

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2012-2013 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 099-E2

Greenvale Agricultural Conservation Reserve

Topic Area: E2. NR Info Collection/Analysis

Total Project Budget: \$ 250,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 2 yrs. July 2013 - June 2015

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 50,000

Summary:

This project uses environmental services and other assessments to develop profitable, multi-resource management practices that restore natural processes across landscapes, improves water quality and wildlife habitat and enhances agricultural economics.

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Sponsoring Organization: Dakota County

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Location

Region: Metro

County Name: Dakota

City / Township: Greenvale Township

<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"/>	Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL <input type="checkbox"/> %



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2012-2013 Main Proposal

PROJECT TITLE: Greenvale Agricultural Conservation Reserve

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Agriculture, directly and indirectly, has a significant and sometimes negative impact on the natural environment, especially water quality, wildlife habitat, and soil quantity and quality. The use of chemical pesticides has been raised as an environmental and public health concern. On the plus side, many programs, financial incentives and new practices exist to address these issues. What is needed, however, is to apply these programs, incentives and practices on individual farms so that conservation is coordinated and amplified across an entire landscape.

Greenvale Township in southwestern Dakota County supports several creeks and large wetland-grassland complexes in mostly agricultural land. The township has 13 permanent conservation easements acquired by Dakota County, totaling 2,067 acres valued at over \$7.5M, and the proposed 1,693-acre Mud Creek Wildlife Management Area. The County has very positive relationships with landowners who are interested in reducing the effects of agriculture on water quality and wildlife habitat. There is also interest in local food production, addressing the aging farmer demographic, helping young farmers with financial and land access challenges, and providing quality hunting opportunities for the metro region. A truly significant opportunity exists in Greenvale Township to integrate public and private benefits on private lands and to prioritize the use of private, county, state, and federal financial and other resources.

Using hydrology, land cover, soils, and ownership data, a preliminary analysis has identified a 14,300-acre study area where existing land management practices, and economic, regulatory and legal factors will be assessed. The primary goal of this project is to use this information and an environmental services analysis to develop profitable, multi-resource management practices that restore the natural processes of the landscape, protect and improve water quality and wildlife habitat, and enhance the area's longstanding agricultural tradition and economy. Associated goals are to increase long-term access to farmland by new farmers for growing and/or processing local food; and potentially developing a metro walk-in hunting area that would not require public acquisition of additional state WMA land.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Planning Framework

Budget: \$0

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Detailed scope, work plan, organizational structure, and operating procedures for undertaking the project. Assessment of the current state of agriculture and natural resource protection within the project area.	Prior to 7/1/2013

Activity 2: Initial Public Engagement and Goal-Setting

Budget: \$15,000

outreach and informational meetings will be conducted among land owners and other interested parties

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Establish goals and outcomes.	9/15/2013

Activity 3: Update Existing Natural Resource Inventory

Budget: \$15,000

MLCCS land cover, soils, geology, slopes, hydrology, water quality, regionally rare (SGCN) wildlife, public lands, conservation and farmland easements, and land parcels and other information will be compiled.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. GIS database of all natural resource and water-related data for study area	9/15/2013

Activity 4: Ecosystem Services Assessment.

Budget: \$70,000

Ecosystem services, ranging from regulating stormwater runoff, building soils, and controlling diseases and pests to enhancing pollination, sequestering carbon and regenerating game and fish populations will be inventoried and mapped to evaluate existing land management practices.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. A series of maps for specific ecosystem services will be produced.	4/15/2014

Activity 5: Land Management Analysis

Budget: \$30,000

Landowner and farmer interviews and land management practices inventory will be conducted.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Recommendations for moving agriculture towards land management which restores ecosystem services and can raise farm income or reduce costs.	7/15/2014

Activity 6: Economic Analysis

Budget: \$60,000

A review of the economic environment and opportunities, including new credit markets, will be completed to assess which concepts/ approaches has the most potential for use.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. A ecosystem services matrix will be compiled to show the costs of implementing each practice, and potential returns from each investment.	9/30/2014

Activity 7: Legal and Regulatory Analysis

Budget: \$40,000

Relevant state and federal laws and local ordinances will be reviewed to address potential opportunities and barriers to accomplishing project goals.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Findings and recommendations	9/15/2014

Activity 8: Demonstration Projects

Budget: \$20,000

Outcome	Completion Date
1. A minimum of four rural landowners will be selected to begin implementing multi-resource management demonstration projects	12/31/2014

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

This project includes Ag Star Financial, Applied Ecological Services, Audubon Minnesota, Cannon River Watershed Partnership, Dakota County SWCD, Crossroads Resource Center, Farmers Legal Action Group, Greenvale Township, Hmong American Farming Association and other immigrant farming organizations, DNR, MN Dept. of Agriculture, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and others.

