# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund 2012-2013 Request for Proposals (RFP)

Project Title: ENRTF ID: 064-D3					
MeCC VII - 2.6 & 3.7: Dakota County Lakeshore and Riparian Protection					
Topic Area: D. Land Acquisition & Restoration					
Total Project Budget: \$ 850,000					
Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 yrs, July 2013 - June 2016					
Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0					
Summary:					
This project will acquire 194 acres of conservation easements along rivers, streams and undeveloped lakeshore; develop Natural Resource Management Plans for 74 acres and restore/enhance 50 acres.					
Name: Alan Singer					
Sponsoring Organization: Dakota County					
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Apple Valley MN 55124					
<b>Telephone Number:</b> (952) 891-7001					
Email al.singer@co.dakota.mn.us					
Web Address www.dakota.co.mn.us					
Location  Region: Metro					
County Name: Dakota					
City / Township: multiple					
Funding Priorities Multiple Benefits Outcomes Knowledge Base Extent of Impact Innovation Scientific/Tech Basis Urgency Capacity Readiness Leverage Employment TOTAL %					

05/03/2012 Page 1 of 8

## **2012-2013 MAIN PROPOSAL**

**PROJECT TITLE:** MeCC7: Dakota County Lakeshore and Riparian Protection

#### I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The project will acquire an estimated ten conservation easements, totaling 134 acres from willing landowners, along the Mississippi River; 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 a 60-acre easement along Marcott Lakes in Inver Grove Heights. Natural Resource Management Plans will be completed on 74 acres and 50 acres of protected property will be restored/enhanced.

**Budget:** \$758,000

#### II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**Activity 1:** Acquisition of Conservation Easements

The completed LCCMR-funded Vermillion River Corridor Plan provides the basis for riparian land protection. The plan integrates and prioritizes the combined protection and improvement of water quality, wildlife habitat and appropriate outdoor recreational opportunities. A system of established criteria is used to evaluate and rank projects. The easements do not require public access, but projects including public access receive higher scores.

Outcome	<b>Completion Date</b>
Permanent protection of estimated 11 properties totaling an	
estimated 194 acres of high priority natural resource lands	June 30, 2015

Activity 2: Natural Resource management Plans and Restoration Budget: \$92,000

All easements require a Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) jointly developed by the County and the landowner. The NRMP describes the current and preferred habitat and other conditions with recommendations on how to achieve mutual goals. A detailed, three-year work plan, describing priority activities and responsibilities, is also completed as a core element of the NRMP. Due to the two-year time constraint, an estimated 50 percent of the riparian easements will have final NRMPs completed by June 30, 2014, with the remaining 50 percent having preliminary NRMPS. Easement deed language requires completion of the final NRMP within six months of closing. The timing and features of the acquisition will determine if a final NRMP can be completed. The application and selection process will also include projects that focus specifically on restoration of previously protected land.

C	<b>Outco</b>	Completion Date	
	1.	Final Natural Resource Management Plans and work plans for 60 acres of new easement acquisitions. Preliminary Natural Resource Management Plans for 74 acres for new easement acquisitions.	June 30, 2015
	2.	Restoration and Enhancement of 50 acres of previously protected	
		areas or early easement acquisitions.	June 30, 2016

05/03/2012 Page 2 of 8

## **III. PROJECT STRATEGY**

## A. Project Team/Partners

This proposal is part of the Metro Conservation Corridor Partnership proposal. Dakota County has used a very collaborative approach to its land conservation efforts over the past eight years. All land acquisition has been done on the basis of willing sellers- most often on a bargain sale basis. The Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization have contributed funds or inkind 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 of previous efforts. The Soil and Water Conservation District and the Friends of the Mississippi River have been critical partners in providing outreach, technical assistance and easement monitoring services. The County has worked very cooperatively with the DNR on a number of land conservation projects from contributing funds for state acquisitions and transferring County lands for a new WMA to jointly managing the Vermillion Highlands complex. 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 2012 FRPP funds are available for conservation corridor projects.

