

# **Dakota County Land Conservation Plan Update**

**Dakota County Planning Commission  
February 28, 2019**

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# Overview



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1. Land Conservation Plan Process Update
2. Draft Guiding Principles
3. Research Topics
4. Potential County Roles
5. Public Engagement

# Process Update



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## 1. Identify Issues and Opportunities

January-June, 2019 (May or June Planning Commission)

Conduct  
Research on  
Plan Topics

Engage  
Stakeholders  
for Ideas

## 2. Test Concepts

July-October, 2019 (November Planning Commission)

Develop  
strategies from  
Phase 1 findings

Test strategies  
with stake-  
holders

## 3. Draft Plan / Review

Q1, 2020

Draft Plan Document  
based on Phase 1 and 2  
findings

Public Review of Plan,  
Engage Stakeholders

# Draft Guiding Principles



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1. Protect and manage land and natural resources to ensure that high quality natural resources and systems are available for current and future generations.

# Draft Guiding Principles



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2. Protect and manage natural resources and ecosystems comprehensively, recognizing that they are not confined to jurisdictional or ownership boundaries, and are the responsibility of all.

# Draft Guiding Principles



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3. Protect and manage natural resources to provide multiple benefits, including:
  - Improving water quality, biological diversity, and native species habitat
  - Increasing access and recreational opportunities
  - Improving community attractiveness
  - Increasing public appreciation for natural resources
  - Reducing harm to life and property

# Draft Guiding Principles



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4. Prioritize protection and improvement of:
  - high quality natural resources
  - unique natural features
  - larger contiguous natural communities
  - functional connectivity between natural areas.

# Draft Guiding Principles



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5. Recognize that natural resource management is a process requiring a long-term commitment rather than a single point-in-time activity.

# Draft Guiding Principles



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**Comments and suggestions  
on the draft Guiding Principles?**

# Research Topics



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## 1. Economic Considerations of Land Conservation

- a. Quantify the economic benefits of ecosystem health and services
- b. Potentially use the County property tax system (credits) for protection and natural resource stewardship on private lands
- c. Create a funding mechanism or separate entity to accept private donations for natural resource stewardship on private lands

## 2. Inventories and Assessments

- a. Protected Lands
- b. Natural Resource Management on Protected Lands
- c. Existing Agency Conservation and Wildlife Plans
- d. Local Comprehensive Plans
- e. Water and Sub-Watershed Plans
- f. Relevant Grant and Technical Assistance Programs and Methods

