



## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

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### ML 2022 Request for Funding

#### General Information

**Date:** 06/21/2021

**Proposal Title:** Dakota County Habitat Protection/Restoration Phase VIII

**Funds Requested:** \$8,100,000

#### Manager Information

**Manager's Name:** Lisa West

**Title:** Senior Project Manager

**Organization:** Dakota County

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#### Location Information

**County Location(s):** Dakota.

#### Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Metro / Urban
- Southeast Forest

#### Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee
- Restore

#### Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie
- Forest
- Habitat

## Narrative

### Abstract

This project will restore approximately 1,100 acres of permanently protected habitats, and acquire approximately 570 acres of permanent conservation easements and/or fee title lands. Project sites include converting cultivated areas to wetlands in the southern two-thirds of the County, and various habitats, including forest, grassland, riparian areas, and other wetlands throughout the County. This initiative includes identified sites and flexibility for opportunities that will arise. This project will allow the County to continue its integrated comprehensive and successful land conservation efforts through its partnership with the LSOHC and others.

### Design and Scope of Work

Historic settlement, modern-day development, and agriculture have replaced, degraded, and fragmented natural resource systems throughout Dakota County. The project scope and scale encompass some of the best natural resource features found in the metropolitan region, across urban, suburban, and rural landscapes. A sound fiscal and prescriptive ecological systems approach to conservation, attempts to balance the interests, rights, and responsibilities of private landowners, with the public's concerns about water and habitat quality and protection.

In November 2020, the County Board approved a new Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County (Plan) that collectively identifies, coordinates, and prioritizes future land protection and management needs on public and private properties throughout the County. This Plan reflects one of five County Board goals of "a healthy environment with quality natural areas." Through its new Plan, the County continues to effectively work with a variety of agencies, jurisdictions, and organizations to implement land protection. Since 2002, the County approved plans and implemented programs to preserve natural areas and quality working land. The County developed conservation policy, project evaluation criteria, and practices to acquire, monitor, and administer 118 conservation easements, totaling 9,694 acres, and assist other public entities in acquiring 22 properties totaling 2,018 acres, for more than 11,700 total acres permanently protected. The new Plan identifies over 75,000 acres of important conservation lands within 24 preliminary Conservation Focus Areas (CFAs), of which 32,500 acres are already protected. The CFAs encompass a wide variety of habitats throughout the County, including 28 specific native communities, with 25 Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Land outside the CFAs is also eligible for conservation, if it meets certain criteria.

All permanent easements require Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMPs) that reflect existing ecosystem health and recommend potential restoration management strategies, including workplans and budgets. Initial implementation is also required, using an adopted public-private funding formula that includes a maintenance component. A Natural Resource Management Agreement (MA) is signed by the landowner and County, identifying NRMP priorities, activities, responsibilities, shared costs, and schedules. The proposed habitat restoration and enhancement projects in this funding request are based on these workplans. This project has direct benefits to fish, game, and wildlife, beyond increased and interconnected habitat. The Plan introduces new tools to measure restoration success through the Five-Star Ecological Recovery Reference System Attributes, Goals and Measures, and an adapted Ecological Recovery Wheel that can be used to visually depict the restorative status of a site.

The proposed and anticipated acquisition projects involve riparian areas along the Minnesota, Mississippi, and Cannon rivers (including Dutch, Mud, Chub, Darden and Pine Creeks, and Trout Brook) and Vermillion River (including North, Middle and South Creeks, the South Branch and tributaries), and shoreland along Chub and Marcott lakes. Additional habitat focuses include woodlands, wetlands, hydric soil areas, and unique landscape features and ecosystems.

Environmental Audits and/or Phase I Assessments are completed for all projects, resulting in waste removal, well sealing, and septic system upgrades, if needed, as program participation conditions. Baseline Property Reports

### **How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species?**

The proposal integrates a number of state and regional County plans, involving different aspects of habitat and wildlife. In 2017, the County Board approved a Natural Resource Management System Plan (NRMSP) for all regional parks, regional greenways and conservation easements located throughout the County. Vegetation, water, and wildlife were the three main elements for each land type. The NRMSP identified rare and endangered species, and species of greatest conservation need throughout the County, based on different data sources. The NRMSP includes different Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) templates of each property type that will provide much more detail for individual sites that typically include a variety of habitat and plant community types. The new Land Conservation Plan identifies over 42,300 acres of unprotected land within 24 preliminary Conservation Focus Areas (CFAs), including more than 14,000 acres in 90 potential wetland restoration basins. The CFAs encompass a wide variety of habitats throughout the County, including 28 specific native communities and 25 Species of Greatest Conservation Need. These habitats/native communities and associated species include, but are not limited to: Forest - northern long-eared bat, American woodcock, oven bird, rose-breasted grosbeak, least flycatcher, red-shouldered hawk; Prairies and Grasslands- badger, Franklin's ground squirrel, prairie vole, loggerhead shrike, eastern meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow and regal fritillary; Lakes, Ponds and Rivers- common snapping turtle and smooth soft shell turtle; Wetlands- sedge wren, sand hill crane, Blanding's turtle, and dragonflies. The County continues to assemble baseline data and will prioritize the habitats preferred by these species for acquisition, restoration and enhancement activities.

