

Shaping priorities for protecting natural resources in Hennepin County

We need your input! Let us know how you would like to be engaged in the update of the Hennepin County Natural Resources Strategic Plan

From lakes and rivers to urban parks, forests and prairies, Hennepin County has an abundance of diverse landscapes and natural resources. These natural resources provide critical habitat for wildlife, protect water quality, offer recreational opportunities, and enhance our collective quality of life.

We all play a role in protecting our natural resources, and we need to hear from you. We are seeking input from the community as we update the Hennepin County Natural Resources Strategic Plan, which will define our natural resources goals and strategies for the next 10 years. The updated plan will seek to better align with new county initiatives, shifting demographics, and changing landscapes. This is the first opportunity to incorporate the county's climate and racial equity priorities into the foundation of the plan.

We will be seeking input from the community throughout the year-long plan development process to ensure your values and priorities are reflected.

About the Hennepin County Natural Resources Strategic Plan

The Hennepin County Natural Resources Strategic Plan guides the county's work to improve, protect, and preserve natural resources. The plan provides a framework for our natural resources policies, programs, and partnerships. This plan guides the duties and authorities of the Soil and Water Conservation District, a role that Hennepin County fulfills. The plan also includes science and data-based information to guide staff in addressing the technical issues facing surface waters, groundwater, natural resources, wildlife, and soils of Hennepin County.

Hennepin County's role in protecting natural resources

Work the county does to protect land and water resources includes:

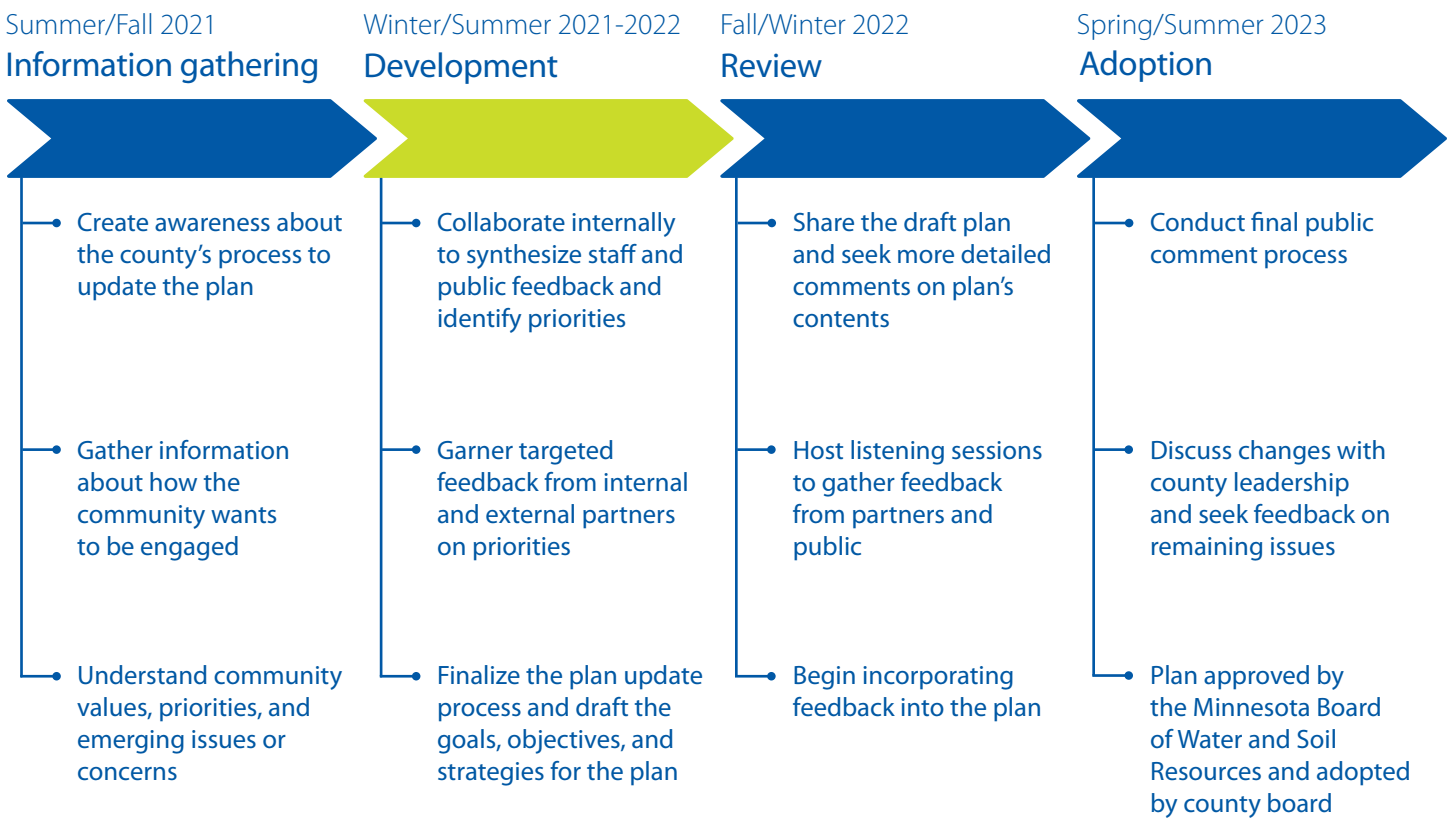
- Protect and restore natural areas, including managing and acquiring conservation easements to permanently protect the best remaining natural areas in the county.
- Protect and restore wetlands, including enforcing the state's Wetland Conservation Act.
- Improve water quality by partnering with local watershed management organizations and cities.
- Prevent the spread of noxious weeds and aquatic invasive species by conducting inspections, educating residents, and working with partners on projects.
- Improve and diversify the tree canopy by growing, planting and maintaining healthy trees, working with partners on large-scale planting events and through grants, managing threats to the tree canopy, and educating the public.
- Educate residents and provide technical and financial assistance to landowners on topics such as sustainable landscaping, agricultural best management practices, soil health initiatives, and other practices to protect water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Manage navigational buoys and public access points for several public waters, including Lake Minnetonka, Lake Independence and Lake Sarah.



Plan update process and timeline

Staff are completing the update process now. We anticipate four phases, each of which will include community engagement. Staff are committed to listening to understand community values about natural resources, learn about their priorities, and identify emerging issues or concerns that should be considered in the plan.

Each phase will include opportunities for the public to offer feedback and stay up to date on the progress toward the adoption of the updated plan. A variety of engagement tools will be used throughout the process, including surveys, meetings, and one-on-one conversations. Staff will share updates through the Natural Resources Strategic Plan email list, on the county's website, and through social media and local news outlets.



Stay up to date

Learn more at hennepin.us/natural-resources-plan and sign up for email updates to stay informed of the process each step of the way.

