

Wilderness in the City

2019 Annual Meeting and Social Event



Photo of Barred Owl at Lebanon Hills Courtesy of Benjamin Olson

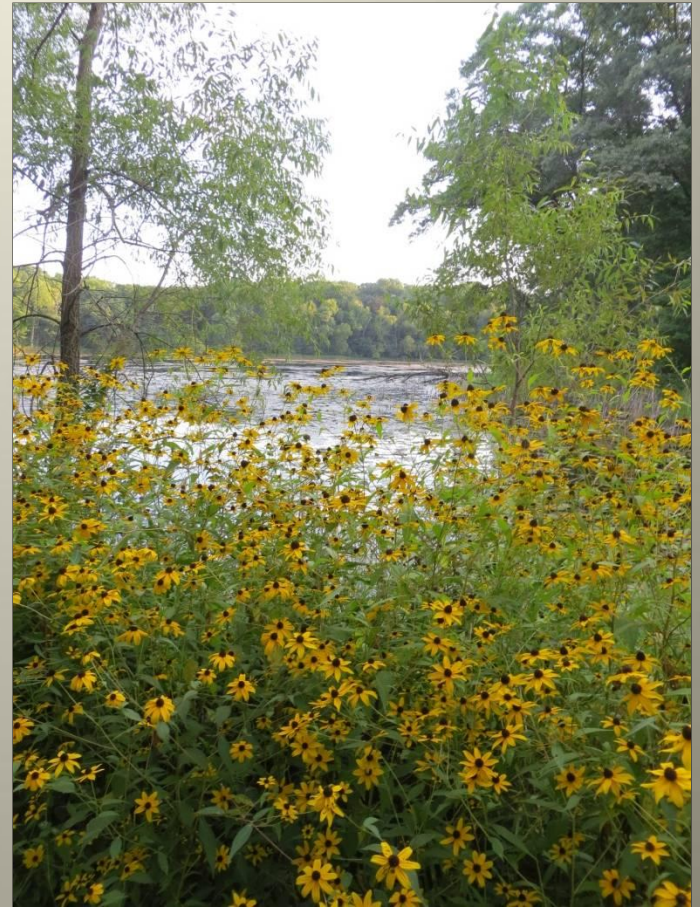
Wilderness in the City

Our Mission:

Dedicated to preserving and enhancing natural urban areas for future generations.

We Envision:

- Parklands with healthy ecosystems for nature-based, year-around opportunities.
- Enhanced wildlife habitats in an otherwise developed urban setting.
- Natural spaces, close to home and accessible to all, that offer respite from the built world around us.



Wilderness in the City

Pathway to Success

- Natural Resource Stewardship
- Community Outreach
- Advocacy

Barriers to Success

- Neglect to ongoing restoration and management of natural spaces
- Excessive development for built recreation amenities
- Lack of public engagement



Your involvement is critical to the long-term preservation of Lebanon Hills and other urban natural areas.

Thank you for your support!

Dakota County Forever Wild Parks

Natural Resources Funding (System)

Budget for 2013: \$150,000

Budget for 2019: \$1,033,998

End of 2018: 2,685 acres restored

End of 2023: 3,500 acres restored

Long-term goal: 100% of parks and greenway corridors restored with ongoing management



Before Restoration



After Restoration

Dakota County Forever Wild Parks

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2019 budget also includes:

- *\$12.4 million for greenway bike trail development*
- *\$3.9 million for park development*

Source: Dakota County Parks CIP, 2019-2023



Before Restoration



After Restoration

Lebanon Hills – Restoration

Natural Resources Management Plan

- Anticipated approval 2019
- Will help define strategy for restoration of entire park.