### **What is the degree of timing/opportunistic urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible?**

Dakota County works with willing sellers and wants to continue the momentum of its ongoing conservation programs, with an increased focus on natural resource management. The County's new Land Conservation Plan includes a valuable opportunity to work even more collaboratively with other public entities, specifically through the City County Conservation Collaborative. Staff continues to see marginal agricultural land converted to row crops and installation of more drain tile. Creating larger scale restoration areas within the rural agricultural landscape can provide multiple public benefits. Since the recent recession, residential development is increasing significantly and natural areas are attractive areas for new development. Through its programs, the County can expand protected complexes and close habitat gaps between previously protected lands within multipurpose corridors. The wetland restoration project within the Minnesota River Valley, involving three public landowners, can serve as an important model for working with multiple public entities.

### **Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:**

There was significant overlap between the County Biological Survey, the 2002 Farmland and Natural Area Protection Plan, and the Metro Conservation Corridors in identifying habitat complexes and key corridors. Based on updated land cover mapping, DNR rare species data, the Vermillion Corridor Plan, new SNA analysis, previously protected areas, County and local comprehensive plans, watershed plans, and park and greenway plans, the County has refined its priority natural areas and the Metro Conservation Corridor Focus Areas. Using Dakota County's premier Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools and expertise, County staff can further prioritize areas where important protection and improvement opportunities exist, using other available data layers, such as ownership parcels, soils, aspect, historical photography, and LiDAR. Project selection criteria have been revised to reflect this refined vision, and further refinements will occur as up-to-date information and data are collected. The County's

new Land Conservation Plan reflects the most current data and information available and identifies 24 primary Conservation Focus Areas and several additional sub-areas, based on existing water resources, other natural habitats and existing protected land where the County plans to target resources.

In a substantial portion of the County, original natural landscapes were significantly altered through agriculture. Extensive wetland areas were drained, filled, and tilled. In 2018, County staff consulted with BWSR and DNR staff to use new LiDAR-based GIS tools to target wetland restoration projects. The tools require a hydrologically-conditioned digital elevation model (DEM) that was previously unavailable within the County. Dakota County Environmental Resources staff created a “base-level” hydrologically-conditioned DEM and ran a series of ArcGIS tools developed by the DNR/BWSR. The GIS tools predicted hydric soils and wetlands via the Compound Topographic Index, smoothed ditches, and created ditch plugs in the landscape to generate storage areas. The resulting areas were inventoried and prioritized based on area (acres) and volume (acre-feet). Then, a GIS dataset of known cultivated hydric soils, developed by the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District was used to refine the inventory. Finally, a map of restoration sites and list of property owners in 4,502 acres was developed for restoration program implementation.

### **Which two sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are most applicable to this project?**

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds

### **Which two other plans are addressed in this proposal?**

- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

### **Describe how your program will advance the indicators identified in the plans selected:**

This proposal is especially well-aligned with Minnesota's WMA Acquisition - The Next 50 Years plan. The County successfully partnered with the DNR on several projects, including: the Vermillion River WMA, Vermillion Highlands Research, Recreation and WMA, donated Spring Lake Islands WMA, and Gores Pool WMA addition. With OH funding assistance, the County purchased and helped restore 212 acres of historic woodland habitat in the newly created Hampton Woods WMA, which was transferred to the DNR for ownership and management. The WMAs are open to public hunting. The County's WMA partnerships further the plan goals for Ecological Section 6, by acquiring plan-identified, priority habitat areas, open to hunting, in close proximity to the metropolitan area. This proposal aligns well with the OHF: A 25 Year Framework plan by furthering the priority actions identified for the state Metropolitan Urbanizing and Southeast Forest Areas, focusing on protecting, enhancing and restoring priority area habitats.

### **Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?**

#### **Metro / Urban**

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

#### **Southeast Forest**

- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

**Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:**

Programs in Metropolitan Urbanizing region:

Dakota County's goal is a network of natural land and riparian habitats that will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need. The County developed an integrated, long-term habitat protection system involving public and private lands to provide multiple public benefits. Enlarging and improving existing protected habitat complexes and providing key connections will continue to be a focus. The County will prioritize its land protection and improvement efforts, in part, based on wildlife species, by devoting staff time and resources to create baseline wildlife and habitat quality information and monitor indicator and other species seasonally/annually to determine if our efforts are producing the desired results over time and to adapt or re-prioritize as appropriate.

Programs in Southeast Forest Region:

Dakota County's goal is healthier populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species, as well as more common species. A portion of the County is included in this region. The County will prioritize its land protection and improvement efforts, in part, based on priority wildlife species. The County will devote staff time and resources to create baseline wildlife and habitat quality information and monitor indicator and other species seasonally/annually to determine if our efforts are producing the desired results over time and to adapt or re-prioritize as appropriate.

**What other fund may contribute to this proposal?**

- Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Parks and Trails Fund

**Does this proposal include leveraged funding?**

Yes

**Explain the leverage:**

It is Dakota County's intention to provide leverage, not only in the form of cash as a grant match, but also all County staff time and resources as an in-kind contribution to the work performed to expend State grant and County grant-match funding. Other government and non-profit entity/organization partnership funding will be sought whenever available and appropriate. Additionally, landowner donations of acquisition value and/or cash and in-kind contributions toward habitat restoration and management are anticipated.

**Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.**

Dakota County's request for funding is not supplanting, nor is it a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund.

**Non-OHF Appropriations**

Year	Source	Amount
ML 2010	Dakota County	\$1,855,000
ML 2012	Dakota County	\$153,400
ML 2013	Dakota County	\$2,222,200
ML 2014	Dakota County	\$480,700

## How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

The Dakota County Board has maintained a remarkable, 18-year commitment to land conservation, and established "a healthy environment and quality natural areas" as one of four priority goals. Adopting a new 2020 Land Conservation Plan, maintaining dedicated natural resource staff, reorganizing departments to effectively achieve land conservation goals, approving capital improvement program budgets, and providing an operating budget for annual monitoring, are further evidence that the County has the interest, capacity and commitment to sustain this work. The County's Natural Resource Management System Plan commits to maintaining areas after restoration and enhancement investments are made.

Approximately half the land protection/restoration work will occur on public lands and half on private lands, all designed to achieve maximum, fiscally efficient, conservation benefits. Relationship building, developing and implementing NRMPs and Management Agreements, and annual monitoring, provide opportunities to share updated natural resource information and best management practices with landowners, and achieve a higher likelihood of increased private stewardship. The Natural Resource Management System Plan, using a public/private cost-share formula, is further testament to this commitment. This comprehensive wildlife habitat and water quality approach on public and private lands provides the best opportunity to effectively protect and improve these community assets.

### Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2022	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years
2023	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years
2024	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects and use adaptive management for future restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years
2025	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years
2026	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years



### Identify indicator species and associated quantities this habitat will typically support:

Acquisition and restoration sites consist of a variety of habitat and community types, including: 1) prairie/savanna, 2) oak woodland, 3) floodplain/lowland forest, 4) wetlands (large river backwaters to small ephemeral pools), and 5) Shoreline. Some indicator species, with typical associated quantities for each habitat type, are as follows:

1) Monarch butterfly (20-50 per acre), regal fritillary (10-20 per acre), plains pocket gopher (15 per acre), Franklin's ground squirrel (4-8 per acre), prairie vole (10-30 per acre), eastern meadowlark (2 per 5 acres), and bobolink (6 per acres)

2) Rusty-patched bumble bee (20-100 per acre), American racer (4-8 per acre), grey fox (2-3 per square mile), ovenbird (2 per 3 acres), and brown thrasher (2 per 3 acres)

3) Blue-spotted salamander (10-20 per acre), wood turtle (2-4 per acre), northern long-eared bat (50-300 per acre), and red-shouldered hawk (2 per square mile)

4) Blanding's turtle (2-4 per acre), green frog (20-50 per acre), yellow-headed blackbird (10-20 per acre), and sedge wren (4-6 per acre); and

5) Tiger beetles (50-100 per acre), spiny softshell turtle (10-20 per acre), northern map turtle (5-10 per acre).

In addition to these, the western Lake Byllesby delta is used by many migrant shore birds during the spring and fall. This has been designated as an Audubon Important Bird Area and includes the following species: common tern, trumpeter swan, piping plover, whimbrel, Wilson's phalarope, Dunlin, ruddy turnstone, white-rumped sandpiper, American avocet, Franklin's gull, Forster's tern, and marbled godwit.

### How will the program directly involve, engage, and benefit BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and diverse communities:

Dakota County's new Land Conservation Plan includes goals, strategies and tactics designed to increase and enhance public involvement in natural resource protection and management and enhanced recreational access to conservation land. The new project eligibility and scoring criteria, developed to evaluate Land Conservation Program project applications, includes incentives when a project will provide natural habitat and open space opportunities for underserved communities that include BIPOC. Distance from a qualified census tract will be used to determine the project score for this factor.

### Activity Details

#### Requirements

**If funded, this proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?**

Yes

**Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought\*\* prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**

No

#### **Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:**

The County has excellent working relationships with its' cities and townships. Coordination takes place for each project with the respective jurisdiction. However, the County Board has historically not required jurisdictional approval if a private landowner desires to convey an easement to the County.

The new Land Conservation Plan establishes a City County Conservation Collaborative that will enhance communication and partnership opportunities with cities. The new Plan also enhances coordination with Townships, by including township official in outreach mailings, notifying townships of landowner responses, project pre-applications and County staff-recommended projects in each township, etc. County Board approval is ultimately sought for each acquisition.

**Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?**

Yes

**Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?**

Yes

**Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?**

Yes

**Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15?**

Yes

**Where does the activity take place?**

- WMA
- SNA
- AMA
- Permanently Protected Conservation Easements
- County/Municipal
- Public Waters

## Land Use

**Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program?**

Yes

**Explain what will be planted:**

There might be situations where portions of the property may be cultivated. As part of a negotiated sale, the owner may be allowed to continue cultivating the same land for a short, defined, period of time as defined and allowed in the Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP). In other situations, it may be advantageous to allow a final soybean crop, which can enhance the restoration process by reducing weeds and residue. Also, in some NRMP-approved situations, food plots for wildlife are allowed within a natural area easement.

**Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?**

Yes

**Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:**

Private land with easements may be open for hunting and fishing, at the discretion of the landowner, but are subject to local ordinances.

