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The project team included:
Mary Vogel, Co-Director
Roger Martin, Senior Research Fellow
Egle Vanagaite, Research Fellow

Project Partners:
Eric Antonson, Conservation Corps Minnesota
Julie Rath, Redwood Area Development Corporation
Mark A. Erickson, Renville County Division of Environment and Community Development
Bradley H. Cobb, Green Corridor, Inc
Loran Kaardal, Tatanka Bluffs Corridor
Barry Huisman, Renville County Parks
Bob Knutson, Renville County Parks
Pat Dingels, Redwood Area Development Corporation

Conservation Corps Minnesota Crew Members:
Allex Askew, Crew Leader
Ellen Fraley, Crew Leader
Alex Nelson
Cody Brant
Katie Donkers
Maryanna Ejiofor
Pa Chee Lor
Theophile Maceno

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For alternative formats, direct requests to:
Center for Changing Landscapes
151 Rapson Hall
89 Church Street
Minneapolis, MN  55455
612.624.7557

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Partnerships</th>
<th>6 - 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope of Work</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY: SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minnesota River Valley Brief Overview</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skalbekken County Park</td>
<td>10 - 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sites</td>
<td>12 - 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Tasks and Construction Schedule</td>
<td>14 - 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Entrance and Equestrian Campsite</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Plan</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Work Tasks Plan</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting Plan</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Construction Elements</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Elements</td>
<td>21 - 24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix A: Site Drawings</th>
<th>27 - 34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Works Tasks and Process</td>
<td>35 - 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Conservation Corps Minnesota Crew</td>
<td>37 - 38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Minnesota River Valley, the Greater Whole: Weaving Assets Together Through Regional Citizen Leadership and Partnerships for a Regional Outdoor Recreation Based Economy and Youth Development.

The Minnesota River and its valley define the region. It connects all the communities, and its natural and cultural resource base has shaped many citizen-lead partnerships to enhance and develop the region with an eye to its future. Partnership of Tatanka Bluffs, Green Corridor, Center for Changing Landscapes, and the Conservation Corps of Minnesota received funds to:

- Build on the citizen-led initiatives and CCL's work by creating additional designs that will connect all the Valley's individual initiatives such as the county trail system, the Minnesota River State Trail, the Minnesota River Scenic Byway, the Minnesota River Water Trail, the acquired natural resource lands, and the historic initiatives into a seamless natural resource and cultural-based amenity system,
- Provide resources for the building of these designs by the Conservation Corps, and
- Extend the impact of the Blandin Leadership Program graduates regionally by engaging graduates in a mentoring program with the Conservation Corps of Minnesota.

This integrated approach to developing the natural and cultural resource based recreation economy in the Minnesota River Valley builds on the strengths of its partners and work already accomplished to move the Valley communities forward together.

Conservation Corps Minnesota, Summer Youth Corps

Conservation Corps youth crew members work and live outdoors for eight weeks during the summer, restoring our natural resources. AmeriCorps crew leaders mentor youth in hard work, community service and environmental stewardship. All are well trained, well equipped and ready for projects on public lands throughout Minnesota.

Summer Youth Corps Participation in Blandin-Sponsored Minnesota River Valley Project:

- Blandin leadership graduates will recruit volunteers from the community to work under the leadership of Summer Youth Corps crew leaders on natural resource, public access and park improvement projects,
- Blandin leadership graduates will work with youth crews on projects to share their knowledge and civic experience and to mentor youth, and
- After work educational and social events led by Blandin graduates and local community members will include presentations by Summer Youth Corps participants on the importance of environmental stewardship.

Partnerships

Tatanka Bluffs Corridor

This organization evolved from the Blandin Community Economic Advantage (CEA) model in 2006. The Tatanka Bluffs corridor (TBC) identified the natural history and ecological resources of the Mid-Minnesota River Watershed as the region’s most underutilized assets with economic potential. The group organized regionally and developed a vision of making the “Tatanka Bluffs Corridor” a competitive regional outdoor recreation destination for camping, ATV parks, hiking, biking, horse trail riding, canoeing, snowmobiling, birding, fishing, hunting and ecological, cultural and historical interpretation. This corridor stretches from the Upper Sioux Agency State Park in Yellow Medicine County to the Fort Ridgely State Park in Nicollet County, along the Minnesota River. The width of the corridor includes all of Redwood and Renville Counties and their 26 communities. Through cooperative collaborations the economic impact of this recreation economy extends along the Minnesota River from Ortonville to Mankato.