Grant Funded Projects

- 336 acres in progress
- Additional 104 acres anticipated


Additional Projects

- Removing large buckthorn around Camp Sac
- Monitoring vegetation and wildlife throughout the park
- Water Quality Study




Lebanon Hills – Development

External Partners

- Natural Gas Pipeline Expansion
- Power Line Project
- Cliff Road Expansion 


County Projects 2019

- Visitor Center “Campus” \$375,975
 - Improved watercraft rental area
 - Accessible watercraft launch
 - Improved seating/retaining walls
 - Outdoor education / gathering space
- Campground Improvement Study 
 - Entry road and traffic circulation
 - Lighting improvements
 - Natural resource restoration
 - Interpretation, education, and wayfinding



Lebanon Hills – Connector Trail



- Most controversial aspect of the 2015 Master Plan Update
- Originally conceived as Hub of Greenway Network but was opposed by majority of public input received
- Function of the trail was revised to serve as a recreation trail for park visitors, and not as part of the Greenway network
- Greenway alignments were revised to connect around the outside of the park
- **Recent documents indicate nothing has changed** 

2013 Greenway Regional Bike Network



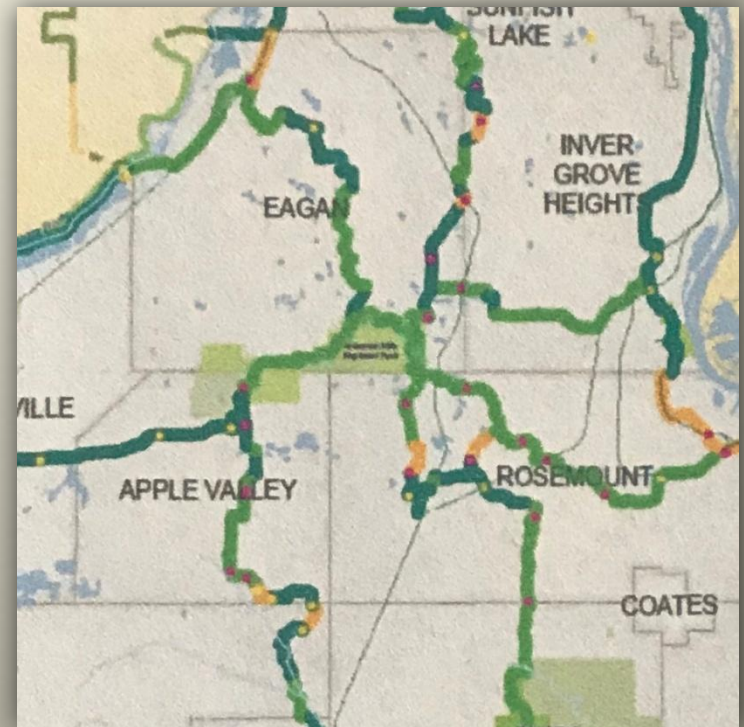
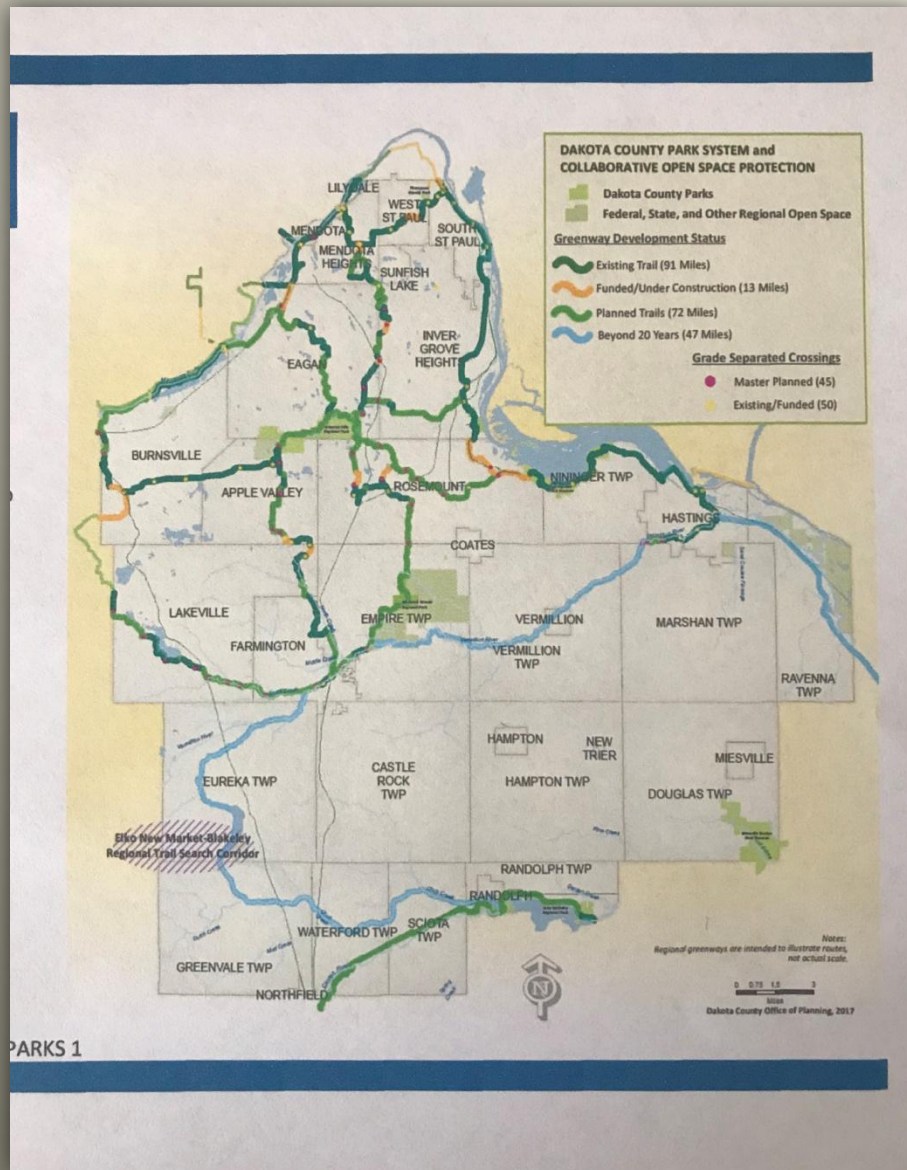
2017 Revised Greenway Regional Bike Network