Many public lands are also open for hunting and fishing, but may also be subject to local ordinances.

**Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?**

Yes

**Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:**

Land protected through partial OH funding may be open to hunting and fishing, as appropriate, based on whether or not it remains in private ownership or becomes public land. Individual landowner consent would be required on private lands. In all cases, the types of hunting (i.e., bow or firearm) and fishing will be allowed only per local ordinances.



**Will the eased land be open for public use?**

Yes

**Describe the expected public use:**

The County has acquired some easements that are open for limited public use. In all cases, the decision to allow public use is determined by the landowner, and is often granted to responsible, conservation-minded and purposed groups and individuals.

**Are there currently trails or roads on any of the proposed acquisitions?**

Yes

**Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:**

In some cases there are existing soft-surface trails and non paved roads used for personal recreation or to access portions of the property for various purposes.

Continued use is allowed, as defined by the easement and the NRMP, provided that such use does not compromise the conservation intent of the easement or the NRMP, or damage or degrade the easement area.

**Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition?**

Yes

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**

Existing soft-surface roads or trails may be retained, improved, removed or relocated. The new underlying fee owner of public land will be responsible for all maintenance and as included in a jointly developed NRMP. On easement land, the underlying fee owner is responsible for maintenance; but, any changes to the existing trails or roads are subject to review and approval by the County. Review of trails and roads are part of the County's annual monitoring process.

**Will new trails or roads be developed or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?**

Yes

**Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:**

It is possible that some acquisition projects may result in the creation of new, soft-surface trails for low-impact recreational use by landowners and/or allowed guests, and in part, to assist in access for natural resource restoration, management and ongoing maintenance.

**How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?**

The landowner will be responsible for all maintenance. A jointly developed NRMP will determine any changes to trails and roads. Review of trails and roads are part of the County's annual monitoring process.

**Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this proposal's funding and availability?**

Yes

**Other OHF Appropriation Awards**

**Have you received OHF dollars in the past through LSOHC?**

Yes

**Timeline**

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Easement or Fee Title Acquisition	June 30, 2026



**Budget**

**Totals**

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	\$700,000	Dakota County	\$700,000
Contracts	\$3,300,000	\$660,000	Dakota County and cities in the County	\$3,960,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	Dakota County	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$2,800,000	\$500,000	Dakota County	\$3,300,000
Easement Acquisition	\$2,000,000	\$460,000	Dakota County	\$2,460,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$8,100,000</b>	<b>\$2,320,000</b>	-	<b>\$10,420,000</b>

**Personnel**

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Land Acquisition/Attorney/Survey/Etc.	2.5	4.0	-	\$700,000	Dakota County	\$700,000

**Amount of Request:** \$8,100,000

**Amount of Leverage:** \$2,320,000

**Leverage as a percent of the Request:** 28.64%

**DSS + Personnel:** -

**As a % of the total request:** 0.0%

**Easement Stewardship:** -

**As a % of the Easement Acquisition:** -

**Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:**

The County Board authorized between 25 and 30 percent match of OHF, with County grant-match funds. The County is also contributing all current County staff time, equivalent to approximately 2.5 FTEs over four years, totaling at least \$700,000 in value. Landowner and City contributions are also expected.

**Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?**

Yes

**If the project received 70% of the requested funding**

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

The scaling may not proportionately reduce acres and activities, because with a voluntary program, County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to

completion. If this proposal is scaled back, County staff can only anticipate lower acreages and lesser activities.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

The scaling may not proportionately reduce personnel and DDS expenses, because with a voluntary program, County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. It's possible that many smaller projects could take the place of fewer larger projects.

**If the project received 50% of the requested funding**

**Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

The scaling may not proportionately reduce acres and activities, because with a voluntary program, County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. If this proposal is scaled back, County staff can only anticipate lower acreages and lesser activities.

**Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?**

The scaling may not proportionately reduce personnel and DDS expenses, because with a voluntary program, County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. It's possible that many smaller projects could take the place of fewer larger projects.

**Contracts**

**What is included in the contracts line?**

All restoration work on permanently protected land for which the County contracts with outside vendors.

**Fee Acquisition**

**What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?**

The County anticipates between 1 and 3 fee title acquisitions. However, this number could change if unanticipated opportunities arise during this grant period.

**Federal Funds**

**Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?**

No

## Output Tables

### Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	200	100	200	600	1,100
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	120	120
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	450	450
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>1,670</b>

### Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	\$600,000	\$300,000	\$600,000	\$1,800,000	\$3,300,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Protect in Easement	\$640,000	-	-	\$2,160,000	\$2,800,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,240,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>	<b>\$5,960,000</b>	<b>\$8,100,000</b>

### Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	1,070	0	30	0	0	1,100
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	120	0	0	0	0	120
Protect in Easement	440	0	10	0	0	450
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,630</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,670</b>

### Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	\$3,200,000	-	\$100,000	-	-	\$3,300,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	\$2,000,000	-	-	-	-	\$2,000,000
Protect in Easement	\$2,600,000	-	\$200,000	-	-	\$2,800,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,800,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$8,100,000</b>

### Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	\$16,666
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	\$4,800
Enhance	-	-	-	-

### Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	\$2,990	-	\$3,333	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State	\$16,666	-	-	-	-

