

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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**LCCMR ID: 104-D-2.7+3.7**

**Project Title:** 2.7 / 3.7 - MeCC 6 - Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection

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**Category:** D. Land Acquisition for Habitat and Recreation

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**Total Project Budget:** \$ \$2,700,000

**Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested:** 2 yrs, July 2011 - June 2013

**Other Non-State Funds:** \$ 1,200,000

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**Summary:**

Acquire permanent, riparian easements and develop natural resource management plans on 1,034 acres within the Vermillion and Cannon river systems and along Marcott Lake and Lake Marion in Dakota County.

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**Sponsoring Organization:** Dakota County

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**Location**

**Region:** Metro

**Ecological Section:** Paleozoic Plateau (222L), Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

**County Name:** Dakota

**City / Township:** Multiple

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

# 2011-2012 MAIN PROPOSAL

**PROJECT TITLE:** MeCC6: Dakota County Lakeshore and Riparian Protection

## I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The long history of settlement and long-accepted agricultural land use has resulted in the loss, degradation and fragmentation of our natural resource systems. In Dakota County, only 3% of the pre-settlement plant communities remain. Despite, increased public awareness of water quality issues and improvement methods and multi-agency efforts to assist landowners, nearly every river, stream and lake is officially impaired in some fashion. In recent decades, the County has experienced tremendous residential development. That development is attracted to the remaining natural features - especially lakes and rivers. The County has a wealth of high quality soils and a vibrant agricultural economy, and with recently high commodity prices, the pressure to plant corn and soybeans fence row to fence row has never been greater. This combination of large-scale impacts and trends must be approached comprehensively, long-term and collaboratively if we are to maintain and improve our natural resource heritage and its many associated benefits. At the same time, there are tremendous opportunities to proactively and successfully address these challenges. The economic downturn has halted residential development for now and significantly lowered land prices. Sound plans have been developed and adopted which collectively focus on protecting and improving our natural infrastructure. The County has an excellent track record of working effectively with a wide variety of agencies, jurisdictions and organizations and has the capacity to acquire and manage conservation easements and implement increased natural resource stewardship.

The project will acquire an estimated 90 permanent conservation easements, totaling 930 acres from willing landowners, along the Vermillion River and North, Middle and South Creek, South Branch and their tributaries; the Cannon River and its primary tributaries within the County (Dutch, Mud, Chub, Darden and Pine Creeks, and Trout Brook); and acquire permanent easements or fee title on several parcels totaling 94 acres along Marcott Lake in Inver Grove Heights and Lake Marion in Lakeville. The scale and scope of this project is both doable and significant. It encompasses some of the best natural resource features found in the metropolitan region across a combination of urban, suburban and rural landscapes. It takes a precise and sound fiscal and ecological systems approach to conservation while attempting to balance the interests, rights and responsibilities of private landowners with the public's concerns about water and habitat quality, outdoor recreation and climate change.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**Activity 1:** Acquisition Conservation Easements and Fee Title of Land      **Budget:** \$ 2,537,600

Riparian parcels will be selected based upon the completed and LCCMR-funded Vermillion River Corridor Plan and a similar plan for the Cannon River. Established criteria including ecological quality, size, length of shoreline, positive impacts on water quality and wildlife habitat, proximity to other protected land, landowner commitment to current and future stewardship, cost, leveraged funds, public access, and promoting appropriate outdoor recreational opportunities will be used to evaluate and prioritize projects. A citizen Advisory Committee will review and rank projects and forward recommendations to the County Board for approval. Easement values will be based upon a formula based on location, regulatory conditions, amount of cultivated land taken out of production, providing public access, and other factors. Environmental assessments will be completed for all projects and all solid waste will have to be cleaned up as a condition of participation. Property Reports will be completed prior to conveyance of permanent easements to Dakota County as the basis for annual monitoring.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Permanent protection of estimated 95 parcels totaling 1,024 acres of high priority natural resource lands	June 30, 2013

**Activity 2:** Restoration

**Budget:** \$162,400

Due to the two-year time constraint, Natural Resource Management Plans, including permanently vegetated buffers, will be completed for approximately 50 percent of the projects. A County/landowner work plan will be developed to begin implementing priority resource restoration and enhancement activities for all lands protected through this project. In addition, restoration will occur on existing protected land and initially acquired easements.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Natural Resource Management Plans for 450 acres	June 30, 2013
2. Restoration and Enhancement of 100 acres	June 30, 2013

### III. PROJECT STRATEGY

#### A. Project Team/Partners

This proposal will be part of the Metro Conservation Corridor Partnership proposal. Dakota County has used a very collaborative approach to its land conservation efforts over the past seven years. All land acquisition has been done on the basis of willing sellers- most often on a bargain sale basis. The cities of Lakeville, and Hastings, Farmington and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization have contributed funds or in-kind services on past and current projects and are likely to continue those productive partnerships during this project phase. All eleven townships have been very supportive. The Soil and Water Conservation District has been a critical partner in providing outreach, technical assistance and easement monitoring services. The Natural Resource Conservation Service has been a critical partner in facilitating the use of over \$10M of federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) funds to the County for acquiring permanent easements along waterways each year since 2003. Budgeted 2011 FRPP funds are available for conservation corridor projects.

