

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2015 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 146-G

MeCC VIII: Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection

Category: G. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

Total Project Budget: \$ 600,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2015 - June 2018

Summary:

This project will acquire an estimated twelve conservation easements totaling 140 acres along Dakota County's rivers, tributaries, creeks, and undeveloped lakeshore and restore a minimum of 100 acres.

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Sponsoring Organization: Dakota County

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Location

Region: Metro

County Name: Dakota

City / Township: Numerous

Alternate Text for Visual:

The map shows the rivers, streams, creeks, brook and undeveloped lakes that will be the focus of this project.

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL	



PROJECT TITLE: MeCC 8: Dakota County Lakeshore and Riparian Protection

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Completion of the LCCMR-funded Farmland and Natural Area Protection Plan in 2001 provided the science- and culturally-based foundation for Dakota County to begin protecting and managing critical land outside of the park system. County residents providing \$20M in increased property tax revenue in 2003 The 2011 LCCMR-funded Vermillion River Corridor Plan integrates and prioritizes the protection and improvement of water quality, wildlife habitat and appropriate outdoor recreational opportunities.

The project will acquire an estimated twelve conservation easements from willing landowners totaling 140 acres along Dakota County’s rivers, tributaries, and creeks. These include the Vermillion River system, including North, Middle and South Creeks, South Branch and their tributaries; and the Cannon River and its primary tributaries within the County (Dutch, Mud, Chub, Darden, and Pine Creek, and Trout Brook). The project will also restore/enhance an estimated 100 acres of protected lands along Dakota County riparian corridors.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Acquisition of Shoreland Conservation Easements

Budget: \$500,000

County Board-approved criteria are used to evaluate and rank projects based on extensive land and water assessments. A formula based on detailed land type, location and tax-assessed value is used to determine easement value for projects with an estimated value less than \$50,000. Appraisals are used for municipal or projects estimated to cost greater than \$50,000. Easements do not require public access, but projects including public access receive higher priority.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Permanent protection of estimated 12 properties totaling an estimated 140 acres of high-priority natural resource lands	June 30, 2018

Activity 2: Natural Resource Management Plans and Restoration

Budget: \$100,000

All easements require a Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) jointly developed by the County and the landowner. The NRMP describes the current condition, existing habitat, and preferred habitat, as well as recommendations on how to achieve mutual restoration or enhancement goals. A detailed, Landowner Agreement, including a multi-year work plan describing priority activities and responsibilities, is also completed as a core element of the easement. Due to the two-year time constraint, an estimated 50 percent of the riparian easements acquired will have final NRMPs completed by June 30, 2017. The remaining 50 percent will have preliminary NRMPs. Easements require completion of the final NRMP within six months of closing. The timing and features of the acquisition will determine if a final NRMP can be completed. The application and selection process will also include projects that focus specifically on restoration of previously protected land.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Completed NRMPs and Landowner Agreements for 50 acres of new easement acquisitions. Preliminary NRMPs for 50 acres of new easement acquisitions.	June 30, 2018
2. Restoration and/or enhancement of 100 acres of previously protected areas or early easement acquisitions.	June 30, 2018



III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

As part of the Metro Conservation Corridor (MeCC) Partnership, Dakota County has been included in previous MeCC proposals and is included in the coordinated FY15 proposal being submitted.

Dakota County has used a very collaborative internal and external approach to its land conservation efforts during the past ten years. County Land Conservation staff has developed an excellent working relationship with other County Administrative, Assessors, Attorneys, Financial, GIS, Operations Management, Planning, Survey, Waste Regulation, and Water Resources staff to provide the full range of services necessary to successfully acquire and manage easements.

The Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) has contributed cost-share funding or in-kind services on recent and current projects, and will continue its support in the next phase of acquisitions and restoration that also achieve the VRWJPO's water-quality improvement goals. All 13 Dakota County townships have been very supportive of previous land protection efforts. The Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Friends of the Mississippi River have been critical partners in providing outreach, technical assistance, natural resource management, and easement monitoring services.