PILT Liability					
Protect in Easement	\$5,909	-	\$20,000	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

## Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

5

## Outcomes

### Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *The County developed an integrated, long-term habitat protection system involving public and private lands to provide multiple public benefits. Enlarging and improving existing protected habitat complexes and providing key connections will continue to be a focus, with protected acres and shoreline as success indicators. The County will prioritize land protection and improvement efforts, in part, based on wildlife species by devoting staff time and resources to create baseline wildlife and habitat quality information and monitoring indicator and other species seasonally/annually to determine if our efforts are producing the desired results over time and to adapt or re-prioritize as appropriate.*

### Programs in southeast forest region:

- Healthier populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species ~ *A small portion of the County is included in this region. Enlarging and improving existing protected habitat complexes and providing key connections will continue to be a focus, with protected acres and shoreline as success indicators. The County will prioritize its land protection and improvement efforts, in part, based on priority wildlife species. It will devote staff time and resources to create baseline wildlife and habitat quality information and monitoring indicator and other species seasonally/annually to determine if our efforts are producing the desired results over time and to adapt or re-prioritize as appropriate.*



## Parcels

### Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes](#)

#### Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

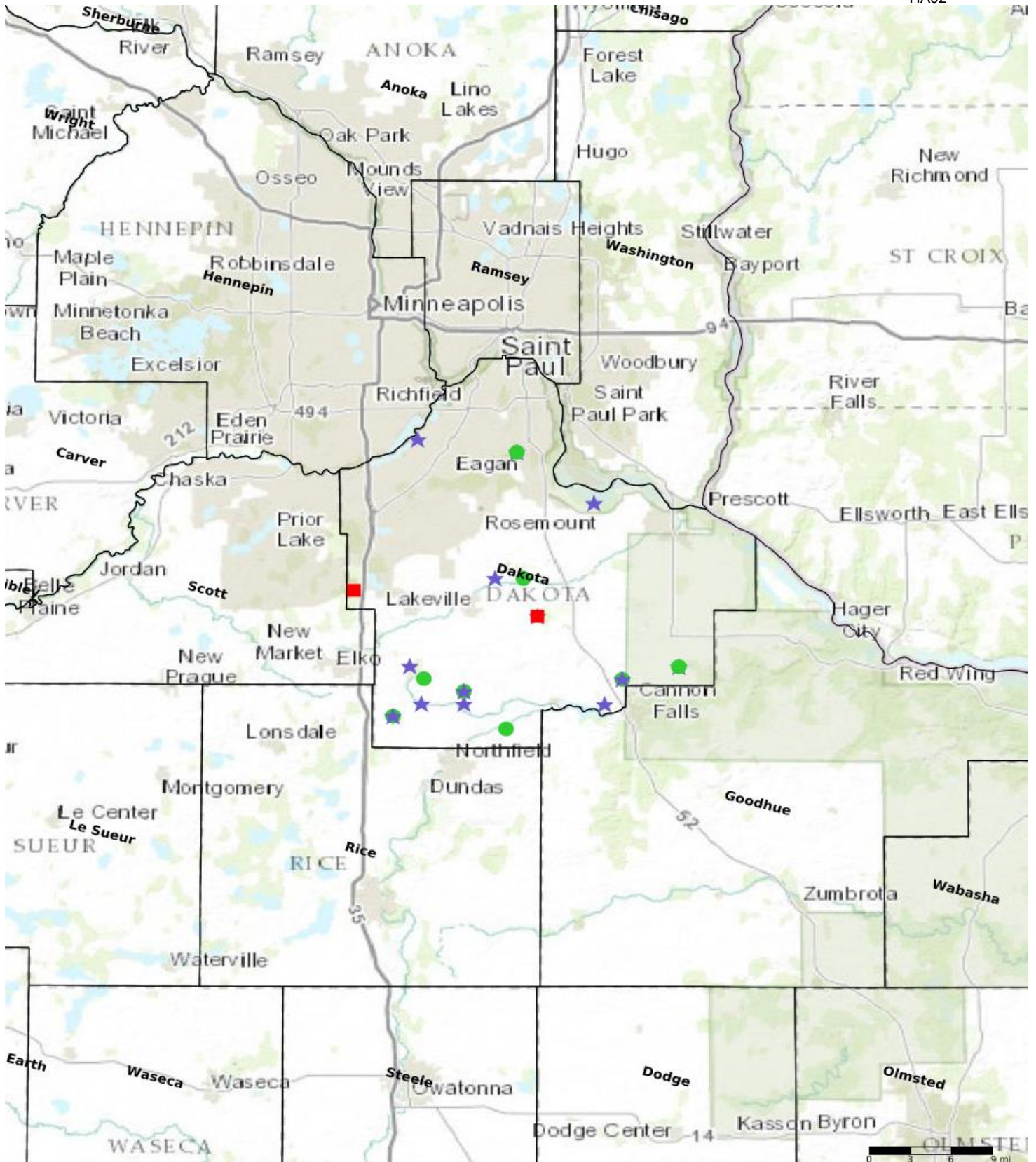
Relative to acquisition parcels, the County provides annual public notices to solicit pre-applications from willing landowners. Targeted mailings will be sent to at least six of the new Conservation Focus Areas identified in the new Land Conservation Plan (Plan). Other projects are identified through adopted park or greenway master plans. Applications are evaluated for eligibility. Eligible applicants meet with County staff to discuss the land conservation program in detail. Final applications are submitted for evaluation, scoring and ranking against other applications, and recommendations for continued consideration. New County criteria were developed to reflect the new Plan and will be used to score projects based on location, natural resource components, financial considerations, commitment to stewardship, and ongoing habitat restoration and management. Recommended projects are appraised to determine easement and/or fee title value. Accepted offers from the County to purchase easements or fee title result in title work, surveys, legal description creation, and preparing jointly developed Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMPs) and baseline Property Reports for each easement project. Easement NRMPs are implemented through jointly developed Natural Resource Management Agreements between the County and the landowner that establish work plan responsibilities, mutual contributions toward restoration, and ongoing maintenance responsibilities. Relative to restoration parcels, County staff work with landowners and other partners most interested in restoring and enhancing natural resources on their property, and also identify restoration activities where significant need is apparent or sensitive natural resources are located.

### Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Chub Creek	Dakota	11219207	60	\$150,000	Yes
Chub Lake	Dakota	11320228	60	\$150,000	Yes
Spring Lake Park Reserve	Dakota	11518222	300	\$750,000	Yes
Hampton Woods	Dakota	11319201	60	\$150,000	Yes
Lake Byllesby	Dakota	11218211	40	\$100,000	Yes
Vermillion River - South Branch	Dakota	11220217	20	\$50,000	Yes
Marcott Lakes	Dakota	02722220	30	\$75,000	Yes
City County Conservation Collaborative	Dakota	02723218	100	\$320,000	Yes
Trout Brook	Dakota	11317227	10	\$25,000	Yes
Vermillion River	Dakota	11419221	30	\$75,000	Yes
Wetland Restoration - Greenvale	Dakota	11220210	120	\$540,000	Yes
Wetland Restoration - Hampton	Dakota	11318236	60	\$270,000	Yes
Wetland Restoration - Waterford	Dakota	11219206	60	\$270,000	Yes

### Protect Parcels

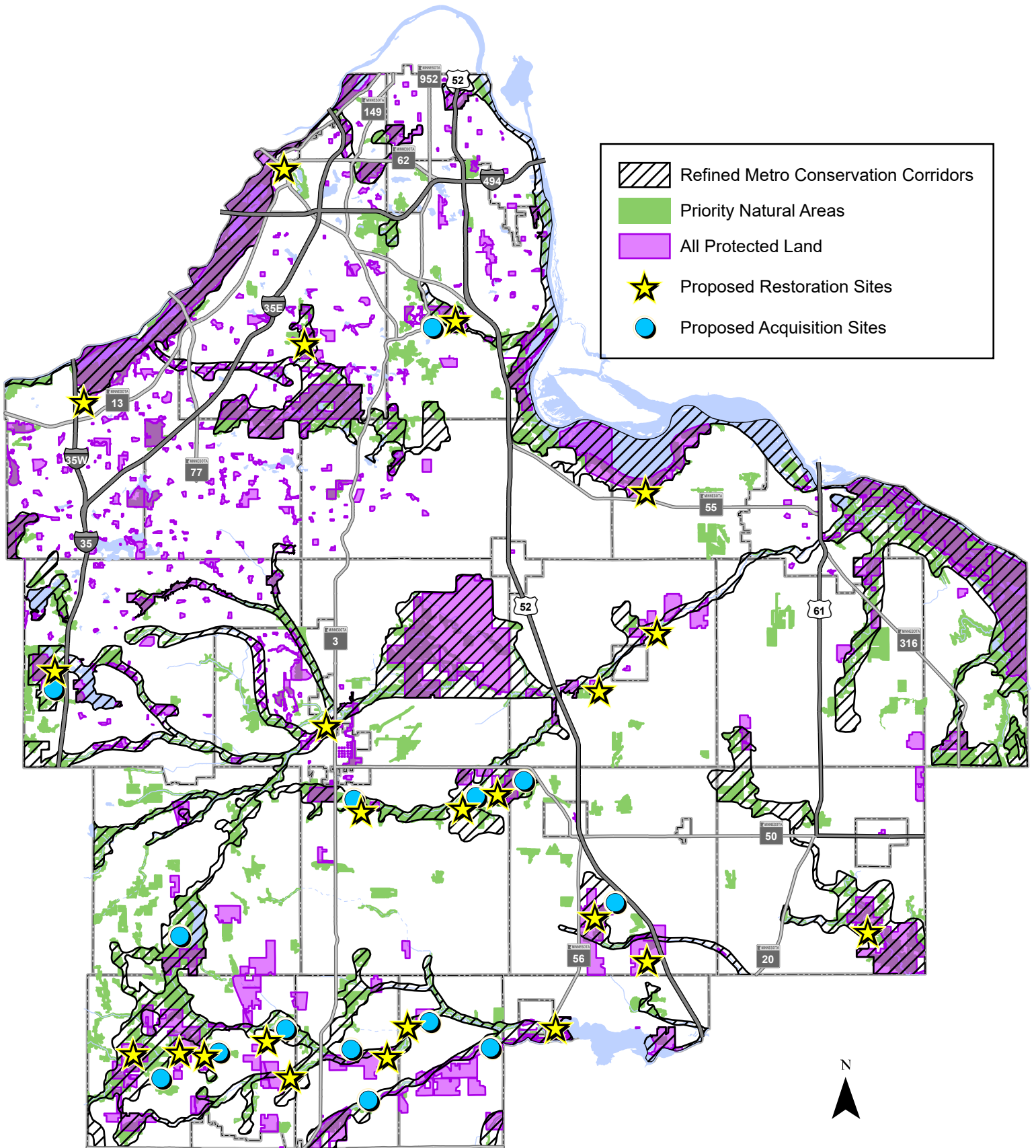
Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Cannon River	Dakota	11219222	30	\$150,000	No
Lakeville	Dakota	11421226	20	\$1,120,000	No
Wetland Restoration - Greenvale	Dakota	11220217	150	\$1,080,000	No
Wetland Restoration - Hampton	Dakota	11318236	80	\$600,000	No
Wetland Restoration - Waterford	Dakota	11219206	80	\$600,000	No
Hampton Woods	Dakota	11319201	20	\$70,000	No
Chub Lake	Dakota	11320234	60	\$260,000	No
Marcott Lakes	Dakota	02722220	10	\$400,000	No
Chub Creek	Dakota	11317227	60	\$260,000	No
Vermillion River - South Branch	Dakota	11419223	60	\$260,000	No



- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✕ Enhance
- + Other

**Parcel Map**  
**Dakota County Habitat Protection/Restoration**  
**Phase VIII**  
**(Data Generated From Parcel List)**

# Dakota County - Acquisition and Restoration General Locations



Note: The mapped locations are currently anticipated projects or are generally located within larger Conservation Focus Areas. Other locations are anticipated as new project applications are submitted through the voluntary, Dakota County Land Conservation Program.

0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles



# Dakota County Natural Area Protection Eligibility & Scoring Criteria

## Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Natural areas are lands with high quality natural resources or lands with the potential for restoring natural features. Natural areas with at least one of the following significant natural characteristics will be eligible:

- Is ecologically significant
- Provides important wildlife habitat
- Is adjacent to a river, lake or stream
- Provides environmental benefits such as water quality protection or flood control

The County's Priority Natural Areas (PNAs) map (see attached Map A), identifies areas that are the highest priority for protection. To be eligible, a natural area must be identified on the map, or provide evidence that the property has at least one of the significant natural characteristics listed above, or has restoration potential.

*Projects with unique features, circumstances (such as threat of immediate development), or are in priority locations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The County Board will determine eligibility for these projects.*

*Priority Natural Areas, Natural Area Conservation Zones and Buffer Corridors were all drawn using the best available natural resources and land cover data. After a site visit, the program administrator may adjust these boundaries for the purposes of scoring the project based on existing conditions and new data.*

<b>Natural Area Scoring Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
<p><b>I. Location</b></p> <p>Intent: Protect and connect contiguous, high quality natural areas</p>	<b>215</b>
<p><b>A. Priority Natural Areas</b></p> <p>The highest quality natural areas remaining in the County have been identified using a variety of criteria including ecological quality, size and location. Land with these features is considered the highest priority for protection (see attached Map A). Points are awarded based on the percentage of project acreage within a Priority Natural Area.</p> <p><i>Example: 18 acres of a 40-acre project is within a Priority Natural Area</i>  <math>45\% \times 50 = 22.5 \text{ points}</math></p>	<b>0 to 50</b>
<p><b>B. Open Space Corridors</b></p> <p>The County has identified corridors along streams, rivers and lakes (generally 660 feet from the waterway) as a high priority for protecting water quality, wildlife habitat and open space. These corridors include surface water, existing natural areas and potential restoration sites such as new buffer areas. Points are awarded based on the percentage of project acreage within the corridor.</p> <p><i>Example: 18 acres of a 40-acre project are within a Open Space Corridor and adjacent to a stream</i>  <math>45\% \times 40 = 18 \text{ points}</math></p>	<b>0 to 40</b>
<p><b>C. Natural Area Conservation Zones</b></p> <p>The County has identified natural area conservation zones to protect and connect the Priority Natural Areas and other protected land (see attached Map A). Points are awarded based on the percentage of project acreage within the Natural Area Conservation Zone.</p> <p><i>Example: 18 acres of a 40-acre project is within a Natural Area Conservation Zone.</i>  <math>45\% \times 40 = 18 \text{ points}</math></p>	<b>0 to 40</b>
<p><b>D. Non-riparian Greenways</b></p> <p>Greenways can provide multiple benefits such as ecological services, habitat and recreation, within a single corridor. The County, together with cities and townships, has developed a network of existing and potential regional and local greenways. Points are awarded based on the percentage of project acreage within the area that could be part of an identified greenway.</p> <p><i>Example: 18 acres of a 40-acre project is within a Greenway.</i>  <math>45\% \times 30 = 13.5 \text{ points}</math></p>	<b>0 to 30</b>

