

Update on the County Land Conservation Program

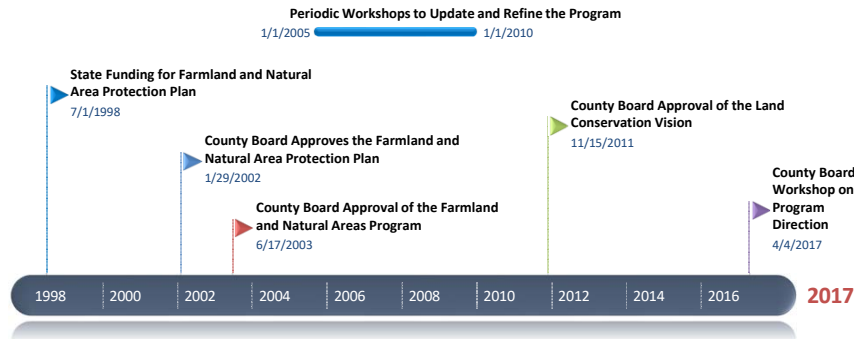
Al Singer
Environmental Resources Department
Dakota County Planning Commission

September 27, 2018

Overview

- Land Conservation Program Background
- 2017 Land Conservation Workshop
 - Board Direction and Progress
- Next Steps
- Comments and Questions

Program History



County Land Protection Plan



Dakota County Farmland and Natural Area Protection Plan

Adopted by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners on January 29, 2002



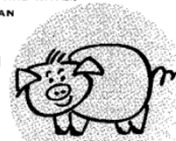
Prepared by the Dakota County Office of Planning, in collaboration with:

- 1000 Friends of Minnesota
- Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Dakota County Township Officers Association
- Friends of the Mississippi River
- Minnesota Farmers Union
- Minnesota Land Trust
- The Trust for Public Land
- Township Agricultural Protection Task Force
- University of Minnesota Extension Service - Dakota County

Funding for this project provided by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (Legal Citation: ML 1999, Chapter 231, Section 16, Subdivision 8)

JOIN THE DAKOTA CITIZENS
FOR OUR LAND AND WATER
FOR AN

Old Fashion Community Pig Roast



CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF
TO SUPPORT THE PROTECTION OF
WATER QUALITY, FARMLAND,
AND NATURAL AREAS



Sunday, September 8th 2002
4 pm to 7 pm
Free will donation
Dakota County Fair Grounds
www.voteYESon1.org
651-287-0883

VEGETARIAN OPTIONS PROVIDED

printed and paid for by Dakota Citizens for our Land and Water, a project of the Conservation Campaign
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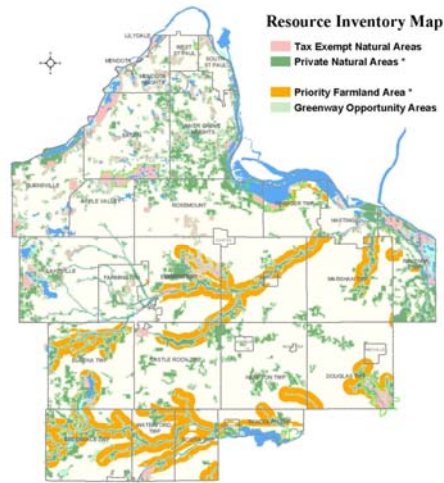
Program Goals and Objectives

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- Protect 5,000 to 10,000 acres of priority farmland/natural areas
- Split \$20M of the referendum funds between “farmland” and “natural areas”
- Work with willing landowners to acquire permanent easements and with other entities to acquire fee title
- Leverage County funds

Eligibility Areas

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Agricultural Land Protection

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Easement Requirements

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- Allows agricultural use in accordance with Stewardship Plan
- Permanent

Restrictions

- Restricts conversion to industrial, residential and non-agricultural commercial uses
- Structures and improvements (buildings and utilities)
- Other impervious surfaces (roads, trails, parking lots)
- Subdivision
- Topography
- Water alterations
- Waste disposal
- Motorized vehicles – if use is degrading the easement area
- Signs
- Vegetation
- Chemicals
- No public access