Center for Changing Landscapes

The Center for Changing Landscapes (CCL) was established in 2003 as an interdisciplinary research and outreach center in the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture and the College of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota. It continues as a center in the recently reconfigured College of Design and the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Sciences.

The Center is an interdisciplinary research and outreach center; its cross-scale work combines design/planning expertise with natural resource expertise and knowledge to support land use and community form decision-making at the site, district, and regional scales to protect, preserve, and enhance Minnesota’s landscapes and their related cultural and natural resources in the face of changing development patterns, resource use, demographics, recreational patterns, economic initiatives, and environmental degradation.

Conservation Corps Minnesota

Conservation Corps Minnesota traces its roots to the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps, which provided natural-resource jobs to unemployed young people so they could support their families during the Great Depression. When federal support for conservation corps ended in 1981, the Minnesota Conservation Corps was created by the Minnesota Legislature to offer youth and young adult programs through the Department of Natural Resources. In 1999, the Friends of the Minnesota Conservation Corps was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which assumed operations in 2003.

Conservation Corps Minnesota provides hands-on environmental stewardship and service-learning opportunities to youth and young adults while completing valuable conservation and natural-resource management projects, as well as emergency response work, throughout the region. Its goals are to help young people from diverse backgrounds become more connected to the environment, engaged in natural-resource conservation, involved in the community and prepared for future employment. These goals are accomplished through a variety of programs, including the Summer Youth Corps, an eight-week residential program for teenagers ages 15-18. Youth begin at a base camp in St. Croix State Park, then spike camp throughout the region working in 13 crews of 6 youth led by 2 well-trained AmeriCorps members per crew. Youth corps members and their
young adult leaders receive a living allowance for their service. As AmeriCorps members, the leaders also receive an education award at the end of their service.

The Partners and their Roles

The project focuses on the strengths of the Tatanka Bluffs and Blandin Community Leadership Program graduates, the Center for Changing Landscapes of the University of Minnesota, and Conservation Corps Minnesota on the design and construction of natural resource based recreational projects in the Minnesota River Valley to advance the development of an outdoor resource based tourism economy in the Valley by:

- Involve community graduates of the Blandin leadership program in a focused regional effort to develop the area’s economy, (Tatanka Bluffs lead),
- Address the design/planning needs of the many projects that are under way including the over 8 million dollars of recent land acquisitions, an effort led by the Green Corridor nonprofit, (Center for Changing Landscapes lead),
- Create designs that link the variety of citizen-led efforts within the Valley together into a synergistic recreational system, (Center for Changing Landscapes),
- Build projects that support the outdoor recreation economy, Conservation Corps Minnesota lead), and
- Enhance the civic dimension of Conservation Corps Minnesota youth development program. (All three partners)

Scope of Work

The project partnership team brings together a range of skills and offers a wide range of perspectives. It brings together those that are working on economic development projects in the Minnesota Valley, engages economically challenged and minority youths from urban, suburban, and rural backgrounds; and community-driven design skills.

The project brings an opportunity to weave the individual economic development efforts together into a larger, connected whole by building on and enhancing local leadership to create regional leadership, identifying and designing specific physical projects, and building those projects through youth and community efforts that enrich the Corps’ youth development program and bring the Valley’s economic development efforts to the next level.

Project Goals:

- Advance the Valley’s separate economic developments efforts to create an outdoor-based recreation economy by linking them together into a synergistic recreational system,
- Build on local work in progress, create an effective model of regional citizen-engaged leadership linked to physical development projects by demonstrating the power of site projects as vehicles to energize community/regional development through a Blandin-trained local community leaders regional network/Center for Changing Landscapes/Conservation Corps Minnesota partnership in the Minnesota River Valley, and
- Enrich the civic dimension of Conservation Corps Minnesota youth development efforts by engaging local community leaders in mentoring individual Corps members.

Project Objectives:

- Build on the community-based leadership training individuals living in the Minnesota River Valley have received from the Blandin’s Community Leadership Program, apply principles taught by the Program to create a regional leadership network, and
- Plan/design a regional project that creates a greater whole out of the many individual initiatives within the Valley by linking the region’s natural, historic, and cultural resource and community development projects together into a synergistic system that strengthens the effectiveness of the region’s current activities and moves them to the next level of funding and implementation.

