

**CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION**  
**FILLMORE COUNTY**  
**Landowners Portion**

*(This application must be fully completed before it can be processed. Failure to complete the form in its entirety will only result in further delays)*

This Conditional Use Permit is for: Veteran's Cemetery  
(Feedlot, Rock Quarry, Telecommunications Tower, Other)

(1) Name of all Landowners: Fillmore County, MN

Phone #: 507-765-4566

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address of Applicants: PO Box 466, 101 Fillmore Street

City, State, Zip Preston, MN 55965

Section: 32 (4) Township: 103 (5) Range: 010

Township Name: Carrolton

(2) Parcel Number: 18.0242.000 Permit # \_\_\_\_\_

To be filled out by the Zoning Office

(3) Legal Description (from deed, abstract or Records Office):

727 Highway 52, Preston, MN 55965

(6) Signature of all Landowners: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 2-12-2013

Fillmore County Chairman

# CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION

## FILLMORE COUNTY

### Applicants Portion

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This Conditional Use Permit is for: Minnesota State Veteran's Cemetery  
(Feedlot, Rock Quarry, Telecommunications Tower, Other)

Name of Applicant Stantec Consulting, on behalf of Fillmore County Phone #: 651-967-4552

Company Name Stantec Consulting, on behalf of Fillmore County

Mailing Address of Applicants: 2335 Highway 36 West St. Paul MN 55113  
Address City State Zip

Date: February 21, 2013 Phone #: 651-967-4552

Provide a complete description of the project you are proposing. This must include a typed or written narrative of what you plan to do.

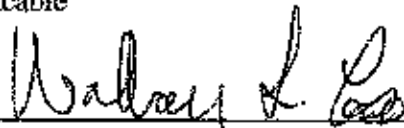
Provide a complete site development plan and building or structure plan. This must include:

1. Name, Address, North Arrow, and Date.
2. Aerial photograph of the site. (*Copies obtained at SWCD or Assessors Office*)
3. Soils maps of the site. (*Copies obtained at SWCD or Assessors Office*)
4. Setbacks from the centerline of all public roads and front, side and rear property lines.
5. Location and dimensions of all structures on the site.
6. Driveways and accesses to the property.
7. Locations of any proposed new construction to include drawings of new structures.
8. Parking Areas. (*In the case of campgrounds, all campsites*)
9. Sinkholes and direction of water runoff.
10. Location of all wells on the property and tile inlets if on the site.
11. Location of any sewer systems located on the site.
12. Locations of rivers, bluffs, trails and public roadways.

Fee: \$450.00

Late Fee: \$250.00, if applicable

Signature of Applicant



Wallace L. Case, Project Manager  
Stantec Consulting

Date: February 21, 2013

## **MINNESOTA STATE VETERANS CEMETERY – SOUTHEAST**

### **FILLMORE COUNTY**

#### **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION – NARRATIVE**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

This narrative and graphics are provided in support of a request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow the development of a new state veteran's cemetery on county property being conveyed to the state for this purpose. This narrative and the graphics represent work in progress. They are based on the preliminary work completed through Schematic Design and are subject to change to respond to review and direction from the State of Minnesota and the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Cemetery Grants Service.

The State of Minnesota currently has one state veteran's cemetery located at Camp Ripley near Little Falls in central Minnesota. Fort Snelling National Cemetery located in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area is the state's only national veteran's cemetery.

A major goal of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA) and the Veterans Cemetery Grants Service (VCGS) is to provide veterans, their eligible dependents and survivor's reasonable access to VA burial options to honor our commitment to our veterans. Reasonable access is defined as access to a VA burial option within 75 miles for 90 percent of all veterans in the country.

In 2009, the state began searching for suitable sites for two new states veteran's cemeteries to be developed in northeastern or southeastern or southwestern Minnesota. The proposed cemetery in Fillmore County at the City of Preston will be the first of the new Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries to be developed.

The Establishment of a new Southeastern Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Fillmore County at the City of Preston will increase the percentage of veterans residing within 75 miles of a VA burial option and will serve veterans in this part of the state and surrounding area.

The Minnesota State Legislature provided initial funding to begin the project. This state funding, minus the land acquisition dollars used, will be reimbursed when the federal grant is approved. The NCA, through the VCGS provides states with grant opportunities for the development of new state veteran's cemeteries. These grants provide for the cost of construction of on-site cemetery facilities and the initial basic equipment needed for cemetery operations.