B. Timeline Requirements

The proposed project will take two and a half years to complete. The majority of the project will be completed in two years with the last six months devoted to implementing demonstration projects.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

More detailed business plans will be developed based on research findings, providing strategies for public and private investments that will result in positive environmental improvements for the study area and nearby regions. Costs for these improvements cannot be estimated until this phase is completed, but this initial funding could leverage millions for future investments.

2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 2.5 years










BUDGET ITEM (See list of Eligible and Non-Eligible Costs, p. 11)	AMOUNT
Contracts: <u>Applied</u> <u>Ecological Services</u> for environmental service analysis and land management assessment: \$100,000 <u>Crossroads Resources Center</u> for economic analysis: \$60,000 <u>Dakota County SWCD</u> for GIS analysis and demonstration projects: \$35,000 <u>Farmers Legal Action Group</u> for legal and regulatory assessment: \$40,000 <u>Cannon River Watershed Partnership</u> for outreach and and public meetings: \$15,000	\$ 250,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 250,000

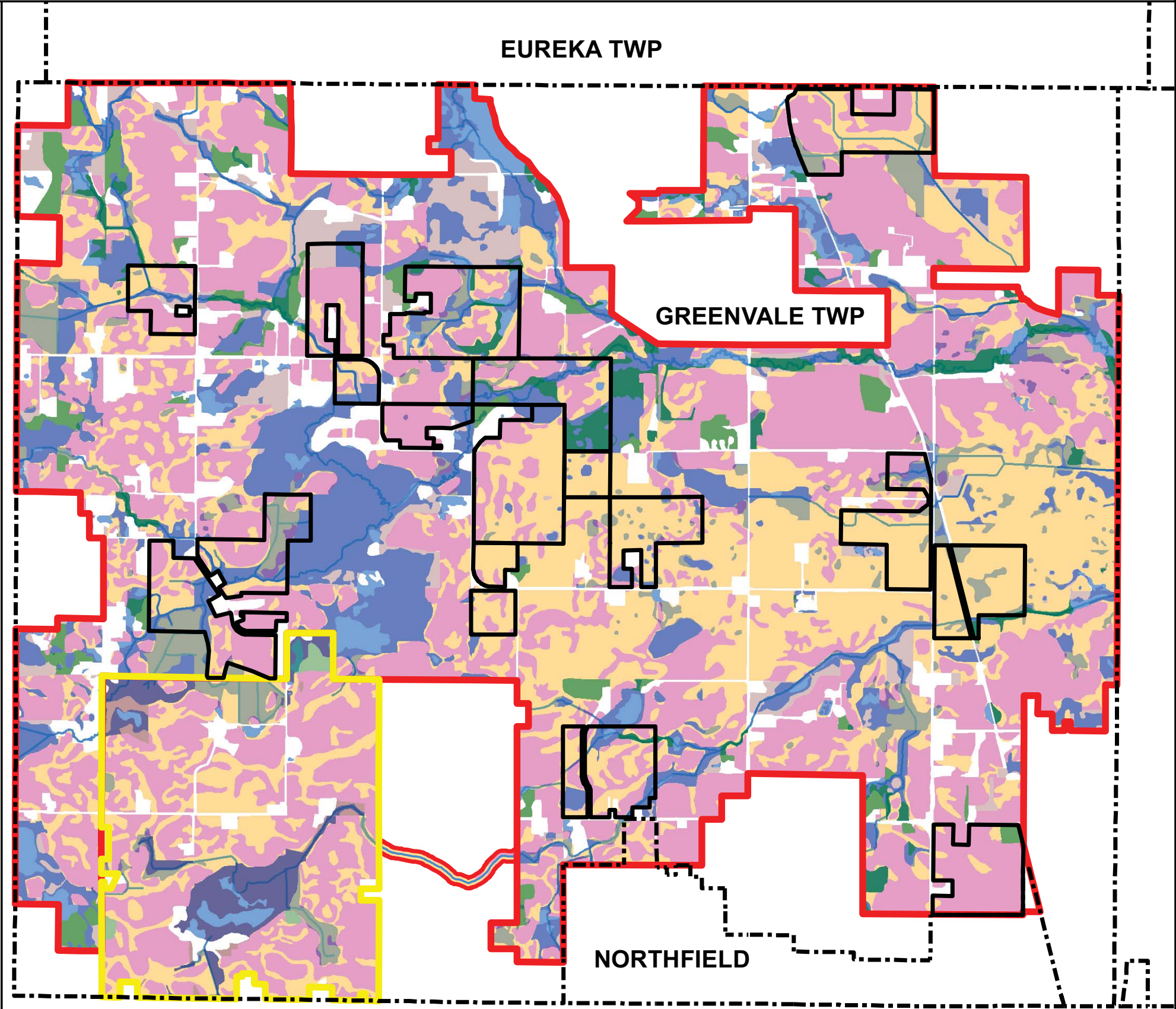
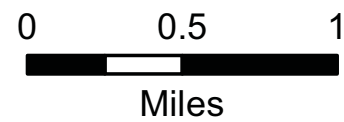
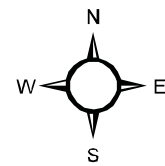
V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: \$50,000 of Dakota Country funds. Other non-state funds will be solicited.	\$ 50,000	Secured
In-kind Services During Project Period: Dakota County staff to coordinate and participate in the project: \$75,000 DNR and MDA staff participation in developing scope and detailed workplan and technical assistance: \$45,000	\$120,000	Secured
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): Specify dollar and year of appropriation from any current ENRTF appropriation for any directly related project of the project manager or organization that remains unspent or not yet legally obligated at the time of proposal submission. Be as specific as possible. Describe the status of funds in the right-most column.	\$1,035,000	Unspent and Not Legally Obligated
Funding History: \$293,000 of ENRTF for phases I and II of Farmland and Natural Areas Protection Plan in 1998 and 2002. \$549,965 (\$400,000 of ENRTF and of \$149,965 of 1998 bond funds) in 2008 for the Vermillion River Corridor Plan and Acquisition	\$842,965	Spent