The regional project will have many individual site projects that are part of the whole:

- Identify the specific designed/planned on-the-ground site projects that link the individual initiatives together as priority projects for implementation in the first phase of the regional project,
- Further the youth development objectives of Conservation Corps Minnesota’s Summer Youth Corps by linking youth to members of the Blandin-trained regional network,
- Build the projects through the partnership with the regional leaders, the Center, and Conservation Corps Minnesota, and
- Position the projects for funding from the Legacy Funds.
MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY: SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK

MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY BRIEF OVERVIEW
SKALBEKKEN COUNTY PARK
THE SITES
MAIN ENTRANCE & EQUESTRIAN CAMPSITE
WORK TASKS & CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE
MASTER PLAN
CONSTRUCTION AND WORK TASKS PLAN
PLANTING PLAN
DESIGN ELEMENTS
**Glacial Impact**
Glaciers that periodically moved across the landscape formed the basis for the current topography of the Minnesota River Valley region. Rocks left by the glaciers are found throughout the landscape.

**Glacial River Warren**
Glacial Lake Agassiz formed around 12,000 years ago; it was created from melt water from receding glaciers. When the ice dam broke at Brown’s Valley and released melt waters from Lake Agassiz, the mighty River Warren, the predecessor to the Minnesota River was created. Today the large riverbed created by the torrent of melt waters is now the Minnesota River Valley within which the present much smaller Minnesota River flows.

Large chunks of ice left by the glaciers created the region’s wetlands and lakes.

**Bedrock Geology**
Deep layers of glacial till bury the region’s bedrock. The bedrock is most visible in rock outcroppings where the glacial till was eroded away by the Glacial River Warren and years of prairie winds. The different types of exposed bedrock reveal the story of the region’s shifting bedrock geology.

In the Redwood Falls area, Morton Gneiss outcroppings are extensive. Morton Gneiss or Rainbow Granite is considered one of the oldest rocks at 3,600 million years old (Ojakansas and Matsch). Morton has an active mine of this famous architectural stone that is operated by the Cold Spring Granite Company. Local rock offers an opportunity to use it in interpretive elements.

**Skalbekken County Park**
Skalbekken Park is Renville’s largest, most popular county park on the shores of the Minnesota River. It has both an upland wayside rest and extensive land along the river. Its park amenities include walking, biking, snowmobile, and horse trails, two canoe launch sites, camping that includes horse camping, an historic cabin, the ruin of an historic dugout house, a shelter that is open in winter, picnic tables, restrooms, a beautiful hardware forest, Limbo Creek, and views across the river valley. The proposed Minnesota State Trail will pass thorough the park to cross the river to Redwood County.

Planned capitol improvements include building a new unisex restrooms in the upper wayside rest area, creation of a new camping area at the river and Limbo Creek, demolishing the existing restroom near Limbo Creek and locating a new one it near the new campsites, separating walking trails from horse trails, widening bike and walking trails, and installing interpretive signs that identify geological features, plant and animal species and historic sites.

Source: Barry Huisman, Renville County Parks

Adapted from Minnesota’s Geology
Skalbekken County park sites include:

- Main Entrance and Equestrian Campsite,
- The Upper Shelter,
- Historic Cabin, and
- Limbo Creek Campsites.

Minnesota River Valley Partners Project 2011 mainly focuses on the work at the Main Entrance and Equestrian Campsite. During the two week - time frame from the July 25th till August 5th Conservation Corps Minnesota crew will be working in the Main Entrance and Equestrian Campsite area supervised by Renville County Parks staff.
THE SITES