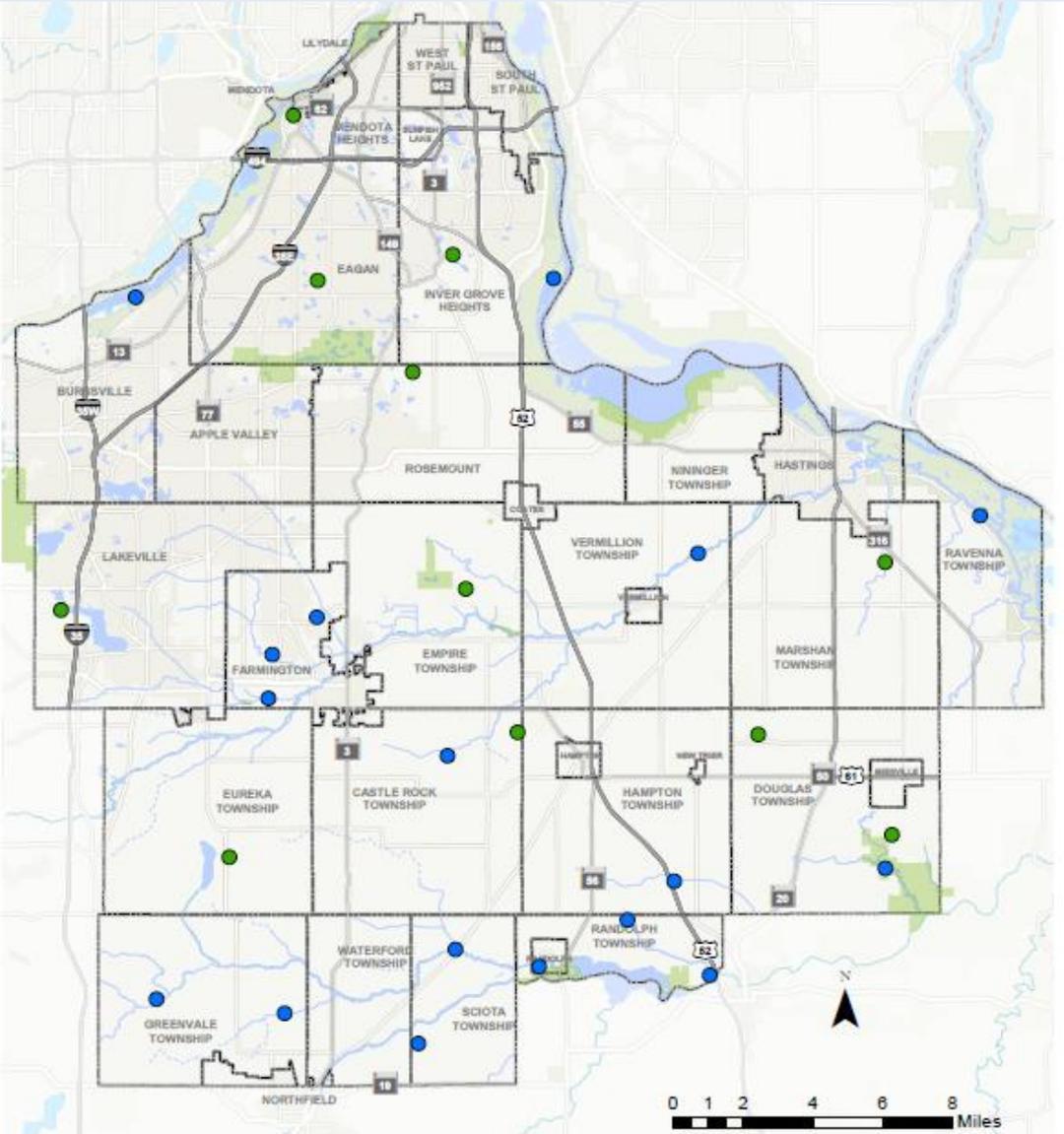
## 3. Modeling and Development

- a. Large-Scale Rural Wetland Restoration and Water Retention Areas (with SWCD)
- b. Hubs and Corridors for Declining Species and Pollinators
- c. Individual Priority Conservation Areas (eligibility)

# Research Topics



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## Priority Conservation Areas

## 4. Program Operational Improvements

- a. Refined Program Evaluation/Selection Criteria
- b. Conservation Scenarios and Outreach
- c. Data Enhancement and Maintenance
- d. Program Operation Options and Needs

## Comments and Suggestions for Research Topics?

# Potential County Roles



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<b>Land Protection</b>	<b>Providers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fee Title Acquisition</li></ul>	Federal (F&WS, COE), State (DNR), Regional (MCES), County, Cities, Townships, and Non-Profits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Permanent Conservation Easement Acquisition</li></ul>	Federal (NRCS), State (BWSR), County, Cities, and MN Land Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Term-limited Conservation Easement Acquisition</li></ul>	State (BWSR)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regulatory</li></ul>	State, County, Watersheds, Cities, and Townships
<b>Natural Resource Stewardship</b>	<b>Providers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Restoration and Enhancement</li></ul>	Federal, State, County, Cities, and Non-Profits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assistance, Incentives and Education</li></ul>	Federal (NRCS); State (BWSR, DNR, MDA, U of M Extension); County; Non-Profits, SWCD; and Watersheds

# Potential County Roles



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## Current Gaps:

### Land Protection

- Coordinate and prioritize
- Determine appropriate type/level of protection for different purposes
- Flexible funding sources

