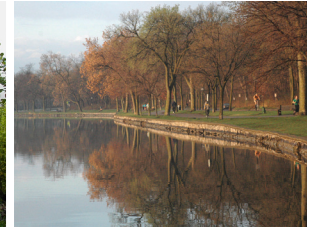


Gathering feedback on the Hennepin County Natural Resources Strategic Plan

Hennepin County is seeking feedback on its draft natural resources strategic plan. This plan is intended to guide the county and its partners in responding to natural resource issues and developing internal and external policies, programs and partnerships that improve, protect and preserve natural resources. This provides a summary of the plan and highlights strategies and key elements to meet our natural resources goals. The full plan is available for review at www.hennepin.us/naturalresources.



Goal 1: Hennepin County waters are clean and healthy

- Protect and restore lakes, rivers and streams
- Protect groundwater to ensure a safe and sustainable water supply
- Protect and restore wetlands

Restoring wetlands and banking mitigation credits

Under the Wetland Conservation Act, landowners who cannot restore or avoid impacting a wetland can replace lost wetland acres by purchasing wetland banking credits. Because there are limited wetland mitigation banking credits available in Hennepin County, credits are often purchased outside of the county, resulting in a net loss of wetlands within the county. To ensure the availability of mitigation credits within Hennepin County, the county will identify and evaluate wetland restoration and funding opportunities on county-owned properties and tax-forfeited lands. In addition, the county will assist the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources in locating willing county landowners with potential wetland restoration sites.



Goal 2: Hennepin County landscapes are diverse and functional and natural areas are preserved

- Protect and enhance natural areas, corridors and green spaces
- Establish and restore landscapes that serve an ecological function
- Control and prevent vegetative and biological threats to maintain healthy ecosystems
- Practice and promote environmental stewardship of the county's soil resources

Establish a conservation easement program

Conservation easements restrict development and certain types of use on a piece of property in perpetuity in order to protect its natural resources. The county will explore options for establishing a program that provides guidance for potential easements as opportunities arise via tax-forfeiture, capital projects or private landowner inquiries.



Maintain and increase a healthy tree canopy

Left unmanaged, the overall tree canopy in the county will likely continue to decline due to loss of trees from age, development, disease, pests and storm damage. The county will provide technical assistance to cities and will evaluate the feasibility of providing financial and logistical support for planning and mitigation efforts related to the emerald ash borer.

Goal 3: Hennepin County fosters effective partnerships

- Foster partnerships and strengthen collaboration with natural resource management entities
- Collaborate with internal partners to incorporate sustainable natural resource management strategies

Hennepin Natural Resources Partnership

The county has convened a group of representatives from watershed districts, water management organizations, cities, county departments, and state and regional natural resource agencies. The Hennepin County Natural Resources Partnership promotes collaborative land and water management efforts on issues transecting political and hydrologic boundaries, encourages sharing of resources and information, increases opportunities to leverage resources, and provides a venue to address countywide policy issues.

Goal 4: Hennepin County motivates environmental stewardship

- Engage the community in taking action to protect the environment

Environmental education

The county develops educational resources, shares technical information and provides funding for partners to implement environmental education projects that empower residents to take action to protect water and land. The county supports programs and projects that help audiences understand that they are part of an ecosystem and can take action to protect the environment regardless of where they live.

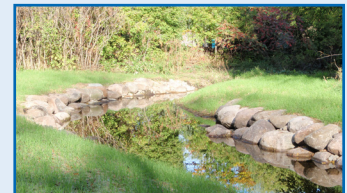


Goal 5: Hennepin County leverages financial resources

- Integrate the work of Hennepin County and partners to achieve the goals of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment
- Provide financial assistance

Leveraging financial resources

The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment provides funding for projects that protect, enhance and restore natural resources, including lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater, wetlands, prairies, forests and wildlife habitat. In an effort to lessen the burden on local taxpayers, the county will seek partners to jointly pursue grant funds on projects and programs that address common natural resources issues, needs and goals.



Provide feedback

Hennepin County is gathering feedback on this plan by hosting meetings, making presentations and surveying partners and residents. Feedback will be collected through July 31, 2015. The feedback will be used to improve the plan and a summary of the public engagement findings will be presented to the county board in fall 2015. Final adoption of the plan by the county board is anticipated in December 2015.

The full plan is available for review at www.hennepin.us/naturalresources. Partners and residents are encouraged to complete the online surveys. Written comments can be sent to randy.anhorn@hennepin.us.



From: [Laura Jester](#)
To: [Randy Anhorn, Hennepin Co](#)
Subject: Comments on NR Strategic Plan
Date: Friday, June 26, 2015 8:44:00 PM

Hi Randy,

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday. It's so nice to have such a great partner in the County! I look forward to continuing to work with you and other County staff on a variety of projects and programs.

In addition to my responses in the partner survey, here are a few additional comments I have on the Strategic Plan:

- It's very well written and concise!
- Goal #1 seems to lack a statement about protecting and restoring water resources for aquatic life, habitats, and ecology.
- It would be interesting to note if County projects will be required to implement (or at least strive toward) the strategies in this plan in their own projects/lands (Strategy 1.1.4, for instance)
- Strategy 1.3.1 is fantastic and much needed in the BCWMC. Perhaps the County can assist the BCWMC with wetland identification and assessment throughout the watershed.
- In Strategy 2.2.3 consider adding "invasive species and climate change" in the list of threats to a healthy tree canopy.
- In Strategy 3.1.1 I would argue that watershed organizations already work toward "united" (rather than "disjointed") management of water resources within their boundaries. Consider rewording the phrase "leads to a disjointed approach to managing natural resources."
- Can the County support or encourage its cities to participate in the GreenStep Cities program? <http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/>
- Consider adding a timeline to implementing these strategies along with a list of responsible County departments for each objective or strategy. This may help ensure implementation of the plan.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan. Please let me know if you have any questions for me. I will ask the BCWMC Commissioners and TAC members to also review and comment on the Plan.

Take care,

Laura Jester

Administrator, Bassett Creek Watershed

Management Commission

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