Main Entrance and Equestrian Campsite

Historic Cabin

Upper Shelter Area
## WORK TASKS & CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>WORK TASKS</th>
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</thead>
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| 1    | Construction begins at Main Entrance & Ewaustrian Campsite, Skalbekken Park, Renville County  
CCM crew on site  
Kick-off Meeting. Project introduction.  
Construction of the parking lot near the shelter.  
Start of trail edge preparation, trench digging. |
| 2    | Continuing the work on trail edging preparation  
Laying down the crushed granite gravel surface on the trails: crowned gravel 4" surface |
| 3    | Continuing the work on trail edging preparation  
Laying down the crushed granite gravel surface on the trails: crowned gravel 4" surface |
| 4    | Complete work on trails  
Dig footings for benches and signs in designated locations  
Assemble benches (2) on site |
| 5    | Pour the concrete bench footings and sign footings  
Place metal straps in bench & sign footings  
Prepare the 8”-12” patio edge around the shelter and lay down the crushed granite surface  
Place top soil for the daylilies edge in the patio area leaving 2’ between the boulder edge and the crushed granite, add 6” of top soil  
Place top soil on the north side of the patio, leaving 5’ between the edge and the granite, add 6” of top soil |
## WORK TASKS & CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUGUST</th>
<th>WORK TASKS</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 6      | Planting of dogwood  
         | Planting of Hydrangea  
         | Planting of the Daylilies  
         | Planting of Iris  
         | Add mulch to plantings  
         | Water thoroughly the plantings |
| 7      | Staining shelter, toilet, picnic tables and benches (back - up plan in case finished early)  
         | Assemble more benches if needed  
         | Continue work on the River Trail, prepare edges and lay down the gravel, trail pruning the River Trail  
         | Place a third bench along the River Trail in designated location  
         | Stain/paint the shelter, picnic tables and toilet in the Upper Shelter  
         | Construct parking area in the Upper Shelter |
| 8      | Staining/painting shelter, toilet, picnic tables and benches (continuing work on the back – up plan)  
         | Assemble more benches if needed  
         | Continue work on the River Trail, prepare edge and lay down the gravel, trail pruning the River Trail  
         | Place a third bench along the River Trail in designated location  
         | Stain the shelter, picnic tables and toilet in the Upper Shelter  
         | Construct parking area in the Upper Shelter |
| 9      | Staining/painting shelter, toilet, picnic tables and benches (continuing work on the back – up plan)  
         | Finishing up tasks  
         | Continue work on the River Trail, prepare edge and lay down the gravel, trail pruning the River Trail  
         | Place a third bench along the River Trail in designated location, assemble more benches if needed  
         | Stain the shelter, picnic tables and toilet in the Upper Shelter, construct parking area in the Upper Shelter  
         | Supper Celebration |
| 10     | Last day for CCM crew on site  
         | Finishing up tasks  
         | Project Wrap Up |
MAIN ENTRANCE & EQUESTRIAN CAMPSITE

Design
The existing entrance area is redesigned. Its features include:
- A one-way road is extended through the woods,
- Parking area with three parking stalls and a handicapped parking,
- Large boulders and trees define the campsite areas,
- Plantings of dogwood shrubs, hydrangeas and daylilies add color and interest to the existing landscape,
- Extended trail connects the parking lot to the existing canoe trail and water access,
- Riverview trail runs parallel to the river,
- Extended patio area defines the rest area and includes two benches for seating, and
- Daylily edge frames the vista to the Minnesota River.
6 Red Osier Dogwood
*Cornus sericea*

Add 6" of Topsoil

2 Red Osier Dogwood
*Cornus sericea*

3 Hackberry Existing
*Celtis occidentalis*

3 Red Osier Dogwood
*Cornus sericea*, Existing

4 Red Osier Dogwood
*Cornus sericea*,

Add 6" of Topsoil

9 Red Osier Dogwood
*Cornus sericea*,

Add 6" of Topsoil

Add 6" of Topsoil

5 Hydrangea ‘Annabelle’
*Hydrangea arborescens*

6 Stella D’oro Daylily
*Hemerocallis ‘Stella De Oro’*

13 Siberian Iris
*Iris siberica*

Add 6" of Topsoil

5 Hydrangea ‘Annabelle’
*Hydrangea arborescens*

6 Stella D’oro Daylily
*Hemerocallis ‘Stella De Oro’*

22 Siberian Iris
*Iris siberica*

35 Stella D’oro Daylily
*Hemerocallis ‘Stella De Oro’*

Add 6" of Topsoil
**TRAIL CONSTRUCTION ELEMENTS**

**Trail Sign Post**, Section View

- 4 x 4 x 6' Wood Post
- 12” Class 2 Crushed Granite
- 12” (Max) Poured Concrete
- 6” Compacted Soil or Gravel

**Trail Trench**, Section View

- Crowned granite fill
- 4” of crushed granite
- 8” deep trench filled with granite
DESIGN ELEMENTS