Stewardship Plans

Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program
STEWARDSHIP PLAN



RAYMOND C. & MARY K. TAYLOR
SCIOTA TOWNSHIP
JANUARY 2005

Requirements

- A. Erosion Control
- B. Buffers

Recommendations

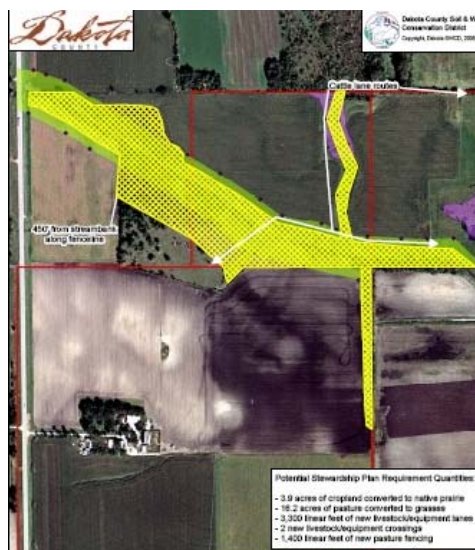
- A. Irrigation Water Management
- B. Nutrient & Manure Management
- C. Pasture Management
- D. Pest Management

Natural Area Management

- A. Natural Area Map
- B. Wetland Management
- C. Grassland Management
- D. Forest Management

Stewardship Work Plan

Stewardship Plan Example



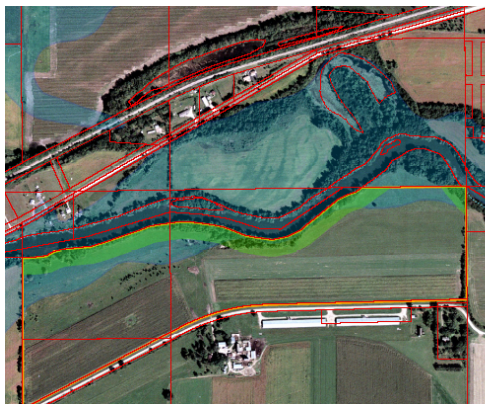
Easement Example

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Easement Example

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Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program
Barret Farm - Sciota Township

-  Property Boundary
-  Easement Area (86 Acres)
-  150 Ft. DNR Stream Buffer (12 Acres)
-  DNR Protected Streams
-  100 Year Floodplain

Parcels:
35-01300-010-28
35-01300-010-29
35-01300-011-01

Contiguous Land – 943 acres

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Agricultural Easement Summary

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68 Easements

7,770 acres



1,300 natural area acres with 49 miles of shoreline

Discontinued Farmland Protection in 2015

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Rationale

- No “net loss” of farmland in County (2000-2014)
- 2013 Farm Bill/Program
 - Focus on large, conventional farms
 - National approach
 - Less funding
 - Subdivision
 - Funding formula

Natural Area Protection

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NR Management Plans and Agreements

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Example of a picture and size for front cover.

Natural Resource Management Plan

for the
Insert Name Property Easement

prepared by
Dakota County

Insert Month and Year

Dakota County Contract #C_____

Natural Resource Management Agreement

This Natural Resource Management Agreement (hereinafter referred to as the "Agreement"), between _____ (hereinafter referred to as the "Landowner"), and Dakota County (hereinafter referred to as the "County") is entered into in order to conduct natural resource restoration, enhancement, and/or management activities on the Landowner's property.

WHEREAS, a Permanent Agricultural Greenway/Natural Area Buffer Conservation Easement was granted to the County, recorded on _____ in the Office of the Dakota County Recorder as Document No. _____ (hereinafter referred to as the "Easement"); and

WHEREAS, a Natural Resource Management Plan (hereinafter referred to as the "NRMP") was jointly developed by the Landowner and the County to guide the restoration, enhancement, and/or management of the Easement area (hereinafter referred to as the "Protected Property"); and

WHEREAS, the NRMP is referenced in and subject to the Easement and a copy is held by both parties; and

WHEREAS, the County and the Landowner have prepared a NRMP Work Plan (hereinafter referred to as the "Work Plan") describing activities, responsibilities, costs, and schedule for implementing the NRMP on the Protected Property, taking into account factors such as soil, topography, geology, existing vegetation, cost, and other relevant factors; and

WHEREAS, the Landowner and the County each agree to implement the restoration, enhancement, and/or management activities on the Protected Property as described in the Work Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Landowner and the County each agree to contribute cash and/or labor as described in the Work Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants and agreements stated in this document, it is agreed by and between Landowner and County as follows:

1. **Work Plan.** The Landowner and the County, after adequate opportunity for review and comment, agree to the terms of the Work Plan setting forth the restoration, enhancement, installation, maintenance, and/or monitoring within the Protected Property, attached as EXHIBIT A, with associated Land Cover Management Units generally depicted on the map attached as EXHIBIT B. Any work in the Work Plan estimated by the County to exceed Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) shall be completed by a contractor retained by the County in accordance with County contracting practices.

