

Staff Use Only: Project Name:
Conservation Focus Area:

Date Received:
Received By: Lisa West



Land Conservation – Natural Resource Protection Final-Application

In response to citizen concerns about the loss of open space throughout the County, the County developed a land protection plan and program in 2002 and has protected over 12,000 acres since then. In 2020, a **Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County** was adopted with the following natural resource protection goals:

1. Ecologically important areas are prioritized for protection.
2. Water quality and quantity are enhanced and protected.
3. Natural resource quality is improved and sustained.
4. Biodiversity is restored and sustained.
5. The public supports and is involved in natural resource protection and management.
6. Recreational access to conservation lands is enhanced.

County landowners are encouraged to consider participating in this voluntary program.

Step 1: Review land conservation information by visiting the Dakota County website at www.co.dakota.mn.us, click on Environmental at the top of the page and then click on Land Conservation. If you have questions or are interested in receiving printed materials, contact Lisa West, in the Environmental Resources Department at (952) 891-7018 or via email at lisa.west@co.dakota.mn.us.

Step 2: Complete and submit a 2024 Pre-Application form. If your property is eligible for inclusion in the Land Conservation Program, you'll meet with County staff to discuss your conservation goals and proposed project, the project evaluation and selection process, and conservation easements and the acquisition process easement. County staff will conduct a preliminary natural resource assessment of your property at no cost to you.

Step 3: Complete this 2024 Final Application. The information you provide will be used by a Technical Committee to evaluate and score your project based on criteria provided at the meeting with County staff. The highest ranked projects will be reviewed and approved for advancement.

Applications should be submitted to:

Dakota County Parks Department
Attention: Lisa West
14955 Galaxie Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124
OR to: lisa.west@co.dakota.mn.us

Submission of this final application form does not bind the applicant to proceeding with the sale or donation of land or an easement. Likewise, accepting this final application form does not bind Dakota County to accept or purchase land or an easement.

Public Information: Information contained in this final application is subject to the provisions of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13. Unless otherwise classified, all data contained in this application is considered public data.

Note: Submission of this final application form does not bind the applicant to proceeding with the sale or donation of land or an easement. Likewise, accepting this final application form does not bind Dakota County to accept or purchase land or an easement.

Notes: Please answer **ALL** of the questions on this application. Expand this form and/or use extra sheets of paper if the requested information does not fit in the space provided.

Project Type: Natural Area Protection, Wetland Protection or Water Retention Project?	
Project Location: Within, Partially Within, or Outside a Conservation Focus Area?	

APPLICANT INFORMATION

First name	
Middle name	
Last name	
Mailing address	
Phone number	
Email address	
First name	
Middle name	
Last name	
Mailing address	
Phone number	
Email address	
First name	
Middle name	
Last name	
Mailing address	
Phone number	
Email address	
First name	
Middle name	
Last name	
Mailing address	
Phone number	
Email address	
First name	
Middle name	
Last name	
Mailing address	
Phone number	
Email address	
Primary Contact	
Are all landowners aware that you are submitting this pre-application?	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please include a visual property description of all contiguous parcels and portions of parcels proposed for inclusion in this project. The description can be a sketch drawn on a copy of an available map, or drawn on maps from the Dakota County website at: www.co.dakota.mn.us The graphic should include:

- Property boundary and project boundary, with approximate acreages of all areas
- Labeled roads
- Location of significant natural resource features including streams, wetlands, etc.
- Any existing pipelines, other utilities, or easements
- Areas to be excluded from the proposed project, including current buildings and facilities, crop fields, future building sites, etc. (Easements cannot include existing buildings of any kind.)

Project Size

Please list the Property Identification Numbers (PINs) and the approximate acreage of each parcel. [PINs are listed on yearly tax statements, or can be obtained at the Dakota County website at: http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/assessor/real_estate_inquiry.htm, by calling the Dakota County Assessor's office at (651) 438-4200 or 1-800-247-1056 (non-metro), or via email to: assessing.services@co.dakota.mn.us]

Property Identification Number	Acres

Financial Considerations

Value Donation. Willingness to consider donating a portion of appraised easement/land value can result in net financial savings and allows the County to extend its funding to protect additional land.

