

## **Minnesota Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements (MMMAPLE)**

A method of evaluating and prioritizing multiple conservation easements within a similar landscape.

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# MN Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements (MMMAPLE)

Conservation easements are valuable tools to retain natural resource elements including:

- 1) A specific ownership (often very large or unique – forest products company, land adjacent to a state park, or a new SNA.)
- 2) Specific species (often Rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal.)
- 3) Specific habitat for a targeted species or purpose (shoreline, waterfowl nesting areas, wetlands, etc.)
- 4) Targeted landscapes (usually a designated geographic area where multiple goals and larger acreages are the goal. E.g. Wildlife habitat, green space, working forests, and watershed protection within a county, township or watershed.)

This MMMAPLE tool is most useful for targeted landscapes (#4 above) where achieving easements on a larger number of acres from multiple landowners is more important than any specific tract. (It is a given that every parcel put into an easement must have a minimum acceptable level of natural resource value.)

Benefits of using a process like MMMAPLE:

- MMMAPLE creates a “Conservation Value Rating” for each parcel which is the ratio of environmental benefits on the parcel compared to the easement costs.
  - Using this ratio as the Conservation Value Rating allows a straight-forward comparison of multiple parcels.
- MMMAPLE requires sealed bidding from the landowners offering parcels.
  - Reduces easement cost by letting landowners establish their lowest price. (Note: Limits are established so no bid exceeds the appraised value or some percent of the appraised value.)
  - Eliminates complaints that bureaucrats are setting the prices.
  - Eliminates gossip and hard feelings about how or why landowner A got paid more than landowner B.
  - Eliminates need for complex formulas to establish “fair” easement value. (Only the maximum needs to be established.)
  - Uses a fixed amount of funding most efficiently
- MMMAPLE uses natural resource experts to create the scoring system for rating the local natural resources.
  - Uses only existing data or aerial photo measurements.
  - Can be done in 30 minutes in the landowner’s kitchen.
  - Scoring can be targeted to the funder’s priorities.

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Example:

Each of the following landowners has 100 acres within the target landscape. Naturally each parcel has different natural resource features and would have different environmental benefits if enrolled in an easement. Each of the properties meets the minimum requirements of natural resource benefits. Let's assume that \$160,000 has been allocated to this landscape by the funder for this round of bidding.

Bob's land is very nice and has 10,000 environmental benefit points as scored. As importantly, Bob is willing to accept \$500/acre for an easement. His "Conservation Value Rating" is  $10,000/500$  or 20.

Julie's land has 8,000 environmental benefit points as scored. Julie wants \$2,000/acre for an easement. Her "Conservation Value Rating" is  $8000/2000$  or 4.

Jack's land has 5,000 environmental benefit points as scored and Jack wants \$1,000/acre for an easement. His "Conservation Value Rating" is  $5000/1000$  or 5.

Rachel's land has the minimum 1,000 environmental benefit points as scored. Rachel is really interested in conservation and wants only \$100/acre for an easement. Her "Conservation Value Rating" is  $1000/100$  or 10.

Under the MMAPE system, we begin funding with the highest Conservation Value Rating. (Conservation Value Rating = the ratio of Environmental Benefit Points / \$ per acre)

First, we would fund Bob's land using \$50,000, (Conservation Value Rating = 20)  
Next, we would fund Rachel's land using \$10,000, (Conservation Value Rating = 10)  
Next, we would fund Jack's land using \$100,000, (Conservation Value Rating = 5)

The funding would now be gone and we would not fund an easement for Julie's land. However she may choose to bid in future rounds if funding is again available and she may choose to adjust her bid in a future round.

See next page for example of Bob's scoring sheet.