#### B. Timeline Requirements

With the Vermillion River Corridor Plan already in place, completion of model implementation projects, development of selection criteria and the process for project evaluation and selection, project implementation in the Vermillion River watershed can begin with completing previously selected projects after July 1, 2011. Funding will require two years or until June 30, 2013.

#### C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

The Dakota County lakeshore and riparian buffer initiative is an ambitious, comprehensive, fully integrated, long-term approach to precision conservation. In 2009, County staff estimated approximately 10,000 acres will need to be protected and managed to fully achieve potential public benefits. To date, approximately 1,991 acres have been permanently protected through County efforts with protection of another 1,200 acres underway. If recommended Outdoor Heritage funds are received in 2010, an additional 600 acres will be protected. Based upon full 2011-2012 LCCMR funding and the resulting protection of an additional 930 riparian acres, approximately 5,300 more acres would need to be protected at an estimated cost of \$15.9M. The County would continue to work proactively with landowners and numerous partners to use existing plans and the recently completed Vermillion River Corridor Plan to strategically protect the highest quality natural resource lands providing multiple public benefits.

## 2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget

### IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 2 years

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
<b>Personnel:</b> .5 of 1.0 FTE real estate specialist for acquiring riparian easements for two years from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2013. Cost includes 50% salary and benefits.	\$ 80,000
<b>Contracts:</b> A .5 of 1.0 FTE contracted Natural Resource Specialist for developing and implementing natural resource management plans on all easement projects from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2013 @ \$31,200/year. \$100,000 in contractual services will be made to undetermined vendors to restore an estimated 100 acres. This will include vendor staff, materials, equipment, etc.	\$ 162,400
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies:</b> Not Applicable	\$ -
<b>Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements):</b> An estimated ninety riparian easements totaling 930 acres, to be held by Dakota County, will be acquired. Two shoreland easements totaling an estimated 94 acres on Lake Marion and Marcott Lakes will be held by Dakota County. If fee title is acquired on Lake Marion, the City of Lakeville will hold title with an easement held by the County. A potential fee title holder of land along Marcott Lakes has not been determined yet.	\$ 2,457,600
<b>Additional Budget Items:</b> Not Applicable	\$ -
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST</b>	<b>\$ 2,700,000</b>

### V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Dakota County (capital and two .5 FTE staff)	\$942,400	Secured
Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization	\$300,000	Pending
Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (estimate based on receiving all of the state allocations during past eight years)	\$500,000	Pending
Landowner Donation (estimate based upon a conservative, five-year track record)	\$500,000	Pending
City of Lakeville	\$400,000	Secured
<b>Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:</b> NA	\$0	
<b>In-kind Services During Project Period:</b> Minimally, this includes related County staff-time for Administration, GIS, Survey, County Attorney's Office, Environmental Assessments, and Property Documentation.	\$140,000	
<b>Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b> \$400,000 from the ENRTF for the "Vermillion River Corridor Acquisition and Restoration in Dakota County" in 2008. In addition, \$149,965 from the 1998 Chub Lake appropriation was transferred to this project in 2008. The \$40,000 planning component will be expended by June 30, 2010.	\$ 509,965	Unspent
<b>Funding History: Environment and Natural Resource Trust Funds</b> Phase I and Phase II of the Farmland and Natural Areas Program in 1998 and 2002	\$293,000	

## 2011-2012 Acquisition List for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Proposal

**Project Title:** MeCC 6: Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection

**Project Manager Name:** Alan Singer

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request:** \$2,700,000

**Final Title Holder(s):** Dakota County


#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee-Title OR Conservation Easement)	County	Estimated # of Acres	Geographical Coordinates (Provide Latitude/Longitude OR UTM-X/UTM- Latitude Longitude)	
					Latitude	Longitude
1	<b>Lakeshore</b>					
2	A. Marcott Lake	Easement (possible fee)	Dakota	80	44°48'58.355"N	93°4'3.402"W
3	B. Lake Marion	Easement (possible fee)	Dakota	14	44°39'41.956"N	93°16'47.092"W
5	<b>River/Stream *</b>					
6	1. Vermillion River Headwaters and western Main Stem	Easement	Dakota	200	44°36'53.022"N	93°13'44.82"W
7	2. South, Middle, and North Creek and central Main Stem of the Vermillion River	Easement	Dakota	100	44°39'13.485"N	93°8'2.475"W
9	3. Vermillion River South Branch	Easement	Dakota	200	44°37'27.688"N	93°3'1.348"W
	4. Eastern Main Stem of the Vermillion River	Easement	Dakota	100	44°41'9.871"N	92°57'18.638"W
	5. Chub, Dutch, and Mud Creeks	Easement	Dakota	200	44°30'26.843"N	93°8'4.189"W
	6. Cannon River	Easement	Dakota	40	44°30'12.29"N	93°4'47.368"W
	7. Pine and Darden Creeks	Easement	Dakota	50	44°32'35.935"N	92°56'1.554"W
10	8. Trout Brook	Easement	Dakota	40	44°33'56.491"N	92°49'29.346"W