Greenvale Agricultural Conservation Zone

Preliminary Study Area

-  Farmland Easements
(2,067 ac.)
-  Agricultural Conservation Zone
(12,560 ac.)
(238 Landowners)
-  Proposed WMA
(1,693 ac.)
(18 Landowners)
-  Farmed Hydric Soils
(ACZ - 3,692 ac.)
(WMA - 509 ac.)
-  Farmed Non-Hydric Soils
(ACZ - 4,575 ac.)
(WMA - 790 ac.)
-  Forests
(ACZ - 619 ac.)
(WMA - 26 ac.)
-  Herbaceous
(ACZ - 2,174 ac.)
(WMA - 220 ac.)
-  Waterways
-  Wetlands
(ACZ - 2,928 ac.)
(WMA - 318 ac.)



Project Manager Qualifications for Alan Singer

1978 to 1991 Dodge Nature Center Interpretive Naturalist and Program Manager

- Teaching and facilitating 40,000 student visits and 10,000 adult and family program participants per year
- Supervising ten staff and fifty adult volunteers

1991 to 1998 Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Environmental Program Manager

- Development of first, comprehensive Environmental Policy for the Park Board
- Developing and implementing the master plan and improvements for Cedar Lake Park and Trail and Loring Park
- Development and implementation of a system-wide reduced mowing initiative and off-leash dog exercise area program
- Management of the J.D. Rivers Outdoor Discovery Center and Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden
- Management or Involvement in the following LCMR projects:
 - Urban Rangers
 - Longfellow House Interpretive Center
 - Multi-use Urban Green Space Project
 - Cedar Lake Trail

1998 to 2003 MN DNR Metro Greenways Coordinator

- Provided \$1 million in 50:50 matching funds for planning projects involved over 70 partners in 60 cities and towns in the metro region
- Secured and expended \$10M of state funds that leveraged an additional \$17M of non-state funds for land protection and restoration throughout the region
- Project Manager several LCMR-funded Metro Greenways allocations and the Initial Metro Wildlife (now Conservation) Corridors project

2003 to Present Dakota County Land Conservation Manager

- Expended or committed nearly \$20M of County funds to permanently protect more than 10,000 acres with a value of \$100 million as an outcome of two successive LCMR-funded projects in 1999 and 2001.
- Program Manager for 2008 LCCMR “Vermillion River Corridor Acquisition and Restoration in Dakota County” project to develop comprehensive water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation plan for the Vermillion River in Scott and Dakota Counties and acquired 192-acre easement on priority land.

Organization Description

Dakota County is Local Government Unit bordered by the Minnesota, Mississippi and Cannon Rivers with almost the entire Vermillion River located within in its boundaries. Nearly 400,000 people live in the county that that is comprised of 14 fully developed and rapidly developing suburbs; six small, rural towns; and 13 mostly rural townships.

The County recently adopted a comprehensive land conservation vision that includes the regional park system, including development of the new Whitetail Woods Regional Park; a 200-mile greenway system that integrates water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation; a buffer program for all rivers, streams and undeveloped lakeshore; farmland protection; and natural area protection.