Land and easement values vary depending on many factors. Providing estimates of conservation easement values, prior to conducting an appraisal, is a difficult task for several reasons:

- Each conservation property is unique in size, land cover, amenities and special features, current land use, etc.
- Current sales of similar land must be used to determine the market value of a property, prior to determining the restricted conservation easement value of the land.
- Land prices have been increasing rapidly, making current sales even more critical to determining fair market value.
- Providing estimated conservation easement values, prior to appraisals, can set easement payment expectations that may not be reflected by an actual appraisal value. County staff does not want to set unrealistic easement value expectations.

Since the Land Conservation Program began, easement values have ranged from \$950 to \$9,900 per acre. The high end of the value range occurred back when the Program started in 2002 through about 2010. The current average value of easements purchased from 2020 to the present is \$2,975 per acre. The average of easement values throughout the past 22 years is \$3,158 per acre. The County advises you to talk to your financial planner/ accountant/attorney regarding possible donation benefits.

Keep in mind that the County is not purchasing the land; so, easement values will always be lower than market value. On average, easement values can be plus or minus 30% less than market value. The reduction in value is based on the specific land use rights being restricted or removed by the easement. If easement restrictions remove 70% of the market value of the land, the easement will be worth 70% of the market value. For example, if the Market Value is \$8,000/ac. and the Easement-Restricted Value is \$6,000/ac., the Easement Value will be \$2,000/ac.

If you are considering a donation of easement or land value, what percent or dollar amount are you considering?	
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Note: More project evaluation points are awarded for higher donation amounts.

Building Rights. Written confirmation of the number of building rights is required from the township/city and must be included in this application or provided prior to project evaluation.

If available building rights exist on the property, the County may consider purchasing one or more, relative to the total acreage and location of the proposed easement. Landowners can retain some or all of the available building rights.

How many building rights currently exist on the property	
How many building rights would you like the County to consider purchasing?	
How many building rights would you like to retain?	

Transferring or clustering retained building rights is regulated by the township/city and confirmation by the appropriate local government must be indicated in this application or prior to project evaluation.

Is building rights transfer allowed?	
If yes, where do you proposed to transfer available building rights?	
Is clustering building rights allowed?	
If yes, where do you proposed to transfer available building rights?	

Other Project Funding.

Please describe any known or potential funding partners for your proposed project and estimated funding amounts, or other cost considerations.	
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Financial Encumbrances

Are there existing mortgages or Contracts for Deed on the proposed property?	
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If yes, you must indicate prior to closing whether you intend to pay-off the mortgage or Contracts for Deed or subordinate them.

Please list the banks or persons holding your mortgages or Contracts for Deed.	
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Are you in bankruptcy, probate or other legal proceeding that could affect this project?	
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If yes at any point during this process, the County needs to be aware, because it could cause difficulties during the acquisition process or schedule.

Transaction Considerations/Circumstances

Please mark existing or potential transaction considerations or circumstances:

None	
Multiple landowner interests	
Non-resident landowner interests	
Known title concerns	
Power of Attorney issues	
Estate issues	
Schedule or timing issues	
Other:	

Environment, Natural Resources and Unique Features

Please describe the environmental significance of this property, in terms of water,	
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soils, and/or geologic features; important plant and animal species or other unique considerations	
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Other Environmental Issues

Are any of the following items located within the proposed project site? Please answer yes, no, or don't know.

Solid waste from an old or new dump site	
Debris, like concrete, brush piles, old lumber, etc.	
Cars or trucks	
Campers, RVs, or boats	
Equipment or machinery	
Other:	
Other:	
Septic System (if yes, is it working properly?)	
Unused wells	
Pipeline, other utility, or access easements	

Please note that an environmental assessment inspection will be conducted within the project boundary by the County prior to any acquisition.

Have any property rights such as mineral or mining rights been sold or reserved?	
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Locational and Land Use Significance

Please indicate if the project site contains any unique or special characteristics or other significance.

