

Blue Earth County's

***Greenprint for Tomorrow* Planning Project**

Citizen Participation Plan

The *Greenprint for Tomorrow* is intended to function as an inventory, prioritization and foundation for other planning efforts. The steps involved in Blue Earth County's *Greenprint for Tomorrow* and the type of public input proposed are summarized below:

Community vision and goals

The Blue Earth County Board of Commissioner's Strategic Plan identified the following community vision and goals:

“Special Goal 1. Review and update MAGMAPS and MAWTAPS and work with Public Works and Parks to review and update MATAPS.

B. Action Initiative – Develop a natural resources inventory and management plan that evaluates and addresses the following: agricultural preservation, open space, wildlife habitat and corridors, recreation and water quality to be used as part of an environmentally sensitive approach to transportation planning (MATAPS), growth management (MAGMAPS and MAWTAPS), wetlands (WCA), and open space planning. Responsibility- Julie Conrad and task force”

The task force will also develop goals and timelines for completing project tasks.

One or more consultants will be hired to assist the County and Steering Committee with this project.

Process

The task force will roughly follow guidelines established in two publications: “A Quick Guide to Using Natural Resources Information” published by the Minnesota DNR and Local Greenprinting for Growth” published jointly by the National Association of Counties and the Trust for Public Land.

1. Natural Resources Inventory

All existing data related to natural resources will be collected. Existing information such as soils and topography, surface water resources such as lakes, rivers and wetlands, vegetation, land use, threatened and endangered species, parks and trails, etc will be included in the inventory. There will be little, if any, public input during the inventory phase of the project. Instead a technical committee will discuss the relevant data sources and advise the consultant. The technical committee will be made of up primarily State agency technical staff from the DNR, BWSR and others.

2. Assessment of the Natural Resources Inventory

The Steering and Technical Committees will review the inventory data and assess its accuracy and use.

Habitat Patches

The consultant will use existing, GIS based models developed by the DNR for use in the metro greenways project to identify habitat and conservation areas. These individual models will then be put together to create a composite map that shows habitat patches. The Technical Committee will be involved with quality assurance related to application of the assessment models.

Corridors

The results of the inventory, models, mapping and other information will be brought to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will then evaluate the information and provide input into the establishment of ecological and other criteria for development of Blue Earth County's *Greenprint for Tomorrow* to be used in GIS based modeling. In addition to natural resources data, additional information, including census data, transportation, land use, park and open space and other plans, will also be used to further develop project.

The *Greenprint for Tomorrow* will include maps, criteria used and general policy statements that further refine the community vision and goals.

3. Develop a plan

The *Greenprint for Tomorrow* can be used by the County, local governments and others for more refined and detailed implementation plans. Implementation plans that may include the *Greenprint for Tomorrow* include but are not limited to:

- Local Comprehensive Land Use Plans
- Zoning, Shoreland, Floodplain, Subdivision and other land use ordinances
- Park and Open Space Plans
- Wetland Conservation and Management Plans
- Mining Reclamation Plans
- Forestry Management Plans
- Watershed Management and Implementation Plans
- Transportation Plans (such as MATAPS)
- Growth Management Plans (such as MAGMAPS)
- Wastewater Management Plans (such and MAWTAPS)

Other task specific committees may be formed or existing advisory committee used for development of some of the plans listed above.

Steering Committee

This committee will meet several times over the course of the project, providing general direction and participating in the assessment and prioritization phase.

Open houses

There will be three public open houses spaced at critical times during the inventory, assessment and prioritization phase of the project. The purpose of the open houses will be to provide information and to get input from as many individuals and interests as possible. The project consultants will attend and facilitate these meetings. The Steering Committee will also be asked to participate. County staff will assist with the open houses. The County's public information person will be asked to assist with these efforts.

The open house meetings will be promoted with the following:

- Advertising
- Press releases
- Invitations to organized groups and interested individuals

County web site and links

The strength of the *Greenprint for Tomorrow* will come from a combination of good science and public input. Public meeting agendas and other useful information will be posted on the web site. The web site will also allow visitors to provide input and feedback on the project.

Discussion Forum or Survey

With assistance from County's IT and Administration Departments, a web based survey and/or discussion forum could be available on site. Maximizing opportunities for public input and discussion will be helpful to the Steering Committee in the process of assessing the natural resources inventory and prioritizing specific corridors.

Links

For those who would like to learn more about greenprinting, conservation, natural resources based planning, habitat protection and other elements of Blue Earth County's *Greenprint for Tomorrow*, the web site will provide links to national and state recognized planning, greenprint, natural resources and other relevant information.

Potential links:

- NACo Greenprint guide books
- University of Minnesota Design Center for the American Urban Landscape
- Center for Watershed Protection
- Trust for Public Land
- DNR – Guide to Using Natural Resource Information
- Nonpoint Education For Municipal Officials (NEMO)

Presentations to interested groups

The *Greenprint for Tomorrow* has the potential for broad application throughout the county. Interested groups and stakeholders will be very important to the implementation of the plan and its use. Power point, handouts and other materials will be presented to interested groups.

List of possible groups:

- County Environmental Committee
- County Planning Commission
- City of Mankato Environmental Committee
- City Planning Commissions
- County Parks Board
- City Parks Boards
- City Councils, Mayors and Clerks monthly meetings
- Township Officials, quarterly meeting
- Conservation Organizations
- Wildlife Organizations
- DNR