2. Landowner Obligations:

- The Landowner shall fulfill the cash and in-kind Landowner responsibilities listed in the Work Plan, subject to weather-related or other unavoidable delays.
- The Landowner shall maintain a record of any in-kind contributions (e.g. personal time, equipment and materials provided in support of restoration, enhancement and/or management activities) in the form attached hereto as EXHIBIT C (hereinafter referred to as the "Landowner Contribution Certification").

City Projects

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Pilot Knob



Caponi Art Park

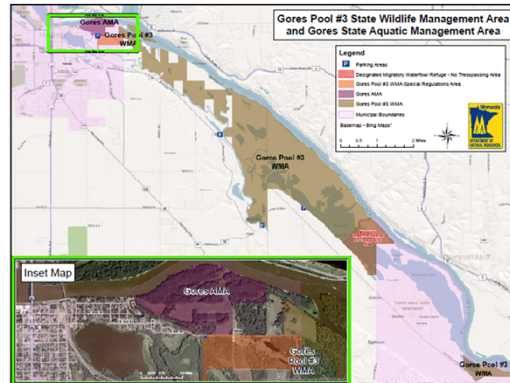


DNR Projects

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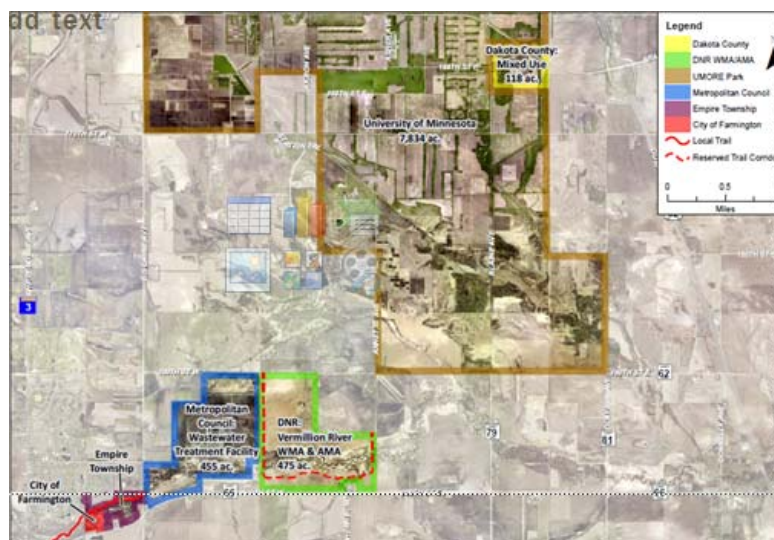
Chimney Rock SNA



Gores Pool #3 WMA

Vermillion Highlands 2005

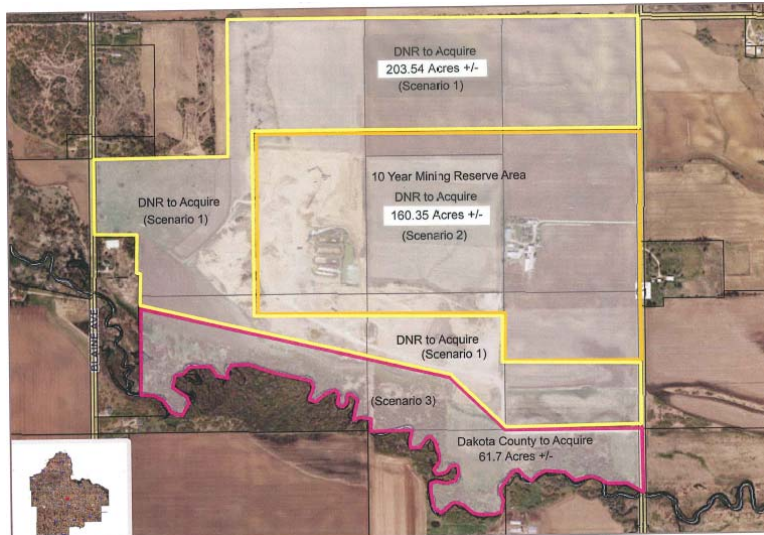
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Cemstone Property Acquisition



