

# For Developers

## Creating a Legacy through Conservation Development: Incentives and Bonuses

Involvement in natural resource protection is voluntary. *Scott County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes natural resource protection in the context of growth. Any parcel proposed for development within the unincorporated area of the County and a mapped **Natural Area Corridor** could be eligible for additional density, or other incentives, if the natural area is permanently protected through a conservation easement.

### Evaluating a Development Proposal

- Is the property (or portion of the property) within or adjacent to a **Natural Area Corridor**;
- What types of natural resources are present and what is their quality;
- What is the purpose of the affected **Natural Area Corridor**;
- Is preservation of the relevant natural resource appropriate;
- What levels of natural resource protection already exist, for example through legal statutes;
- What is the appropriate implementation method or option?

### Examples of Possible Implementation Tools

1. Guide the development to minimize impact to the resource (e.g., reconfigure lots or road alignment)
2. Developer-dedicated conservation easements
3. Provide incentives in exchange for public benefits, such as:
  - Higher density allowed for clustering development away from and protecting the resource
  - Transfer of development rights, selling density opportunities for developing in areas where there is less impact;
  - Set-aside programs, such as Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).



# Creating a Natural Areas Legacy

Natural resources are important in shaping Scott County's distinctive character. The rolling hills of New Market Township, the wooded bluffs around Jordan, the migration of birds over the bluffs of Blakeley, and the Minnesota River Valley refuge areas are only some of the features that define our community and add to the quality of life for our residents.

These and other features are at risk over the next two decades if we do not manage these resources in the face of continued growth and development. Scott County has unveiled what may be the last best chance to preserve a balanced future.

**Creating a Natural Areas Legacy** is a new approach that is sustainable, and over the long term will be a more cost-effective way of managing water resources and associated infrastructure, as compared to the traditional ways of developing and managing stormwater.

Based on a concept called green infrastructure, it leaves the floodplain to holding flood waters, and keeps homes and structures out of harm's way. It also creates a buffered natural environment that not only provides open space, but also protects water quality and wildlife, creating corridors with the capacity to absorb cumulative impacts.



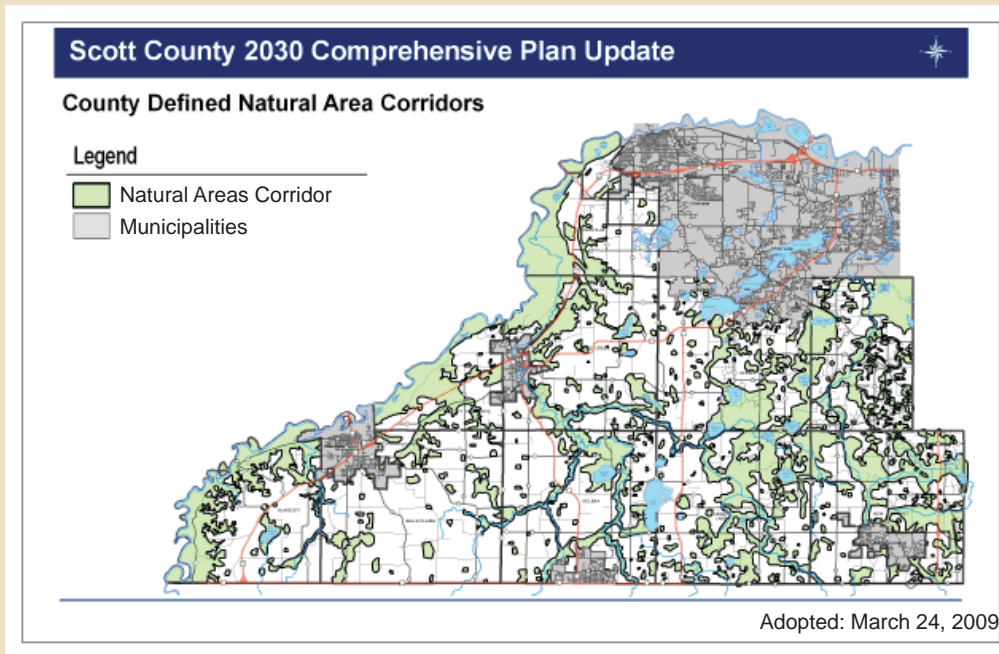
*With your help, Scott County is undertaking a new approach for conserving our critical lands and waters through the proactive, voluntary conservation actions of partners, communities, and individuals.*



## How You Can Help

**Creating a Natural Areas Legacy** is a way you can make a difference. It is not intended to prohibit development, but it identifies the significant natural features and corridors of the County in a map called **Natural Area Corridors**. Property owners work voluntarily with the County to protect or enhance the resource. The program will also protect the quality of our water courses, lakes, and wetlands while promoting land stewardship on adjoining uplands.

Landowners may voluntarily partner with the County to develop or manage their property. There are cost-share grants available to implement land stewardship practices or density bonuses for development with conservation easements.



## Achieving the Vision: Working Together

Landowner assistance is only one part of a coordinated approach that will be used to reach the full vision of **Creating a Natural Areas Legacy**. Elements of this coordinated approach include:

- The Watershed Management Organization (WMO) cost share and incentive programs;
- The County's (and other local government units or LGUs) *Comprehensive Plan Updates*;
- Watershed standards set by the WMO;
- A natural resource-based regional park system; and
- Strategic acquisitions by WMOs and LGUs from willing landowners when resources are available.

## For Landowners

### Creating a Legacy through Stewardship: Cost-Share and Incentive Programs

Several Cost-Share and Incentive programs are available to landowners to help improve surface and ground water quality, and wildlife habitat throughout Scott County. By combining local, state, and federal resources the programs provide educational, technical, and funding assistance to install various conservation practices in Scott County thereby building and maintaining a "green" infrastructure.

Cost-share programs share the cost of the project with the landowner. Funds are matched from applicable programs to maximize cost share for the landowner. The landowner share is typically between ten and twenty-five percent of total project cost.

Incentive programs compensate the landowner for changing the use of the land and converting the land to a conservation use.

Priority is given to landowners whose property has sensitive species or communities or other features highlighted in the **Natural Areas Corridors** map.

#### Examples of Cost-Share and Incentive Activities

- Protect, restore wetlands, waterfront (riparian) areas and wildlife habitat
- Install conservation practices to reduce cropland erosion and urban erosion
- Provide stabilization assistance to protect and stabilize eroding stream banks
- Provide technical assistance in the design and implementation of rain gardens and lakeshore restorations

## Purpose of Natural Area Corridors

- Directs where natural resources can be enhanced or restored (e.g., what types of vegetation should be planted, where stormwater ponds should be located);
- Protect and buffer water resources;
- Allow for movement of wildlife for their feeding, breeding, and nesting needs;
- Provide connections between larger preserved areas;
- Guide where trails may be located, if compatible and appropriate;
- Safeguard landscape views to help maintain the rural "feel" of the community;
- Buffer a natural resource from the impact of development;
- Recommend priorities for protecting natural areas and/or parks; and
- Assist with transportation planning.



For more information on the *2030 Comprehensive Plan* or to view the **Natural Area Corridors** map, contact the Planning Department at (952) 496-8475 or visit the County's website ([www.co.scott.mn.us](http://www.co.scott.mn.us)) and click on "2030 Comp Plan" under the "Property, GIS & Land" tab.

For more information or to answer any questions, please contact the Scott County Natural Resources Program at (952) 496-8475.