Figure 4.16: Dakota County Planned Regional Greenway System

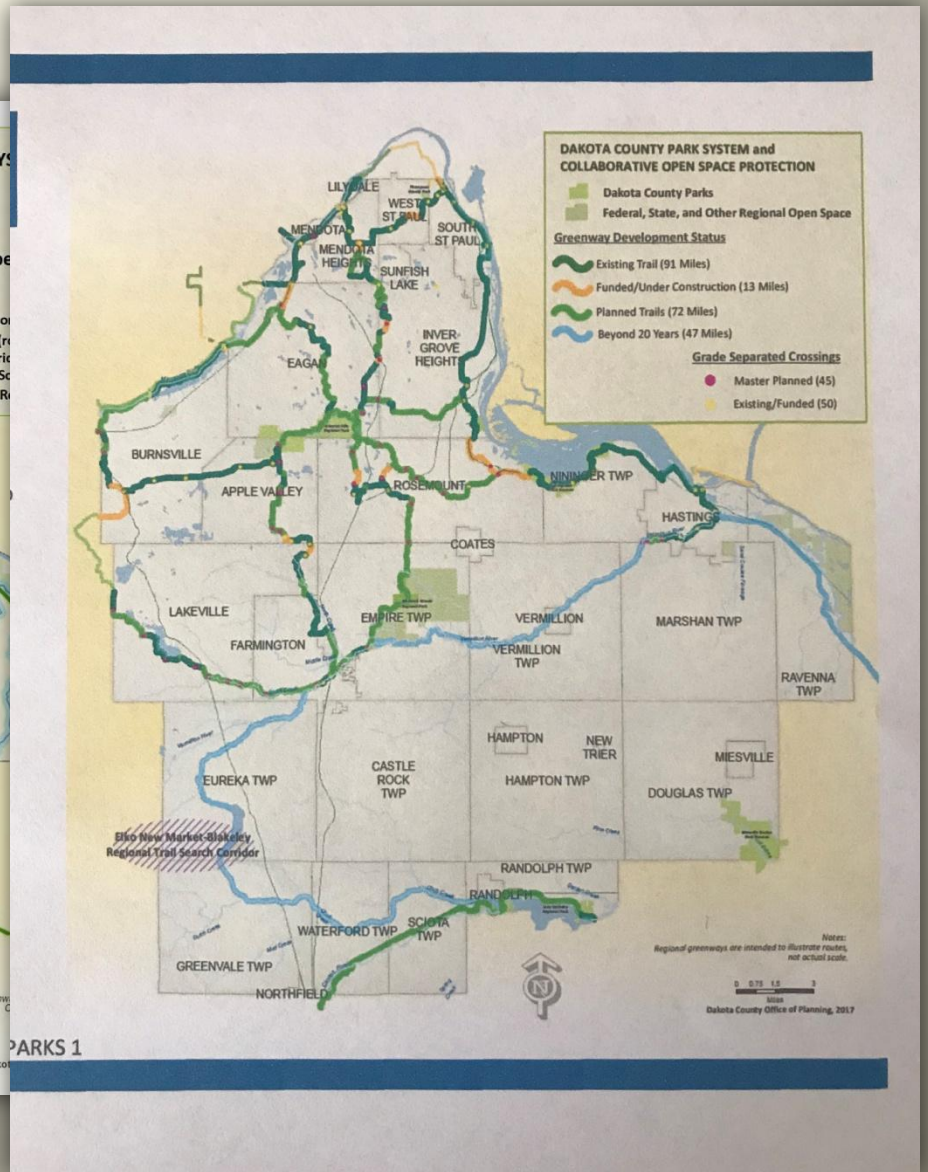


Source: Dakota County Planning

2019 Greenway Regional Bike Network ~ Parks CIP



2013 vs. 2019



Our Position – Connector Trail

Figure 4.16: Dakota County Planned Regional Greenway System



Source: Dakota County Planning

Greenway Bike Network must remain outside the boundaries of Lebanon Hills and should not directly link to recreation trails within Lebanon Hills.

Greenway connections around Lebanon Hills should be completed and functioning prior to any action on proposed connector trail within the park.

Lebanon Hills – Connector Trail

Current Status

2019: No Actions Anticipated

2020: Feasibility Study to determine the best technical and programmatic alignment for the connector trails