<p><b>E. Water Adjacency</b></p> <p>Projects that are directly adjacent to lakes, streams or rivers have unique opportunities to provide multiple benefits (resource protection, water quality, and habitat,) and therefore are prioritized by the County. If a project is directly adjacent to a waterway, 15 points are awarded. Additional points are awarded based on the length of shoreline (in the case of lakes) or length of waterway centerline (in the case of streams &amp; rivers) compared to the total perimeter of the project easement. To determine this ratio, use the following formula:</p> <p>Waterway length over easement / total easement perimeter = Waterway Ratio</p> <p>The following scale is used to determine any additional points above 15:</p> <p>Waterway Ratio of 0.3 or greater: 15 additional points are awarded  Waterway Ratio of 0.1 to 0.29: 1 point awarded for each 0.02  (rounded up to the nearest point)</p> <p><i>Example: Waterway length of 1,000 feet and easement perimeter of 5,280 feet (40-acre parcel) = .19 = 9.5 points</i></p>	<p><b>0 to 30</b></p>
<p><b>F. Urban Projects</b></p> <p>Projects in incorporated cities are rarer due to urbanization, loss of natural land and higher land prices, characteristics that, along with adjacency to large populations, make them more significant.</p> <p>Projects located in incorporated cities will be awarded 7 to 15 points depending upon alignment with existing approved plans.</p> <p>Projects located outside of incorporated cities will be awarded 0 to 7 points depending upon proximity to city boundaries and population density.</p>	<p><b>0 or 15</b></p>
<p><b>G. Adjacency to Protected Land</b></p> <p>Projects that are adjacent to previously protected land (city or County parks, County easements or State-protected land, etc.) are valuable because they create opportunities for contiguous natural area protection and more effective management and will be awarded 10 points.</p>	<p><b>0 or 10</b></p>



## II. Financial Considerations

40

Intent: Provide incentives to landowners to reduce County land protection costs

### A. Easement Value Donation

The number of points increases with an increasing percentage of easement value donation based on the value of the final easement.

Donation Amount	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%
Points	6	8	11	15	20

*Note: A landowner can increase their donation beyond 25%. A bonus of one point will be awarded for every one percent donation above 25% up to a maximum of 40 points.*

0 to 20  
~  
More Points Are Possible

### B. Leveraged Resources

Leveraged resources include funds from project partners and other funding sources such as the Outdoor Heritage Fund, Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, DNR, City, or other.

Leveraged Amount	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%
Points	6	8	11	15	20

*Note: A bonus of one point will be awarded for every one percent of leveraged resources above 25% up to a maximum of 40 points.*

0 to 20  
~  
More Points Are Possible

## III. Stewardship

25

Intent: Encourage the management and restoration of high-quality natural areas and areas that maintain or increase natural resource quality

### A. Commitment to Restoration

Restoration means going beyond generally accepted minimum stewardship practices to significantly improve the natural resource features of the land to higher quality. Examples include restoring wetlands, re-meandering streams, or replanting native grasses, trees and shrubs. Staff will determine what practices could be considered given the unique circumstances of each property and assign points accordingly.

0 to 15

<p><b>B. Commitment to Stewardship and/or Maintenance</b></p> <p>Landowners will be awarded up to 10 points for stewardship activities previously conducted on the property, <u>if</u> they commit to continuing those practices into the future.</p> <p>If minimal stewardship or maintenance practices are not currently being undertaken <u>and</u> the landowner is willing to commit to implementing those practices in the future, up to 10 points will be awarded.</p> <p>Common stewardship or management practices that may apply can be found here (<a href="#">link</a>). Staff will determine what practices could be considered, given the unique circumstances of each property and award points accordingly.</p>	<p><b>0 to 10</b></p>								
<p><b>IV. Public Access</b></p> <p>Intent: Encourage appropriate and compatible public access</p>	<p><b>50</b></p>								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="188 831 1101 863">Level of Access</th> <th data-bbox="1101 831 1271 863">Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 863 1101 898">No public access</td> <td data-bbox="1101 863 1271 898">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 898 1101 999">Appropriate access allowed on a portion of the project area or at specific times/seasons, e.g., trails, nature observation, fishing, cross-country skiing, etc.</td> <td data-bbox="1101 898 1271 999">1 to 25</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 999 1101 1066">Appropriate access allowed on the entire project area, ideally with another public partner (DNR, etc)</td> <td data-bbox="1101 999 1271 1066">26 to 50</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Level of Access	Points	No public access	0	Appropriate access allowed on a portion of the project area or at specific times/seasons, e.g., trails, nature observation, fishing, cross-country skiing, etc.	1 to 25	Appropriate access allowed on the entire project area, ideally with another public partner (DNR, etc)	26 to 50	<p><b>0 to 50</b></p>
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Appropriate access allowed on the entire project area, ideally with another public partner (DNR, etc)	26 to 50								
<p><b>V. Unique Qualities/Other Considerations</b></p> <p>Intent: Protect unique or threatened sites, and ensure project readiness</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>								
<p><b>A. Level of Threat – 5 points</b> Examples: Development pressure, imminent sale of land, ownership transfer, changes in zoning, etc.</p> <p><b>B. Project Partners and Readiness – 5 points</b> Examples: Number of project partners, known issues or complexities</p> <p><b>C. Unique Features – 10 points</b> Examples: Wildlife species of special concern; state-wide, regional, county or local significance; public interest; historic/cultural significance, etc.</p>	<p><b>0 to 20</b></p>								