The state is responsible for the upfront cost of the complete design of the cemetery with approved fundable costs reimbursed to the state upon award of a construction contract. The state has the long-term obligation to provide for the annual operations and associated costs of the cemetery and is also responsible for locating, reviewing and acquiring a suitable site for a potential cemetery. The State of Minnesota included a legislative requirement that donated or

tax forfeit properties must be given first priority and be considered and determined unsuitable prior to purchasing property. The cost of land is not reimbursable through the grant.

The land for the proposed Southeastern State Veterans Cemetery is in the process of being conveyed to the state by Fillmore County specifically and exclusively for the development of a new State Veterans Cemetery to serve our veterans.

## **PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed new Southeastern Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery is located in central Fillmore County at the City of Preston. The site is approximately 36 miles south of Rochester; 70 miles east of Albert Lea; 57 miles west of La Crosse, Wisconsin and 35 miles north of Decorah, Iowa. The site is undeveloped vacant land that has been previously farmed from the early 1900's through the 1970's when Fillmore County acquired the property. The site is currently owned by the county and is no longer farmed.

Site due diligence review, surveys, studies and reports have been completed and the site is in the conveyance process. An overall site Master Plan and Schematic Design have been completed and reviewed and Design Development is underway for the initial phase of cemetery development. The completion of Construction Documents and competitive bidding are scheduled for the early spring of 2013. The initial phase of construction is currently planned to be completed by the summer of 2014.

The site is 176 acres in size with an irregular perimeter boundary approximately 14,885 feet long. The site is generally bounded on the south by US Highway 52, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Preston Truck Station, and the Fillmore County Recycling Center; on the west by privately owned actively farmed uplands; on the north by privately owned actively farmed uplands; and on the east by the DNR Harmony-Preston Valley State Trail, county owned farmed floodplain and the Root River.

The site is landlocked except at a single location fronting on Highway 52. Access will be limited to this location and will require sharing a common drive and access with the existing MnDOT Preston Truck Station.

The site includes over 150 feet of elevation change and has limited areas that are suitable for development. These areas are generally located along a long narrow ridge in the southern part of the site and on a large hill in the central part of the site. The southern area is bounded by steep slopes and separated from the central area by a narrow valley. The entire site is characterized by strong landforms, steep to very steep slopes and large ravines. This site overlooks the wooded Root River valley and hills beyond. The northernmost part of the site is isolated from the southern site by a large ravine and very steep slopes.

At the closest point, the northernmost part of the site is within 150 feet of the Root River. This part of the site overlooks bluff land and the river. This part of the site is topographically isolated from the main part of the cemetery and will be preserved as permanent open space and not be disturbed or impacted by cemetery development.

Much of the site has been farmed and heavily disturbed by row cropping and grazing from the early part of the twentieth century until it was acquired by the county. The current vegetative cover includes areas of forest and woodland that were historically present; disturbed forest areas that have developed since the 1970's; former pasture areas; and conifer plantations planted in the 1990's. Much of the site includes high levels of non-native vegetation.

#### **BOUNDARY, TOPOGRAPHIC AND UTILITY SURVEY**

A field survey was conducted for the site by Stantec during the summer of 2012. Property monuments were located, control monuments were set, aerial topography has been verified and significant trees along the entrance drive were surveyed.

A boundary survey and legal description were prepared based on county records and the field survey work. An ALTA survey was not prepared.

Aerial topography was provided for the site by the county. The aerial topography is LIDAR based and was flown in November 2008.

#### **CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS FILL AREAS**

The site includes two construction debris fill areas that were operated by the county. Both have been officially closed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

The larger eastern fill area accepted construction debris including wood and similar organic debris and will generally be avoided. However, there may be some potential for placing additional fill on this area and grading a portion of the area to reduce the slope to 2 to 3 percent for use as a mown temporary Memorial Day parking area. The area and amount of parking will be limited by the adjacent steep slopes, landform and existing woodland buffer between the fill limits and the DNR Trail. The MPCA has informally indicated working atop a closed fill is to generally be avoided but that they will review and consider a proposal for placing additional fill and grading for temporary parking.