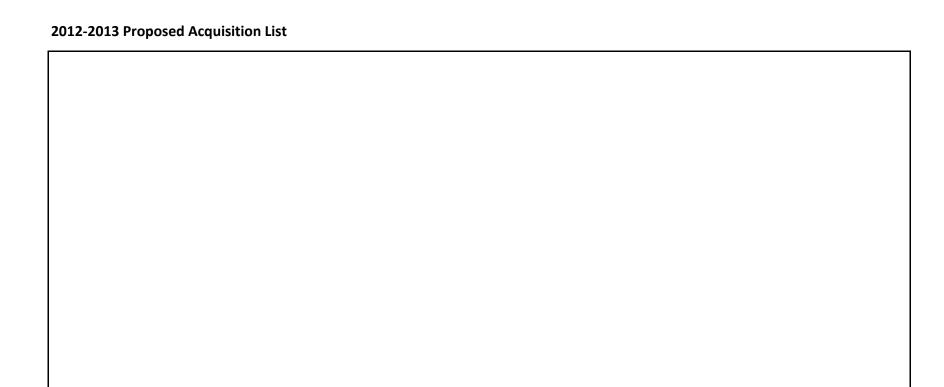
## **B.** Timeline Requirements

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. While we anticipate that acquisition funding can be accomplished in two years, the lapse between acquisition and implementing restoration takes longer. As a result, we would request that we have until June 30, 2016 to complete the project.

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

In 2011 the County completed an ambitious, comprehensive, long-term approach to land and water conservation vision and strategic implementation plan. This plan integrates acquisition of private regional park in-holdings; development of a 200-mile multi-purpose greenway system that focuses on recreation, habitat and water quality; and protecting and improving riparian and lakeshore buffers, and priority natural areas and agricultural conservation zones. County staff has estimated an additional 13,000 acres will need to be protected and managed to fully achieve a variety of public benefits at an estimated cost of \$42M.

05/03/2012 Page 3 of 8



**Project Title:** MeCC7 Dakota County lakeshore and Riparian Protection

Project Manager Name: Alan Singer

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$850,000

	Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund \$ Request: \$850,000							
#	Parcel Name	Acquisition Type (Fee Title or Conservation Easement)	County	Ecological Significance	Proposed#of Acres	Proposed # of Shoreline Miles (if applicable)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	
1	Grannis, Grannis, et.al.	Conservation Easement	Dakota	Undeveloped lakeshore of high quality lake	60	.74 mi.	Dakota County	
3	Vermillion River Headwaters	Conservation Easement	Dakota	State designated trout stream	30	1.3 mi.	Dakota County	
4	South, Middle, and North	Conservation Easement	Dakota	riparian habitat	20	1.1 mi.	Dakota County	
5	Vermillion River South	Conservation Easement	Dakota	State designated trout stream	20	1.1 mi.	Dakota County	
6	Eastern Main Stem of the	Conservation Easement	Dakota	riparian habitat	10	.57 mi	Dakota County	
7	Chub, Dutch, and Mud Creeks	Conservation Easement	Dakota	riparian habitat	20	1.1 mi.	Dakota County	
8	Cannon River	Conservation Easement	Dakota	state scenic river	20	1.1 mi.	Dakota County	
9	Pine and Darden Creeks	Conservation Easement	Dakota	riparian habitat	14	.77 mi	Dakota County	
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05/03/2012 Page 4 of 8

