

To: Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

From: Chris McGrath, Associate Director of Protection, The Nature Conservancy

Date: December 23, 2024

RE: **Murray #8 (aka Agnes Johnson NTP NWR fee parcel) even-land exchange request:**

Murray #8 is a Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge (NTP NWR) fee acquisition funded by both NTP NWR ML18/Phase IX and ML19/Phase X. After the property closed we discovered a slight encroachment of a neighboring Concrete facility's storage bunker that sits at the base of a steep hillside. Moving the bunker would be problematic due to the need for excavation of the hillside if the bunker & its concrete foundation were to be moved, which would most likely cause additional erosion and probable damage to the untilled native prairie at the top of the hillside, requiring restoration time and expense that could be utilized elsewhere. TNC is proposing an even land exchange of 7,872 sq. ft. (.15 acre) with Schuur Concrete that will remove the encroachment and provide the following additional benefits:

- A net gain of native prairie: The surveyor estimated that the majority of the 7,872 sq. ft (.15 acre) that TNC would transfer to Schuur Concrete is eroded hillside and all of the 7,872 sq ft TNC would receive in the even land exchange is native prairie.
- A new property line that follows much more of the existing fence line as compared to the current property line.
- The new property line would result in additional space in between a Schuur Concrete building and the property line, providing more breathing room for the exterior maintenance needs of the building. Currently, the NE corner of this building is approximately 5 feet from the TNC property line. The new property line would result in approximately 16 feet between the building and the new property line.
- Schuur Concrete has been a good neighbor to TNC, allowing us to drive through their concrete plant to access the SW portion of Murray #8. They have also been involved in the Chandler MN community for many decades. The even land exchange would provide the best solution for maintaining the positive relationship we have with this neighbor and the community.



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