The smaller central fill area accepted only highway construction pavement demolition debris. Due to its key location in the cemetery a portion of this fill area will be needed for cemetery development and to facilitate the best and most efficient use of the limited developable areas. Development of a committal service shelter on this fill area will require removal of limited amounts of unconsolidated pavement construction debris and soil, replacement with suitable/structural fill and installing a new soil cap where needed.

#### **CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM**

Portions of the site have been planted in trees (conifer plantations) or taken out of production under the USDA FSA Conservation Reserve Program by Fillmore County. The areas in trees total 68.2 acres and were placed in the program in 1997. The areas in CRP total 18.9 acres and were placed in the program in 2008.

The program expiration dates for the areas in tree was 2007. The areas planted in trees have expired and can be modified without penalty.

The program expiration date for the areas in CRP is 2018. Modification of those areas prior to 2018 may involve a penalty. One area Field 7 (9.3 acres) is located in the southwest corner of the site and is in conflict with the location of the proposed maintenance/storage facility. Development of this area will require early retirement of the CRP contract for the field and which may entail a penalty.

There are three other CRP Fields that will not expire until 2018. These fields are located north of the valley/major ravine. Those areas are not expected to be disturbed during the initial development phase. However, two of those areas may be affected if the area needs to be disturbed to balance site grading quantities.

The conifer plantations were planted at approximately the same time in the early 1990's. The trees are approximately the same height and closely spaced. Only the trees at the edges are fully branched. The pine plantations will need to be managed as the cemetery develops. Management may include selective harvesting, thinning, pruning, stand conversion, reforestation and inter-planting to maintain the plantation areas along the development edges as long term vegetative buffers and aesthetic backdrops. Maintenance of portions of the pine plantations that will remain should include maintenance thinning at approximate 10 year intervals. The pine plantations will begin to decline approximately 40 to 50 years after the initial planning if unmaintained.

## **VIEWS**

There is excellent potential for expansive views and vistas of the woodlands along and beyond the Root River to the east from the upland parts of the site. There is also potential throughout the site for dramatic sequential interior views of the developed cemetery areas and facilities, strong landforms, valley and ravines and preserved and restored natural areas.

## **PROXIMITY TO ROOT RIVER**

The northernmost part of the site is within 150 feet of the Root River. This part of the site overlooks the river, is topographically isolated from the main part of the cemetery and will not be disturbed or impacted by cemetery development. It is important for the cemetery to maintain the natural character of this portion of the site for the long term preservation and protection of cemetery views and vistas as the land surrounding the cemetery develop in the future.

## **PROXIMITY TO DNR TRAIL**

The eastern boundary of the site abuts the DNR Harmony – Preston Valley State Trail. This is a well-used recreation and tourism amenity for the state, Fillmore County, City of Preston and the

region. The wooded slopes and rock outcrops along this trail and cemetery boundary will need to be preserved and undisturbed by cemetery development to protect the natural and rural character of this important area amenity.

The proximity of this important trail to the cemetery presents an opportunity for creating a future pedestrian connection between the cemetery and the trail. Such a connection would help identify and build public awareness of this State Veterans Cemetery as a cultural landmark and national shrine.

A future pedestrian connection to the cemetery would require developing a cemetery entrance feature with smaller scale stone piers, gate and ornamental fencing for security, potential bicycle parking and informational and interpretive signage to encourage and manage visitation.

### **DEVELOPABLE AREA, BURIAL AREAS, FACILITIES AND ROADWAYS**

Much of this large site is undevelopable and the challenging topographic and geotechnical conditions will not support development of a standard compact State Veterans Cemetery. The strong landforms, very steep slopes and variable depth to bedrock dictate the general design and layout of the roads, burial areas and cemetery facilities.

There is only one viable route in and out of this site and the internal road system will need to follow and adapt to the landforms, steep slopes, dramatic elevation changes, and dispersed developable areas. The topography precludes development of a standard compact loop and fully interconnected road system. Developing burial areas on the limited areas that have workable slopes and sufficient depth to bedrock and connecting those areas requires long curving roads that accommodate the steep slopes and extensive grade change. The cemetery road system needed at full development will be approximately 12,260 feet long. The proposed facility will be a unique, dramatic and expansive State Veterans Cemetery. The dispersed burial areas and facilities and the long roads will be challenging for the efficient operation and management of the cemetery.