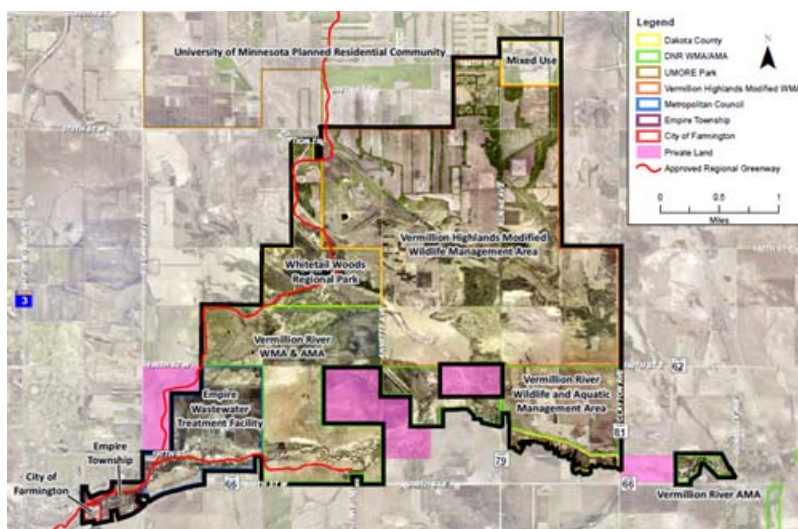
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Vermillion Highlands 2017



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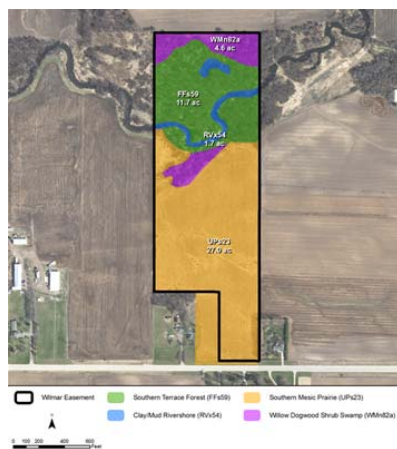
Hampton Woods WMA

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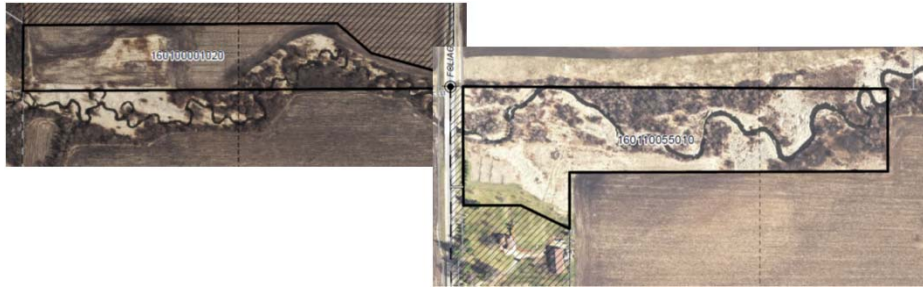
Easement Examples

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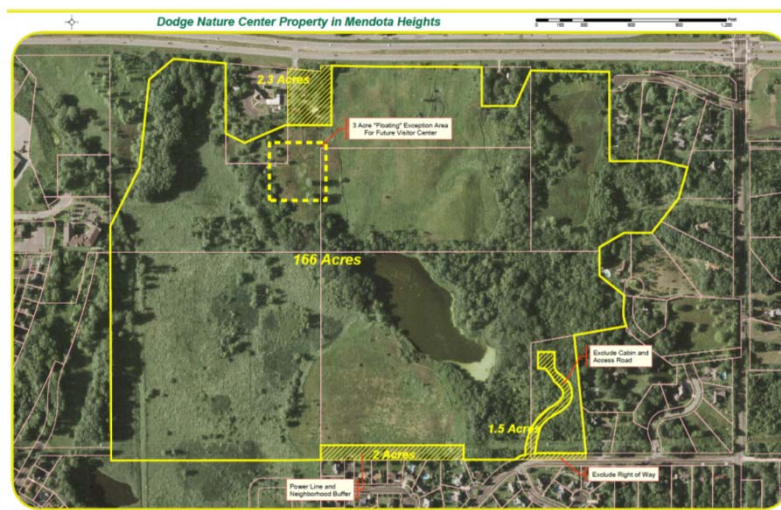
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Regional Greenways

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Natural Area Protection Summary

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65 Projects

3,539 Acres



79 miles of shoreline

2003-2017 Financial Summary



Landowner Donation:	\$26.0M
Non-County Funding:	\$31.7M
County Funding:	<u>\$19.6M</u>
Total Land Value:	\$81.9M

2017 Board Workshop Direction and Progress



Focus on projects that protect and improve
priority natural areas and improve water quality

- 108-acre easement on Grannis property acquired
- 7.4-acre easement on Smith property acquired*
- 14-acre easement in Knutson property acquired

Cost Summary State: \$2.95M

County: \$1.04M

Landowner: \$0.28K

- Thirteen acquisition projects (368 acres) in process
- Inventories being completed

2017 Board Workshop Direction and Progress



Protect park in-holding properties when available,
and protect park buffer areas as necessary