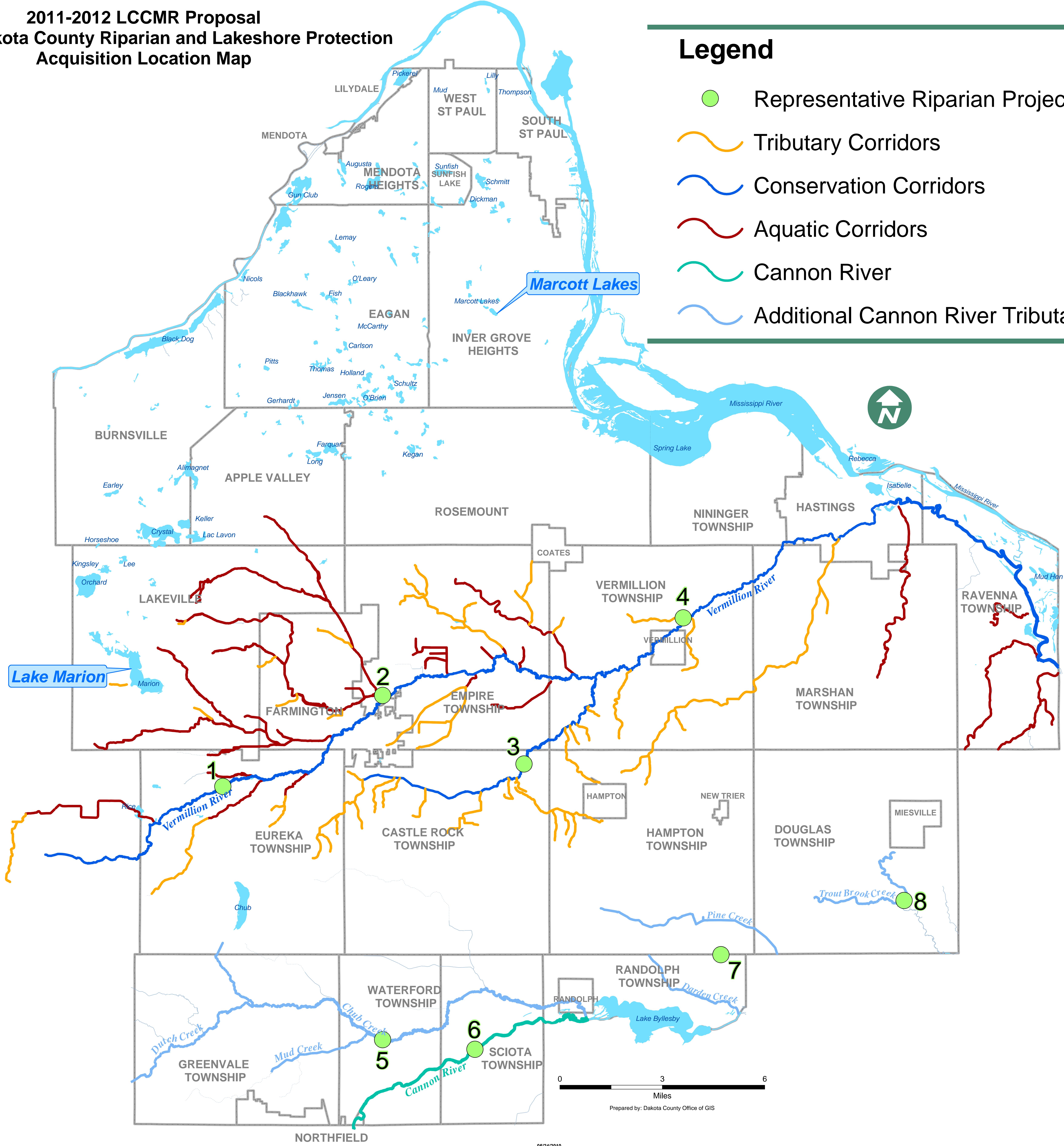
**NOTES:** These listed locations are generalized reference points. Acquisition and restoration projects will be funded in multiple locations along these identified rivers and streams.



**2011-2012 LCCMR Proposal**  
**MeCC 6: Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection**  
**Acquisition Location Map**

**Legend**

-  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 program 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 and Loring Park
- Development and implementation of a system-wide reduced mowing initiative and off-leash dog exercise area program
- Management of the J.D. Rivers Outdoor Discovery Center and Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden
- Management or Involvement in the following LCMR projects:
  - Urban Rangers
  - Multi-use Urban Green Space Project
  - Cedar Lake Trail
  - Longfellow House Interpretive Center

## **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 Conservation) Corridors project

## **2003 to Present Dakota County Land Conservation Manager**

- Expended or committed over \$18M of County funds to permanently protect more than 8,700 acres with a value of \$75 million as an outcome of two successive LCMR-funded projects in 1999 and 2001.
- Program Manager for 2008 LCCMR “Vermillion River Corridor Acquisition and Restoration in Dakota County” project to develop comprehensive plan, acquire a minimum of 156 acres and restore 70 acres.

## Organization 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.