### **GEOTECHNICAL EVALUATION**

#### **Bedrock Test Pit Investigation – September 28, 2012**

The purpose of the bedrock test pit investigation was to evaluate the potential for exposing bedrock as an aesthetic feature at the proposed cemetery entrance and along the entrance road.

Six test pits were dug in locations at the entrance and along the entrance road as directed by the Stantec.

The samples showed the bedrock material has the potential to be aesthetically acceptable if unweathered rock is or can be exposed. However, based on the limited number and locations

of the test pits, the potential design outcome and costs of intentionally exposing the bedrock are unknown. In combination with the apparent depth of cover to hard bedrock at the entrance and along the entry road, intentionally exposing bedrock in these areas for aesthetics does not appear viable.

The design team recommendation based on the level of uncertainty and budget constraints is to evaluate instances where bedrock is exposed during the normal planned construction of the facility to determine if it can and should be preserved as a natural aesthetic feature based on the appearance, location and extent of rock exposed.

### **Preliminary Geotechnical Evaluation – December 20, 2012**

Sixteen borings were performed to depths ranging from 20 to 40 feet. Fourteen borings encountered bedrock at depths ranging from 8.5 to 27 feet. Groundwater was not observed but the report indicates that seasonal and annual fluctuations should be expected and piezometers or monitoring wells will be required to confirm the presence and depth to groundwater.

In general the geologic materials encountered in the borings appear suitable for the structural loads associated with the cemetery facilities. Areas of previously placed fill may be unsuitable for building support. Based on the local topography and geology, springs may be encountered as the ridges and side hills are cut for development. On-site soils appear to be free of organic and debris and can be used as backfill and fill. Silts and clays are fine grained and will be difficult to compact. Clean sands were not encountered.

Based on the nature of the topography, soils and geology all embankment/fill areas on the existing side slopes will require benched sub cuts.

The site is in a Karst Region and an area of moderate risk of Karst features. No definitive Karst features were identified in their review but Karst features could be exposed during site grading operations. Any Karst features encountered during construction will require geotechnical evaluation.

As there is potential for Karst features, a minimum depth of soil or impervious layer will need to be maintained between potential infiltration sources (ponds, preplaced crypt areas) and the bedrock.

Additional geotechnical evaluation and borings will be performed prior to final design and development of structures, ponds and preplaced crypt areas.

### **Preliminary Soil Development Summary – August 6, 2010**

This preliminary pre-acquisition review of the site soil and geologic conditions was included review of the existing USDA soil data and existing records for the site. This record and literature review did not reveal geological conditions that would heavily impact development and indicated



the site was marginally suitable for cemetery development and recommended Geotechnical Evaluation, soil testing and a boring program.

## **CULTURAL EVALUATION – PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORICAL SURVEY**

### **Phase 1 Architectural History Survey – December 2012**

A Phase 1 Architectural History Survey was conducted in accordance with Section 106 requirements and the Minnesota Historic Sites Act. This Phase 1 Architectural History Survey identified two industrial properties and one farmstead within the site Area of Potential Impact (APE). The farmhouse had been previously inventoried and was determined to lack the integrity necessary to be considered eligible and the industrial buildings constructed prior to 1967 do not have enough significance to meet any of the criteria. The recommendation for the site is a finding of No Historic Properties for this project.

### **Intensive Phase 1 Archeological Investigation – December 2011**

An Intensive Phase 1 Archeological Investigation was conducted in the late fall 2011. The field investigation included soil probing and extensive shovel testing of the site and laboratory analysis of artifacts found.

The intensive investigation identified one prehistoric archaeological site, described as a small, undifferentiated prehistoric resources procurement site. In this location, a single flake fragment was recovered from one shovel test from the plow zone. Because the site appears to be confined to the plow zone and few artifacts were recovered, the report stated it is recommended not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) and recommended no further investigation of the site or APE.

### **Preliminary Cultural Resources Literature Review – August 2010**

The initial preacquisition archaeological and architectural history review was a record and literature review. The review indicated the site had a moderate to high potential for containing unknown archaeological resources.

It indicated that there were no known archaeological sites within the site and no previous architectural history properties within the project area. The potential eligibility for any unknown cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) could not be determined until a Phase 1 survey of the project area was completed. This preliminary review indicated that it was unlikely any unknown resources would prevent the project from proceeding.

### **Tribal Consultation**

As this project is to receive federal funding, under Section 106 of the National Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, it will require formal consultation by the responsible federal agency with

the appropriate federally recognized Native American Tribes with a cultural affiliation to the land in the project area. This consultation will be initiated by letter.