- Sorg Trust settlement finalized
- Five acquisition projects in process

2017 Board Workshop Direction and Progress



Protect multi-purpose corridors

- 6.5-acre Dodge Nature Center property acquired
for the Lebanon to Mendota Regional Greenway
- 4.5-acre Smith property acquired for the North
Creek Regional Greenway
- Thirteen acquisition projects in process

2017 Board Workshop Direction and Progress

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Consider agricultural land protection projects only when there are other public benefits

- Multi-purpose project with three adjacent landowners in Greenvale Township nearly completed

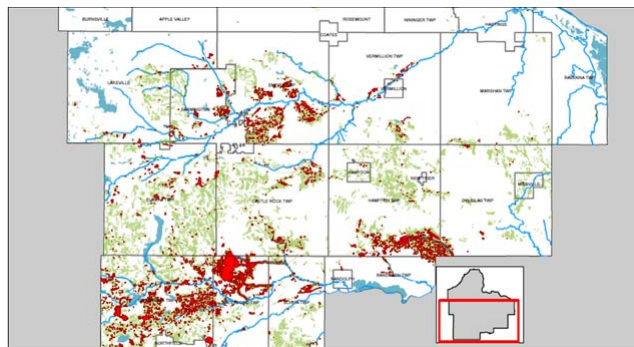


2017 Board Workshop Direction and Progress

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Increase focus on wetland preservation and restoration and projects that retain surface water and increase infiltration in rural areas

- Initial rural hydrologic study completed



2017 Board Workshop Direction and Progress

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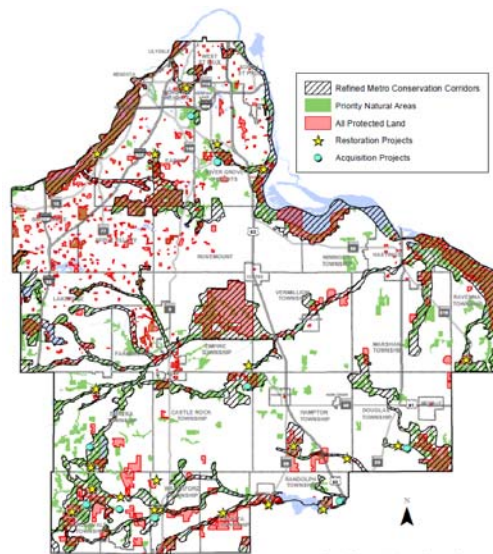
Increase natural resource restoration of conservation easements on private land

- New Natural Resource Management Plan template completed
- New Stewardship Plan template completed
- Fifteen restoration projects on 354 acres completed or underway

Cost:	State:	\$334,100
	County:	\$111,873
	Landowner:	\$90,673

2017 Board Workshop Direction and Progress

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2017 Board Workshop Direction and Progress



Continue to seek non-County resources to implement the program

- \$2.3M state Outdoor Heritage Fund grant awarded in 2018
- \$4.2M state Outdoor Heritage Fund grant requested in 2018 for 2019
- Economic study with consultant will be initiated
- New Federal Farm Bill being monitored

Program Update Steps



1. Complete inventory, assessment, and research

- Economic benefits of land conservation
- “Protected” land in the County
- Land managed for natural resource quality
- Conservation, wildlife, comp., and water plans
- Wetland protection and restoration
- Collaborative approaches (city and DNR)
- Grants and technical assistance programs
- Options for Landowner Incentives
- Program Best Practices

Program Update Steps



2. Strategically Engage Stakeholders

Public Engagement Tool Level (1): Inform and Discuss

Group	Research Phase	Concept Phase
Past Agricultural Land Participants and Farmers	issues, preliminary idea testing	Test concepts
Past Natural Area Participants		Test concepts
MN DNR	issues and opportunities	
Watershed Management Organizations		Test concepts
Cities	issues and opportunities	Test concepts
Environmental Groups		Test concepts
Agricultural Groups	issues and opportunities	Test concepts

Program Update Steps



3. Test Concepts and Refine Program

- Mission, goals and objectives
- Priority Conservation Areas
- Program requirements, documents and processes for both land protection and natural resource management
- New landowner conservation incentives
- Land Conservation Collaborative with cities
- Interactive County natural resource webpage

Next Steps



Planning Commission Review

- Preliminary Recommendations: Q1 of 2019
- Final Draft: Q3 of 2019

Next Steps



Next Natural Area Project Application Round

Application Round Activities	Anticipated 2018 Timing
Announce/distribute application materials	August
Pre-applications due	September
Final applications due	October
Evaluate, score and rank projects	December

Questions and Comments

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