Adjacent to other protected land	
Threatened by development or adjacent housing	
Cultural significance (if yes, please describe)	
Other:	
Other:	

Public Access

Private ownership is retained if the County acquires an easement. However, there may be opportunities to provide full or limited public access for a variety of activities, if you're willing to allow it. Using the table below, please indicate if you would consider allowing the general public or special groups, such as educational, youth, adults, scouts, veterans, disabled, etc. to access your property for the listed example activities and when:

Low Impact Use Examples	Type of Access: General Public, Special Use, or both	Estimated percent of area that could be used	Year-round or occasional use permission?
Hiking			
Cross-country skiing			
Biking			
Hunting			
Fishing			
Bird watching			
Natural study			
Other:			

Township or City Plans

Has this property been identified in any official township/city plans, or been the subject of land use, zoning, or plan review or approval?	
If yes, please describe.	

Stewardship, Restoration and/or Maintenance

Please describe the types of stewardship	
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activities you have undertaken to maintain the natural resources found on the property:	
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Restoration means going beyond minimum stewardship practices to improve the natural resource features of the land. In the table below, please indicate any restoration activities you have performed in the past or currently, and what, if any, activities you are interested in continuing or accomplishing in the future. Please answer yes, no, or not applicable.

Restoration Activity	Past or Current	Future
Removing invasive species, like buckthorn or other non-native plants		
Planting trees and shrubs		
Establishing specie-specific habitat, like flowers for pollinators		
Controlling erosion		
Installing wider shoreline buffers		
Restoring grasslands		
Restoring woodlands and forests		
Restoring wetlands		
Creating ponds of water retention basins		
Re-meandering a stream		
Removing or installing fences for conservation or habitat protection		
Other – please describe:		

In the box below, briefly describe why you believe stewardship, restoration, maintenance, and management of natural resources is important and what you would like your property to become in the future.

Is there any question on this final application for which you believe the information you provided is security data that should be protected pursuant to Minn. Stat. Sec. 13.37?	
If yes, which questions do you believe request security information?	

By signing this form, you indicate landowner approval of the submittal of this Natural Resource Protection pre-application to Dakota County.

Submission of this Natural Resource Protection pre-application does not bind the applicant to proceed with a donation or sale of land or an easement. Likewise, the submission of this pre-application does not bind Dakota County to accept or purchase land or an easement.

Primary Contact Signature, Printed Name and Date

Signature:	
Printed Name:	
Date:	

Please Read The Following Page.

Tennessen Notice

Data Privacy Acknowledgment

In accordance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act; Minn. Stat. § 13.04 and § 13.591, Dakota County is required to inform you of your rights as they pertain to private or non-public information collected from you. **Unless otherwise classified, all data in this application will be considered public data.** "Private or non-public data" is information that is available to you, but not to the public.

NEED FOR INFORMATION: The information we collect or have collected from you or from other sources authorized by you is needed for evaluation of applications received by Dakota County for lands to be potentially included in the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Program.

REFUSAL: You are not legally required to supply the requested data by Dakota County. You have the right to refuse to supply the information we request. However, without this information, we may be unable to properly evaluate your application and may not be able to accept your land for inclusion in the County program.

ACCESS TO DATA: Public data may be shared or inspected on demand. Private or non-public information we collect from you may be shared, as a matter of program or service necessity, with the Citizen Advisory Committee or other consultants hired by Dakota County to evaluate and score applications.

You, as the subject of collected data, unless otherwise specified by law or court order, may view the information we have concerning you and may make written comments as to the accuracy of the information. Copies of information we have concerning your application may be made, for a reasonable fee, upon your request.

RETENTION: All information on you will be kept until federal, state and/or county retention requirements have been met, at which time the information will be destroyed. Unless otherwise noted, this consent will only be effective for a period of three (3) years from the date of signature.

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 13.04, I HAVE BEEN INFORMED
OF AND UNDERSTAND MY RIGHTS AS SUBJECT OF DATA.**

Primary Contact Signature, Printed Name and Date

Signature:	
Printed Name:	
Date:	