### **State Historic Preservation Office/Office of the State Archaeologist Review**

The Phase 1 Architectural History Survey and Intensive Phase 1 Archeological Investigation were submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) for review. A response was received within the officially prescribed review period from the SHPO.

In the response letter the SHPO stated that after reviewing the survey, investigation and review materials provided they agreed the site and farmhouse were not eligible for listing in the National Register and that no historic properties will be affected.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION**

The site includes two construction and demolition debris fills and records indicate it previously included two farmsteads.

#### **Construction Demolition Fill 1**

This fill is located in the south central part of the site and was operated by Fillmore County from 1998 until 2010. Approximately 13,000 cubic yards of construction demolition waste (highway demolition materials including concrete and rebar) were buried to depths up to 14 feet. This fill area occupies approximately 0.75 acres. The fill was capped and closed. The fill was tested for asbestos in the fall of 2012 and the test results were provided to the MPCA by the county. No asbestos containing material (ACM) was found and the fill was closed by record.

Any construction of buildings and pavements on this fill will require coordination with the MPCA and monitored excavation of unconsolidated highway demolition debris and removal to an approved disposal facility. In addition, this fill area will not be irrigated and will be monitored and maintained to prevent erosion and maintained and mown to prevent the growth of brush and trees.

#### **Construction Demolition Fill 2**

This fill is located in the southeastern part of the site and was operated by Fillmore County from 1988 until 2003. The fill was permitted for up to 32,166 cubic yards of construction demolition debris with 7,722 yards filled and reported as of 2003. The total permitted fill area was 5 acres of which only 3.2 acres were used to 2003. The 3.2 acre fill area was capped and closed in July 2004. This fill is to be undisturbed during construction and operations and is to be monitored and maintained to prevent erosion and maintained and mown to prevent the growth of brush and trees.

## **Farmsteads**

Two farmsteads were previously located and operated on the site from the 1940s to 1979. One was located upland in the central part of the site adjacent to one of the large ravines. The second was located downslope in the south central part of the site near the east end of the Country Recycling Facility. Both farmsteads have been removed. As farmstead activities can result in a variety of site contamination, including petroleum and agricultural chemical spills, the farmstead areas were reviewed under the Phase I ESA and representative sampling and testing were performed under the Phase II ESA. No contamination was identified. As the entire site has been actively farmed for many years there is potential for encountering contamination from past agricultural activities during cemetery construction or operations. Any possible contamination encountered during construction or operations will need to be reviewed, tested and reported as required.

## **Phase I Environmental Site Assessment – January 2012**

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA) was performed. The Phase I ESA revealed no evidence of historic recognized environmental conditions (HRECs) in connection with the site with the exception of the following:

1. The presence of the potentially closed demolition fill 1.
2. The historical use of portions of the site as farmsteads between circa 1940 and circa 1979.
3. The historical farmstead adjacent to the south-southeast of the site between circa 1940 to circa 1979.

Based on the assumptions and objectives of the Phase I ESA investigation and available information, a Phase II ESA investigation was recommended to determine if soil or groundwater had been impacted by the activities on the site and to assess if any liability of the identified HRECs/RECs.

## **Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Update – December 2012**

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Update was completed in response to acquisition time extensions. No change of the environmental condition of the site was identified.

## **Limited Phase II Environmental Site Assessment – December 6, 2012**

A Limited Phase II ESA was performed in response to HRECs/RECs identified during the January 2012 Phase I ESA/Phase I ESA Update. Eight soil borings were performed in areas near the construction debris fill areas and previously removed farmstead. No volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds or pesticides were detected above laboratory detection limits.

Arsenic was detected above the Tier 1 testing values but did not exceed 20 mg/kg ppm and the testing values are likely naturally occurring levels. The Minnesota Department of Health

Hazardous Site and Substances in Minnesota indicates that arsenic levels in soil from 5 to 20 mg/kg ppm are generally considered safe even if the contact continues for many years.

## **WETLAND INVENTORY AND REPORT**

There are four small wetland areas located in the ravine bottoms and along the eastern boundary and the DNR Harmony-Preston Valley State Trail. The following summaries identify the findings of the wetland inventories performed for the site.