21

BENCH WITH BACK//

Deck Screws 2 1/2" Long
1/2" Hole Drilled in Metal Plate
2" from Top
1/4" Metal Vertical Plate 4" by 8"
4" Deep Concrete Slab
6" Deep Compacted Aggregate Base

2" x 4" x 8' Long Wood
Solid Stain, Gray Color
Pressure Treated Lumber
5" long 1/2" Carriage Bolts
1/4" 4" by 8" Metal Plate
4" Deep Concrete Slab
6" Deep Compacted Aggregate Base
STEP 1
- Dig out 12” deep 8’8” wide aperture
- Set in the form work for the concrete
- Add 6” of compacted aggregate base
- Pour in 4” of concrete
- Cast in the 4 metal vertical plates at 4 1/2” distance from the front of the concrete edge and 6” away from the concrete edge on the sides and the back
- Wait until the concrete firms

STEP 3
- Set in the 6 (2 x 4 1’8 1/8”) lateral bases, horizontal members
- Place in 6 carriage bolts
- Secure the connections with flat washers and flange nuts
STEP 2
- Place 6 (2 x 4 x 1’ 8 1/8”) horizontal members
- 1 1/2” Distance between the two members
- 3’ 4” Distance between the each pair
- Set in the vertical supports:
  - 3 (2 x 4 x 2’9”) at a 75 degree angle
  - place in 3 carriage bolts
  - secure the connections with flat washers and flange nuts
  - 3 (2 x 4 x 1’ 4 1/2”) at a 90 degree angle
  - place in 3 carriage bolts
  - secure the connections with flat washers and flange nuts

STEP 4
- Add 4 (2 x 4 x 8) horizontal wood members
- Secure the connections behind the frame with the 12 (2 1/2” long) deck screws
STEP 5
- Place in 4 (2 x 4 x 8) horizontal wood members for the seat
- Place in 12 carriage bolts
- Secure the connections with flat washers and flange nuts
- Place in 3 (2 x 4 x 8) horizontal wood members for the back
- Place in 9 carriage bolts
- Secure the connections with flat washers and flange nuts

STEP 6
- Set the bench in place on the concrete base
- Secure the connections with 4 metal plates
- Stain the bench with gray color solid stain.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SITE DRAWINGS
APPENDIX B: WORK TASKS & PROCESS
APPENDIX C: CCM CREW
APPENDIX A: SITE DRAWINGS, MASTER PLAN

- Restroom
- Removed Road
- Removed Trail
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Boulders
- Existing Hackberry Trees
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Boulders
- Hydrangea
- Daylily
- Iris
- Boulders
- Pavilion
- Rest Benches
- Daylily Edge
- River View Trail
- Vista to Minnesota River
- Minnesota River
- New Parking
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Boulders
- Trail
- Fire Pit
- Forest Edge
- Boulders
- Canoe Trail
- Minnesota River
- Trail
- Road
- Removed Road
- Removed Trail
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Boulders

North Scale: 1" = 20.0'

SITE DRAWINGS: MASTER PLAN
APPENDIX A: SITE DRAWINGS, PLANTING PLAN

- 6 Red Osier Dogwood
  *Cornus sericea*
- Add 6” of Topsoil
- 2 Red Osier Dogwood
  *Cornus sericea*
- Existing
- 3 Hackberry
  *Celtis occidentalis*
- 3 Red Osier Dogwood
  *Cornus sericea*, Existing
- 4 Red Osier Dogwood
  *Cornus sericea*,
- Add 6” of Topsoil
- 9 Red Osier Dogwood
  *Cornus sericea*,
- Add 6” of Topsoil
- 6 Stella D’oro Daylily
  *Hemerocallis ‘Stella De Oro’*
- 6 Stella D’oro Daylily
  *Hemerocallis ‘Stella De Oro’*
- 22 Siberian Iris
  *Iris sibirica*
- 13 Siberian Iris
  *Iris sibirica*
- 5 Hydrangea ‘Annabelle’
  *Hydrangea arborescens*
- 5 Hydrangea ‘Annabelle’
  *Hydrangea arborescens*
- 35 Stella D’oro Daylily
  *Hemerocallis ‘Stella De Oro’*
- Add 6” of Topsoil