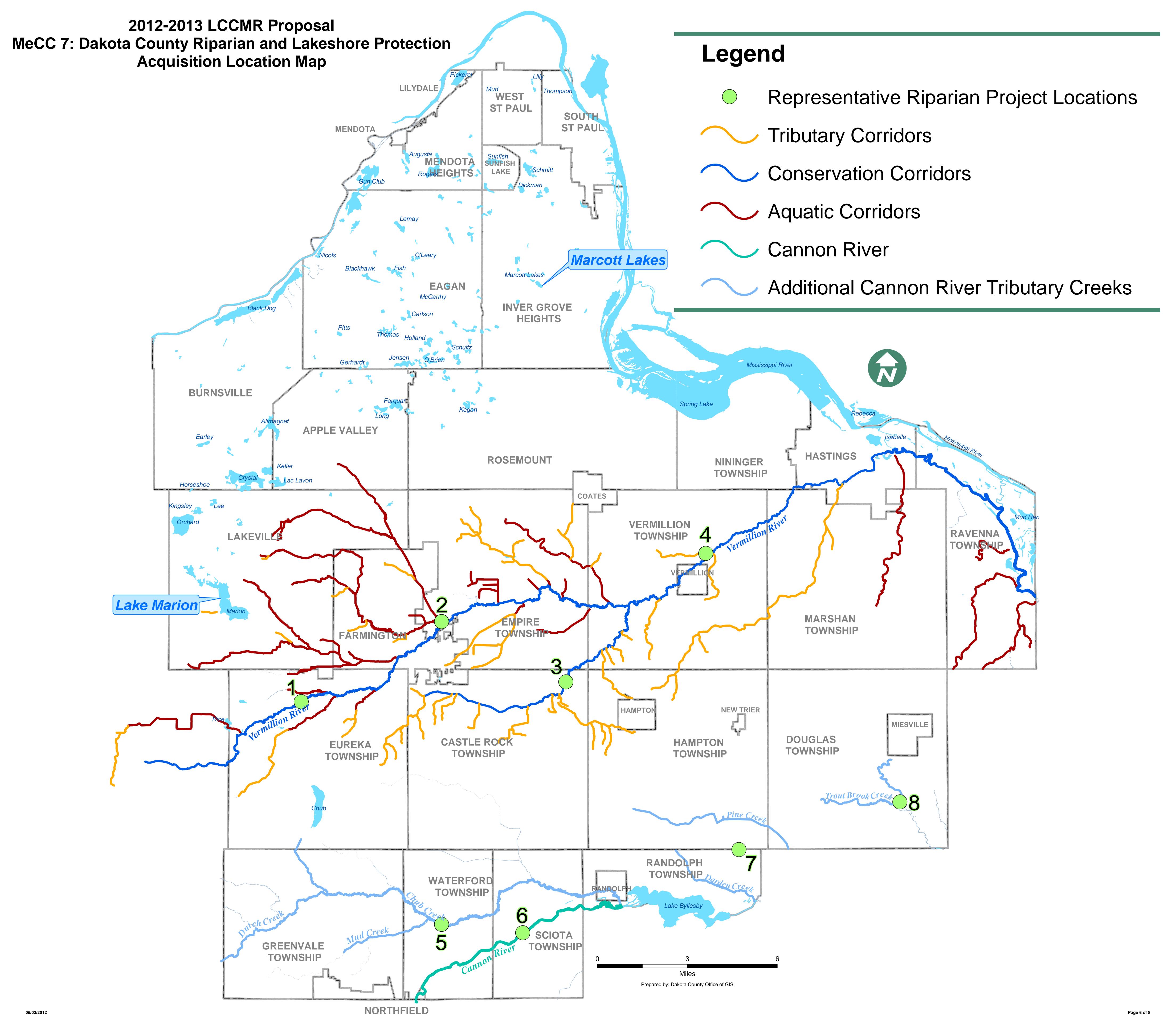
# 2012-2013 Detailed Project Budget

## IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET 3 years

BUDGET ITEM	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Contracts:	\$ 58,250
A. Landowner Outreach: 250 hours @ \$65 per hour over two-year period with Lee Markell	
B. Developing and Implementing Natural Resource Management Plans: 600 hours @ \$70	
per hour over three years with Friends of the Mississippi River and Dakota County SWCD	
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Native grass and forb seeds, native trees and shrubs, and	\$ 50,000
equipment use for installation	
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): 194 acres of easement held by Dakota	\$ 741,750
County	
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$ 850,000

## V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: \$700,000 from	\$ 910,000	Cash is
Dakota County, \$60,000 from Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization		secured.
\$50,000 from NRCS through FRPP, and \$100,000 in landowner donation		Landowner
		donation is
		pending.
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Future Outdoor Heritage	\$2,000,000	Uncertain
Funds may be requested for future phases of the Marcott Lakes project		
In-kind Services During Project Period: Dakota County staff for coordinating projects,	\$ 50,000	Secured
GIS, survey, environmental assessments, legal, and other necessary documentation.		
emaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): \$1035,000 in FY11 for \$1,035,000		Unspent
Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection as part of the MECC 6 project		and Not
		Legally
		Obligated
Funding History: \$293,000 in 1998 and 2001 for Phase I and Phase II of Farmland and	\$ 842,965	Spent
Natural Areas Program Plan, \$549,965 in 2008 for Vermillion River Cooridor Plan and		
Protection, \$1035,000 in 2011 for Dakota County Riparian and Lakeshore Protection as part		
of the MECC 6 project		



# **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 -Longfellow House Interpretive Center
  - -Multi-use Urban Green Space Project -Cedar Lake Trail

## 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 nearly \$20M of County funds to permanently protect more than 10,000 acres with a value of \$100 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 water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation plan for the Vermillion River in Scott and Dakota Counties and acquired 192-acre easement on priority land.

# **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.

The County recently adopted a comprehensive land conservation vision that includes the regional park system, including development of the new Whitetail Woods Regional Park; a 200-mile greenway system that integrates water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation; a buffer program for all rivers, streams and undeveloped lakeshore; farmland protection; and natural area protection.

05/03/2012 Page 7 of 8

05/03/2012 Page 8 of 8