# MMAPLE Method (Minnesota Multi-faceted Approach for Prioritizing Land Easements)

## Avon Hills Area Conservation Easement Bid Worksheet

Formulas updated 4 June 2014 by T. Kroll

Landowner Code Name:	Bob's Example	(Make up a name or code that will be used to identify your property.)
Date prepared:	28-Jul-14	
Environmental Benefits Points	Environmental Weighting Factor	Units Affected
Enter your actual data in the blocks with the blue and green colors to determine Environmental Benefits Points. Blue is determined by the landowner. Green is determined by the land features in the easement. Purple are calculations. Orange = total Environmental Benefits Points. Red = Conservation Value Rating.		
(EBP= weighting factor x units)		
<b>Size of Property (based on tax statement acres)</b>		
		80 Total acres owned by applicant contiguous to this proposed easement. (For information only)
815	10 +	75 Acres to be protected by an easement, not including any house site acres within the easement area.
		80 Acres of this proposed easement plus those acres outside the easement that would fall within a full "40" or Gov. Lot
(i.e. 75 acres in easement + 5 homesite acres = 80 acres. Include only those acres owned by applicant.)		
815	10 +	75 Total contiguous easement acres or largest block if not all acres are contiguous
<b>Special Natural &amp; Cultural Resources to be Protected by the Easement (count only those acres covered by the easement)</b>		
0	250	0 Acres of Outstanding Quality DNR Sites of Biodiversity Significance (SOBS) (Rounded up to nearest 5 acres)
6,000	150	40 Acres of High Quality DNR Sites of Biodiversity Significance (SOBS) (Rounded up to nearest 5 acres)
0	75	0 Acres of Moderate Quality DNR Sites of Biodiversity Significance (SOBS) (Rounded up to nearest 5 acres)
538	1	538 Feet of Shoreline on "public waters" (streams, lakes+ wetlands>10 ac) from the Public Water Inventory Map (round up to nearest 10)
0	1+	0 Feet of the longest contiguous section of shoreline on "public waters" for each lake on which the survey is "meandered." (round up to nearest 10)
0	100	0 Acres which are designated as a source of public drinking water or aquifer recharge area.
0	1	0 Feet of protected property boundary which is adjacent to a designated scenic road, river, trail, or other designated scenic feature.
0	50	0 # of documented sites of historical or cultural significance which will be protected.
<b>Open Space /Working Forest /Working Ag to be Protected by the Easement (count only those acres covered by the easement)</b>		
756	10 +	70 Acres to be used for working forest, prairie, preserved forest, savanna, or wetland . (Not intended for agriculture, pasturing, or horticulture.)
25	5	5 Acres to be allowed for use as agriculture, pasturing, or horticulture.
0	5	0 Acres for which a current land management plan exists. (i.e. Forest Stewardship Plan or NRCS Farm Plan)
<b>Location of the Property to be Protected (count only those acres covered by the easement)</b>		
0	100	0 Acres on which unrestricted public access will be allowed.
0	2	0 Feet of protected property boundary which is adjacent to either public land or other permanently protected land.
815	10 +	75 Acres which are inside some kind of specially designated conservation protection area. (Township, county conservation overlay district )
<b>Building Allotments to be Extinguished, or Retained for Future Use, or are Already Used by the Applicant (within next full "40")</b>		
(include building areas inside the easement area plus those controlled by the applicant outside the easement that would fall within the next largest full "40" or Gov. Lot.)		
		A40 Current property zoning. Examples A5, T20, A40 - Check with zoning board.
		2 Total number of building allotments (used or unused) that are assigned by zoning . (Often 1 per 40 acres. Check with zoning board.)
		1 Number of building allotments already used or to be retained from above. (Include any existing homesites you own.)
2,000	2000	1 Number of building allotments to be extinguished within the proposed easement area.
		1 Clustering: How many unconnected areas will contain building sites? Clustered building sites that have adjoining boundaries are counted as 1 area.
		Enter 1 above Boundaries of individual building sites must adjoin on the longest or second longest side to be counted as one cluster.
		1 How many separate legal easement document sets need to be created? (Multiple bidders or current/future land splits require separate easements.)
		\$0 \$ /acre Admin fee for multiple easements. (\$15,000 per additional legal easement sets needed /acres protected. \$0 fee for the first easement.)
11,765	SUB-TOTAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS POINTS	
<b>Deductions (if any) for Not Extinguishing all Building Allotments (100% protection = no deductions)</b>		
11,765	= sub-total of E	94% Percent of land in the easement compared to the next highest "full 40" or government lot. (Protection > 80% has no deductions.)
10,000	= (.35+ %) x abo	50% Percent of total allotments to be extinguished. (Must be >65% for full credit.)
10,000	100%	75 Acres of protected land per homesite or developed cluster. Must exceed 75 acres for 100%. 160+ acres = max of 130%.
<b>Final Calculations and Examples</b>		
10,000	10,000	10,000 = TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS POINTS for your land.
\$2,000	\$1,000	\$500 \$ per acre you want to be paid for the easement. (Compare 3 bids.)
\$0	\$0	\$0 Extra \$/ac admin fee for bids needing more than one set of easements.
5.0	10.0	20.0 = YOUR CONSERVATION VALUE RATING - Higher is better!
Conservation Value Ratings = Environmental Benefits Points / (Your bid per acre for the easement + Admin Fee)		
75	75	75 = Total acres you are protecting with an easement.
\$150,000	\$75,000	\$37,500 = Total \$\$ you will receive if your bid is accepted.
Hand calculate your bid below if you want.		
	10,000	
		Enter your price per acre
	\$0	Add this admin fee to your total price /acre
		Divide the points from above by your total price/acre
	75	= Total acres you are protecting with an easement.
		Multiply your acres X your price/acre.