The County has worked cooperatively with the Minnesota DNR on many conservation projects, from facilitating and contributing funds for state acquisitions of new Scientific and Natural Areas and Aquatic and Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), to transferring County lands to create a new WMA and jointly managing the Vermillion Highlands complex. The federal Natural Resources Conservation Service has been a critical partner in facilitating the allocation of more than \$10M of federal funds to the County for acquiring permanent agricultural easements including permanent vegetative buffers along waterways and associated natural areas.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

Completion of the LCCMR-funded Farmland and Natural Area Protection Plan in 2001 provided the science- and culturally-based foundation for Dakota County to begin a new land conservation program. County residents subsequently provided an initial \$20M in increased property tax revenue in 2003 for protecting and managing critical lands that provide a multitude of public benefits. Nearly 10,000 acres have now been protected in the County.

The LCCMR-funded Vermillion River Corridor Plan, completed in 2011, integrates and prioritizes the protection and improvement of water quality, wildlife habitat and appropriate outdoor recreational opportunities in the largest metro region watershed. The plan evolved into the ShoreHolders Program and became the final component of the County's ambitious, long-term, comprehensive land and water conservation vision integrating regional parks and park reserves; a 200-mile, multi-purpose greenway system that focuses on water quality and wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation; riparian and lakeshore buffers along all streams and rivers and undeveloped lakeshore; priority natural areas; and agricultural conservation zones. County staff has estimated an additional 13,000 acres will need protection and management to fully achieve the County's goals at an estimated cost of \$42M. This project will incrementally advance the County's goals.

C. Timeline Requirements

Due to the inherent challenges and complexities of land acquisition, we request that the completion date be June 30, 2018.

2015 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: MeCC8 Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET \$600,000 for three years

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel: Acquisition Specialist - .14 FTE for three years (14% of salary and benefits)	\$ 31,500
Contracts: Independent Appraisals - \$20,000 SWCD - \$20,000 Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMP), NRMP implementation and Property Reports Friends of the Mississippi River - \$10,000 Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMP), NRMPs and NRMP implementation	\$ 50,000 Dakota County
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Native grass and forb seed, woody plant materials and equipment rental	\$ 70,000
Acquisition: 140 acres of permanent easements to be held by Dakota County	\$ 388,500
Travel: None	\$ -
Additional Budget Items: Easement Stewardship @\$3,500 per easement	\$ 42,000
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 600,000

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

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: <i>Dakota County -\$147,000 -Secured</i> <i>Landowner Donation \$40,000 - Projected</i>	\$ 187,000	<i>Secured/ Projected</i>
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: <i>FY 14 Outdoor Heritage: \$50,000 - secured</i> <i>FY 16 Outdoor Heritage: \$50,000 - pending</i>	\$ 100,000	<i>Secured/ Pending</i>
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: <i>Dakota County staff including Land Conservation Manager, Project Coordinator, GIS, Survey, Water Resources, Waste Regulation, Contract Services, County Attorneys Office, and Financial Services</i>	\$ 105,000	<i>Secured</i>
Funding History: Dakota County - \$1,350,000 FY14 Outdoor Heritage - \$2,400,000 FY14 ENRTF -\$368,000	FY12 Outdoor Heritage -\$480,000 FY12 ENRTF -\$1,035,000 \$ 5,318,000	Secured
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation: <i>FY 12 ENRTF -\$561,432</i> <i>FY14 ENRTF -\$368,000</i>	\$ 929,432	<i>Unspent</i>

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2015 Proposed Acquisition/Restoration List**

Project Title: MeCC 8 Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection

Project Manager Name: Alan Singer

Organization: Dakta County

ENRTF \$ Request: \$600,000








#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	County	Ecological Significance	Activity Description	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)
		Latitude	Longitude								
	Acquisition										
1	Marcott Lakes	44°48'58.355 "N	93°4'3.402" W	\$30,000	Dakota	High quality lake and upland	Easement	10	0.37	Private	Dakota County
2	Chub Lake	4°33'52.35"	93°13'13.03" W	\$40,000	Dakota	High quality lake and upland	Easement	18	0.37	Private	Dakota County
3	1. Headwaters and western portion of Vermillion River	44°36'53.022 " N	93°13'44.82" W	\$21,000	Dakota	Designated trout stream	Easement	10	0.55	Private	Dakota County
4	2. South, Middle, and North Creek and central portion of the Vermillion River	44°39'13.485 "N	93°8'2.475" W	\$37,000	Dakota	Portions are designated trout stream	Easement	18	0.98	Private	Dakota County
5	3. Vermillion River South Branch	44°37'27.688 "N	93°3'1.348" W	\$29,000	Dakota	Designated trout stream	Easement	14	0.77	Private	Dakota County
6	4. Eastern Main Stem of the Vermillion River	44°41'9.871" N	92°57'18.638" "W	\$32,000	Dakota	Riparian	Easement	15	0.82	Private	Dakota County
7	5. Chub, Dutch and Mud Creeks	44°30'26.843 "N	93°8'4.189" W	\$87,500	Dakota	Riparian	Easement	35	0.96	Private	Dakota County
8	6. Cannon River	44°30'12.29" N	93°4'47.368" W	\$28,000	Dakota	Riparian	Easement	10	0.55	Private	Dakota County
9	7. Pine and Darden Creeks	44°32'35.935 "N	92°56'1.554" W	\$28,000	Dakota	Riparian	Easement	10	0.55	Private	Dakota County
10	8. Trout Brook	44°33'56.491 "N	92°49'29.346" "W	\$28,000	Dakota	Designated trout stream	Easement	10	0.55	Private	Dakota County
	Restoration										
11	Marcott Lakes	44°48'58.355 "N	93°4'3.402" W	\$10,500	Dakota	High quality lake and upland	Restoration	15		Private	