North Scale 1”=20.0’
8’ Foot Bench with Back
- Pressure treated lumber
- (11) 2” x 4” x 8’ Horizontal studs
- (3) 2” x 4” x 3’ Vertical support pieces
- (18) Carriage Bolts 5” long and 1/2” diameter, flat washer and flange nuts
- 12 Deck screws 2 1/2” long
- 4 1/4” metal vertical plate 4” by 8” or 4 pier caps with anchors to hold the wood in place

2 x 4 x 8’ Wood Needed per Bench
15 full pieces
Includes 2 extra per bench

Other Supplies
- Gray color solid stain
- Drill
- Cement
- Bucket or water hose
**WORK TASKS & PROCESS**

**Work Tasks for CCM:**
- Place (if missing) the surveying stakes according to the drawing,
- Construct the parking area near shelter,
- Construct and stain the picnic tables,
- Erect walking trail signage,
- Stain shelter and toilets,
- Plant around the shelter,
- Plant shrubs along the trail,
- Place crushed granite surface on the designated trails, and
- Widen and enhance the walking trails: Trail Tasks include:
  - Pruning should be done sensitively, so that the trail appears natural, prune to the collar of any branch for the health of the shrubs and a more natural looking result,
  - Remove seedlings from the designated trail corridor,
  - Remove roots and stumps in the trail to clear a zone that is parallel with the tread, if roots are perpendicular to the tread and not a tripping hazard, leave them, and
  - Remove rocks if necessary in the trail clearing area.

**Building Crushed Granite Gravel Trails:**
- Mark the centerline of the trail with surveyor’s stakes,
- Dig out the path to the depth of 4”,
- Dig a 12” deep trench along the edges of the 8’ trail,
- Fill the path and the trench with gravel, and
- Compact the stone base with shovels.

**Planting Dogwood Shrubs:**
- Place each potted shrub on the ground in the desired location,
- The shrubs should be spaced at 12 foot on center intervals (measure the distances between the centers of the plants with a tape measure),
- To achieve the optimal growth dig out a large hole and make sure that the back soil is well worked,
- Use a shovel to dig a hole that is three times as wide as the roots of the potted plant,
- Till the soil deeply before planting, add compost to increase the organic matter,
- The hole has to be shallow enough that the entire trunk of the shrub will sit above the top of the soil,
- Remove the potted shrub from the pot and insert into the hole,
- Fill in the hole with soil until all of the roots are covered and the shrub stands upright,
- Water each shrub with 1 to 2 inches of water,
- Place a 1 to 2 inch layer of mulch (organic material) around the base of each shrub to help retain moisture and prevent weed and grass growth around the shrub, provide an even moisture level and insulation for the roots from winter cold and summer heat.
- In compacted clay soils partially fill a large planting hole with loose backfill soil for proper plant establishment, and
- Water plants carefully few times a week after installment.

**Planting Hydrangea:**
- Place each potted shrub on the ground in the desired location,
- The shrubs should be spaced at 4-foot intervals (measure the distances between the center of the plants with a tape measure),
- Use a shovel to dig a hole that is three times as wide as the roots of the potted plant,
- Till the soil deeply before planting, add compost to increase the nutrient matter,
WORK TASKS & PROCESS

- Carefully remove the potted shrub from the pot and insert into the hole,
- Fill in the hole with soil until all of the roots are covered and the shrub stands upright,
- Place a 1 to 2 inch layer of organic mulch around the base of each shrub to help retain moisture,
- Water each shrub with 1 to 2 inches of water, and
- Water the hydrangea thoroughly after you plant it, but let the soil dry out somewhat between watering to prevent root rot.

**Planting Groundcover:**
- Till the soil deeply before planting, add compost to increase the organic matter,
- Dig a hole large enough for the roots without bending or crowding them,
- Water thoroughly after planting, and
- Apply mulch to ensure establishment of the plant.

**Recommended Planting Spacing:**
- Shrubs 12-foot intervals,
- Daylilies 18-inch intervals,
- Hydrangeas 4-foot intervals, and
- Iris 15-inch intervals.
CONSERVATION CORPS MINNESOTA CREW

Alex Askew (Crew Leader)
Ellen Fraley (Crew Leader)
Cody Brant
Alex Nelson
Katie Donkers
Maryanna Ejiofor
Pa Chee Lor
Theophile Maceno