



Vermillion River Greenway, Hastings Segment Natural Resources Management Plan: Final Draft Review and Comments

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Parks Department
Physical Development Division

Dakota County Planning Commission Meeting
October 26, 2023

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Vermillion River— Hastings Greenway Corridor

- ~Five miles in length
- 100- to 300-foot corridor
- Adjacent to 450 acres of open space and park land



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Project Purpose



Vermillion River Greenway

Natural Resource Management Plan
2023

For the *natural communities* and *features* of the corridor:

- To gain a better understanding
- Develop priorities
- Guide the management
- Protect and preserve

Inform future *construction activities*

Develop a natural resources management *work plan*

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Outcomes of NRMP



- Plant and animal communities
- Park visitors
- Management activities
- External funding
- Cooperative management with City of Hastings



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Work Plan



- Greenway corridor divided into twelve segments
- Restoration sequence
- Management and restoration tasks are identified and prioritized
- Costs for each task are estimated
- Timeline and implementation schedule developed

Estimate for completing the entire greenway:

- \$915,000
- Phased over 20 years
- Intend to use external funding primarily—state grants

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Greenway Natural Resources Costs and Responsibilities



Greenway Roles	Trail Corridor*	Greenway Corridor**	Adjacent to Greenway Corridor***
Project Costs	County	County and Landowner equally share expenses after use of grant funds	County and Landowner costs determined by future Joint Powers and Management Agreements
Restoration Project Management	County	County and Landowner Partnership	County and Landowner responsibilities determined by future Joint Powers, Management, or other Agreements
Maintenance	County	County, with Landowner approval	County and Landowner responsibilities determined by future Joint Powers, Management, or other Agreements

*Generally, 30 feet wide

** Width in "urban" location is 100 feet (50 feet from either side of the centerline); width in "suburban" location is 200 feet (100 feet from center line); or width in "rural" location is 300 feet (150 feet from center line)

*** Non-County public lands and/or permanently protected private property adjacent to and beyond the Greenway Corridor located within a Conservation Focus Area as defined in the Land Conservation Plan.

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Public Comment Period



Comment Period: 7/18/23 to 8/18/23

Advertised in:

- County ListServe
- Hastings Gazette
- Certain media outlets, including social media such as Facebook
- City of Hastings website
- Wilderness in the City website
- Friends of the Mississippi River website
- Scott Haugen, DNR Parks and Trails
- Dakota County website

Joe Walton's contact information was sent to the City of Hastings, in case anyone inquired about the plan. Joe is the Dakota County Senior Ecologist, and the project manager for this plan.

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Public Comment Period



Comments Received:

1. The Old Mills Ruins at the Vermillion Falls Park is rapidly deteriorating and being vandalized. Can we do anything to prevent this?
 - a. Make a fence around it to protect it, but at the same time keep it open to viewing
 - b. Do something with the vegetation to un-screen it? Remove the tall vegetation?
 - c. Spray paint, vandalism, and pieces of the old wall are being pulled out by unruly people
 - d. How can we utilize this as a resource, a teaching point, a historic landmark?
 - e. How can we keep people away from it, while still allowing it to be viewed?
 - i. Fencing and then building a raised plane with a railing around it
 - f. Could we approach the Cargill corporation to see if they might sponsor some restoration and/or interpretive activities?
 - g. Could we talk to the Hastings Preservation Committee about this?

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Public Comment Period



Comments Received:

2. Would like to see the County build a bike/walk/wheelchair trail from 10th Street Bridge to the falls.

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Public Comment Period



3. **City of Hastings Parks Commission**, Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 6:00 pm, City Hall Chambers. All commissioners were present. The following is taken directly from the meeting notes:

Mr. Walton provided an overview of the NRMP for the Vermillion River Regional Greenway, a plan developed by Dakota County to identify current conditions and develop plan for possible future enhancements.

Commissioner Karnick asked a few questions about Levee Park and any potential habitat enhancement efforts within the developed area. A word of caution due to multiple large events and heavy use.

Commissioner Smith asked about educational opportunities around the plan, and how the County would work to educate the public about the work proposed.

Commissioner Strauss discussed the positives around enhancing habitat on the fringes of already developed parks.

Commissioner Smith inquired how the County works with private land owners and how they encourage habitat enhancement on those private lands.

All commissioners are supportive of this NRMP and see value in working with Dakota County to enhance habitat within the corridor and recognize each potential project will be explored individually as a partnership between the City and County.

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Timelines and Schedules




- August 2022: Contractor was hired
- October 2022: Stakeholder meeting with City of Hastings Park's staff
- August-December 2022: Site survey and background information collected
- February 2023: Draft Plans
- May 2023 Planning Commission Review
- July-August 2023: public comment period
- Trail construction started August-Sept
- September-October 2023: Final public drafts
- November 2023: Final adoption

We are here, now!

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Questions?



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