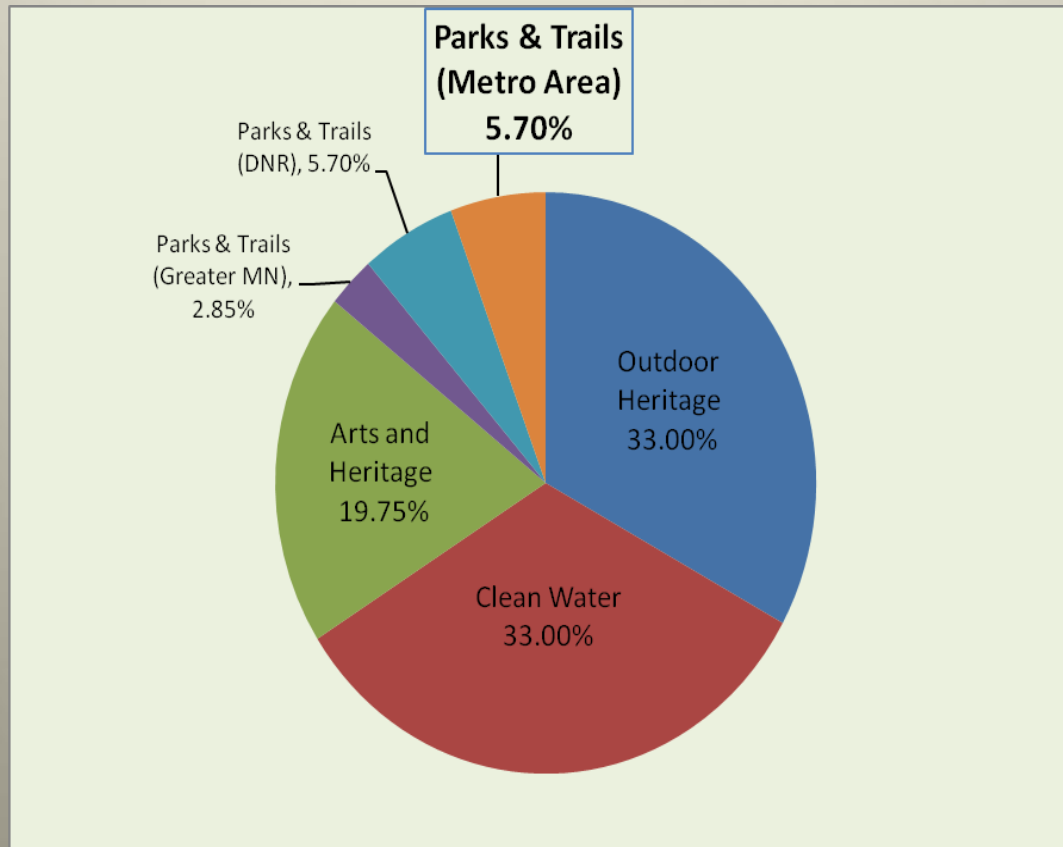
Stay Informed * Get Involved * Take Action

1. Continue to engage with your elected officials and the Met Council
2. Develop alternative concept for improving access, which is a goal we support
3. Support Our *Legacy of Nature* Campaign



A Legacy of Nature

Minnesota's Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment



A Legacy of Nature

Minnesota's Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment

- 2008: Most people cited “clean water and preserving nature” as their reason for supporting Legacy
- 2011: 25-year Legacy Plan found overarching vision “protect natural resources and create next generation of stewards
- 2018: DNR finds top public priority for parks and trails fund: Take care of natural resources. (ranked last: build new amenities”)
- **Since inception, the majority of spending in the metro region has focused on new development and expanding the built environment.**



A Legacy of Nature

Minnesota's Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment

- Metro area P&T fund does not have oversight body to comprehensively review and recommend project proposals
- Metropolitan Council allocates funds based on a distribution formula
- If Met Council determines projects meet criteria in their Regional Parks Policy Plan (*which is different than the Legacy Plan*) then park agencies are free to establish their own priorities for Legacy funds
- Majority of these funds are used for capital development...



A Legacy of Nature

Minnesota's Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment

...even when that irreversibly degrades ecologically sensitive areas of parklands.



We are advocating for legislative action to assure this conservation fund improves natural resources -- not diminishes them -- as intended by voters.

What will be our Legacy?



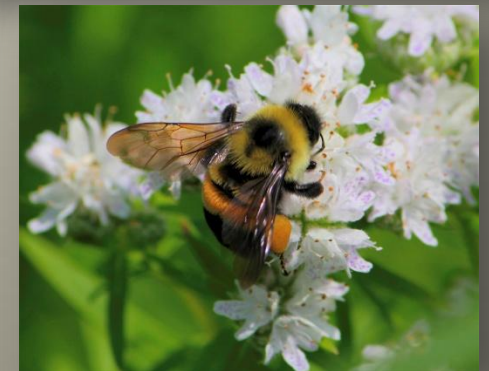
What will be our Legacy?



Support “A Legacy of Nature”

“It’s not about what it is, it’s about what it can be”

~ Dr. Seuss





**“IT’S NOT
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~ DR. SEUSS

Thank You!