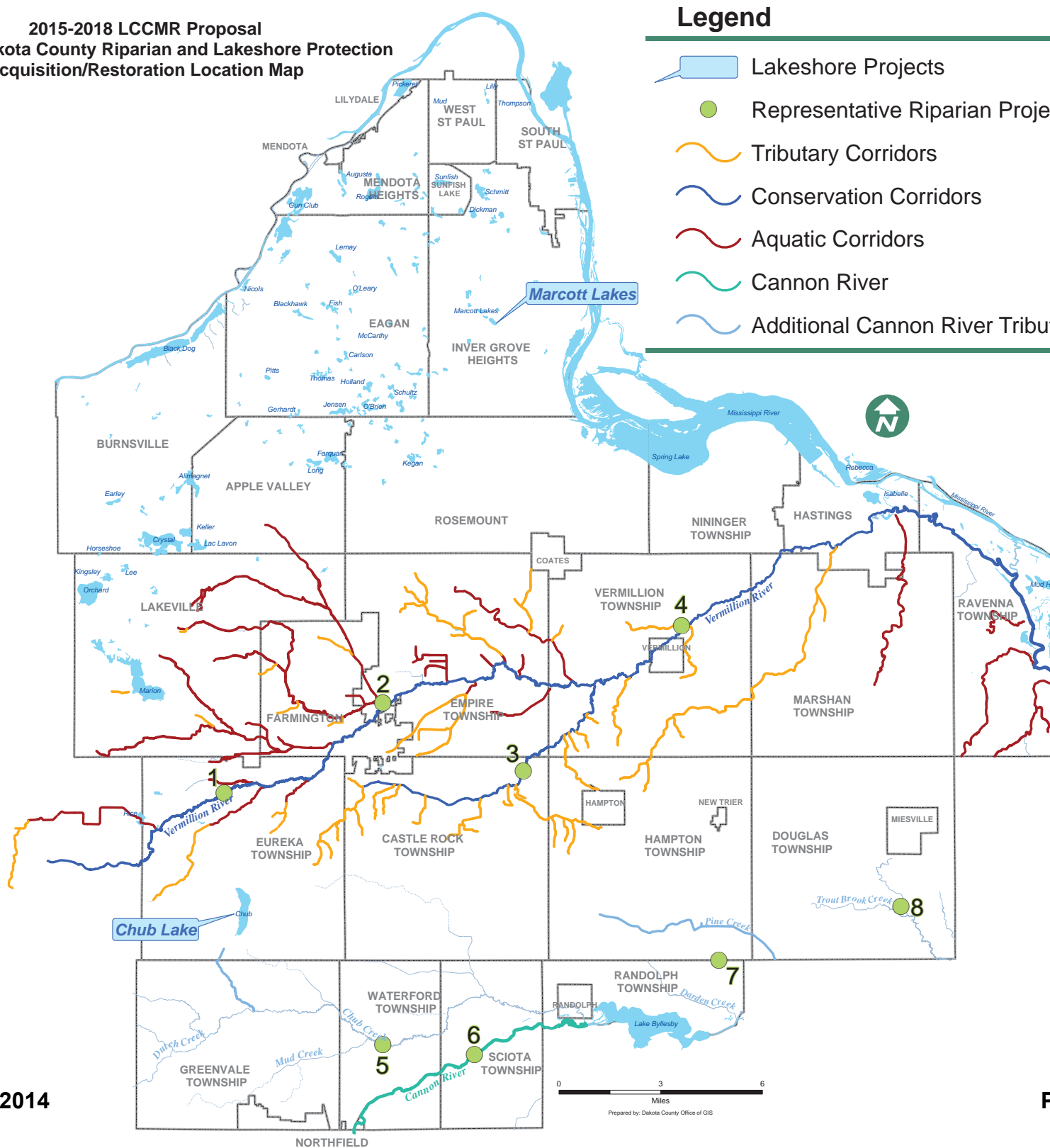
12	1. Headwaters and western portion of Vermillion River	44°36'53.022 " N	93°13'44.82" W	\$7,000	Dakota	Designated trout stream	Restoration	10	Private	
13	2. South, Middle, and North Creek and central portion of the Vermillion River	44°39'13.485 "N	93°8'2.475" W	\$7,000	Dakota	Portions are designated trout stream	Restoration	10	Private	
14	3. Vermillion River South Branch	44°37'27.688 "N	93°3'1.348" W	\$7,000	Dakota	Designated trout stream	Restoration	10	Private	
15	4. Eastern Main Stem of the Vermillion River	44°41'9.871" N	92°57'18.638 "W	\$7,000	Dakota	Riparian	Restoration	10	Private	
16	5. Chub, Dutch and Mud Creeks	44°30'26.843 "N	93°8'4.189" W	\$17,500	Dakota	Riparian	Restoration	35	Private	
17	6. Cannon River	44°30'12.29" N	93°4'47.368" W	\$7,000	Dakota	Riparian	Restoration	10	Private	
18	7. Pine and Darden Creeks	44°32'35.935 "N	92°56'1.554" W	\$7,000	Dakota	Riparian	Restoration	10	Private	

NOTES:

2015-2018 LCCMR Proposal
 MeCC 8: Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection
 Acquisition/Restoration Location Map

Legend

-  Lakeshore Projects
-  Representative Riparian Project Locations
-  Tributary Corridors
-  Conservation Corridors
-  Aquatic Corridors
-  Cannon River
-  Additional Cannon River Tributary Creeks



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 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
- Development and implementation of a park system-wide reduced mowing initiative and off-leash dog exercise area program
- Manage 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 Metro Conservation) Corridors project

2003 to Present Dakota County Land Conservation Manager

- Managed the expenditure of more than \$20M of County funds to permanently protect more than 10,600 acres with a value greater than \$82 million
- 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

Organizational 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 has adopted a comprehensive, long-term land conservation vision that integrates the regional park system; a 200-mile greenway system that integrates water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation; the Shoreholders buffer program for all rivers, streams and undeveloped lakeshore; natural area protection; and farmland protection.