steien) - Template.mxd