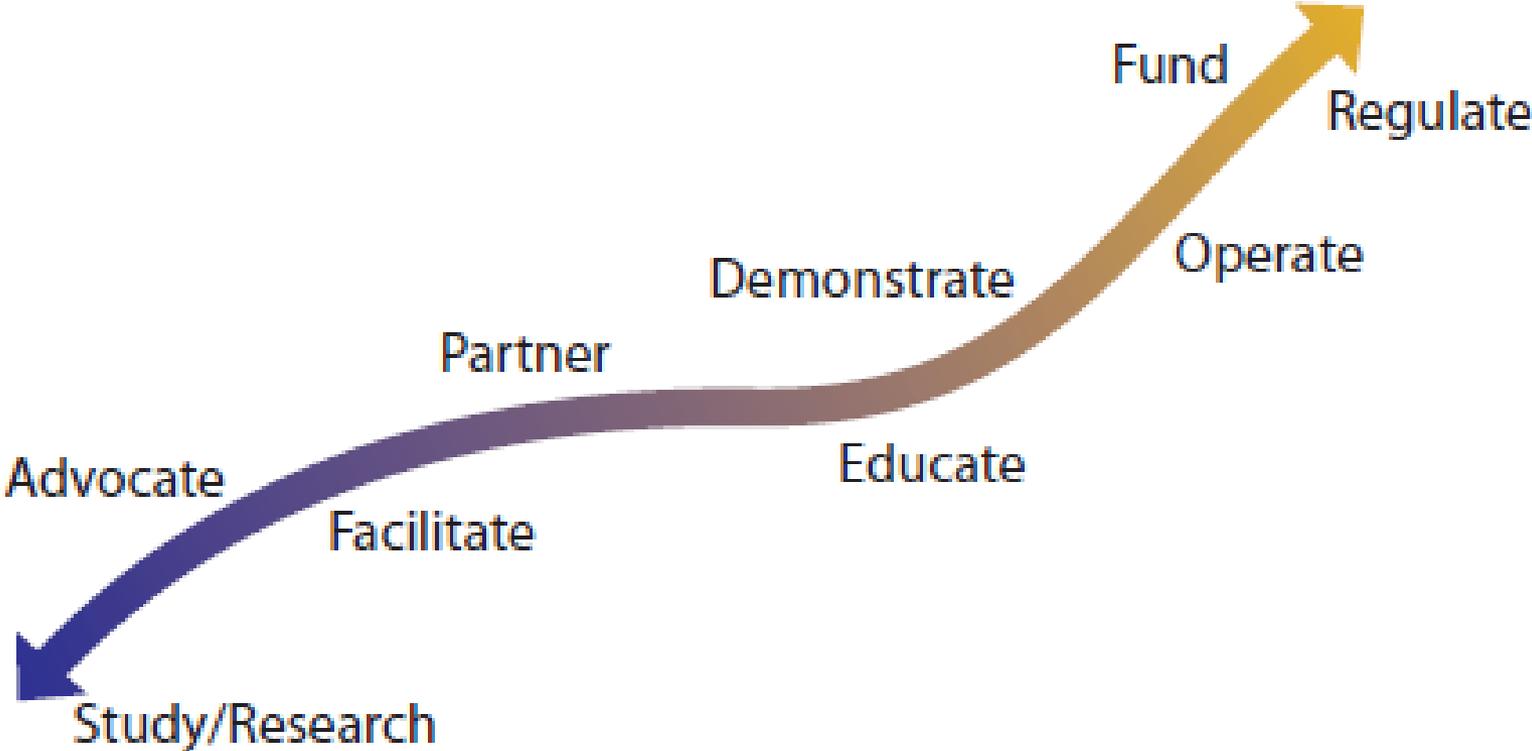
### Natural Resource Stewardship

- Coordinate and assist
- Purposes and standards
- Incentives and requirements
- Ensure long-term maintenance

# Potential County Roles



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# Potential County Roles



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**Thoughts on potential County roles in land protection and natural resource management in urban and rural areas?**

# Public Engagement



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## General public engagement objectives:

- Increase overall awareness
- Learn about broader perceptions and expectations related to land protection and management
- Understand public willingness to support different plan and program options
- Gather timely comments that will inform specific plan decisions and strategic direction

# Public Engagement



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## **Specific stakeholder engagement objectives:**

- Benefit from their past involvement, knowledge and interests
- Consider new collaborative initiatives
- Seek improvements to the Program and outcomes
- Create opportunities for new and improved relationships
- Provide timely information

# Public Engagement



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Major Groups to Engage	Online Survey	Workshop	Focus Group	Interview	Open House
1. General Public	X				X
2. Past and Future Program Participants	X		X		X
3. Conservation Agencies/Organizations		X	X		
4. Cities and Townships		X	X		
5. Natural Resource Protection Groups		X	X		
6. Agricultural Interests and Agencies			X	X	
7. Business Community			X	X	

**Are there other stakeholders that should be engaged?**

**How would the Planning Commission like to be involved in the stakeholder and public engagement process?**

# Next Steps



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## Next Planning Commission Review

- Research and First Round of Stakeholder Engagement Findings: May-June



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**Thank You!**