### **Additional Wetland Investigation and Delineation – October 25, 2012**

The proposed boundary of the site was adjusted to provide additional land for the cemetery during the summer of 2012. An additional wetland investigation, inventory and delineation was conducted for the additional land in October of 2012.

This investigation delineated two additional wetlands along the eastern site boundary. The additional wetlands are outside of the development areas currently proposed. Wetlands C and D are located along the boundary between the site and DNR trail near future DNR trail connection points. The locations of these wetlands will need to be considered if the alignment of the field access road is changed and if a cemetery connection to the DNR trail is developed in the future.

### **Wetland Delineation Report – November 17, 2011**

The original wetland inventory and delineation was conducted in October of 2011 for the proposed cemetery site.

There are no DNR Public Watercourses or Water bodies within the investigation area.

The National Wetlands Inventory identifies two wetlands with the investigation area.

During the initial investigation, two wetlands were inventoried and delineated.

Wetland A is a Type 2 wetland that includes a spring/seep area located in the bottom of a large ravine in the east central part of the site. This spring/seep disappears into the rock prior to reaching the DNR trail. This ravine and wetland lie north and east of the proposed cemetery development area and are not anticipated to be impacted by cemetery development.

Wetland B is a Type 2 wetland dominated by reed canary grass located in the lower portion of the largest ravine/small valley the separates the two primary cemetery development areas. This wetland is located on both sides of an existing metal culvert under an abandoned farmstead access road. This wetland consists of several low berms and one excavated cattle pond that have held water long enough to develop wetland characteristics. This wetland is located at the only viable crossing point between the developable upland areas. In addition, this wetland is in

the most appropriate location for the development of the stormwater pond that will be needed for the cemetery.

### **Wetland Delineation Approval**

The Wetland Delineation Report and Additional Investigation were reviewed and approved by the Fillmore County Soil & Water Conservation District.

### **Proposed Cemetery Wetland Impacts**

Wetland B will be modified by the stormwater pond construction. The part of the wetland upstream from the culvert will be enhanced, enlarged and deepened to a maximum of depth of 6 feet. The part of the wetland downstream from the culvert that includes the livestock pond will be reconstructed to become a stormwater retention basin. Both the enhanced wetland and stormwater retention basin will be revegetated with native plants to serve as an aesthetic feature for the cemetery.

The abandoned farmstead road crossing will be improved to meet cemetery traffic and safety needs and the culvert will be replaced by a larger culvert to meet stormwater management needs. This road crossing and culvert will be designed and constructed in a future phase to have the appearance of a stone arched bridge.

Approximately 0.4 acres of the Type 2 wetland will be converted to stormwater basin and will be mitigated at 2:1 through the purchase of wetland banking credits.

### **VEGETATION SURVEY AND ANALYSIS**

Following a review of historic aerial photographs, MnDNR information and other natural resources background information, Stantec conducted a field-based ecological evaluation of the proposed Fillmore County VA Cemetery site on November 1, 2012.

Cover types at the site include several forest and woodland areas that were historically present but have been disturbed by past agricultural activities; pioneer forest areas that have developed since the 1970s; former pasture areas and conifer plantations that were developed since the early 1990s.

The native (historic) forest areas at the site include a moderate to good quality oak forest that was historically grazed. This oak forest occurs on the moderately steep to very steep slopes on the northeast side of the site. A valley that crosses the site from the northwest, trending to the south, and then extending east across the site is a former pastured oak woodland that has been colonized by thick pioneer tree and invasive brush growth – mostly since the 1970s based on historic air photo review. The oak woodland areas were historically part of a much larger pasture that still includes relatively open areas dominated by nonnative pasture grasses with native grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees less common (this area also includes two construction demolition fill sites, which have been seeded to nonnative grasses). The southeast side of the

site includes a pioneer forest that was open grassland in historic air photos. This area has been colonized by weedy native boxelder trees, with very limited amounts of native vegetation in the shrub or ground layer.

Historically, much of the arable land at the site was plowed as part of row crop production. In the early 1990s these areas were planted to conifer trees, including red pine, white pine, and white spruce.

The field survey, as well as surveys conducted in fall 2011 and 2012 by a Stantec wetland scientist with an ornithology background resulted in no observations of rare, threatened or endangered wildlife. Additionally, the moderately to significantly disturbed habitat types found at the site are generally not conducive for supporting populations of state or federal listed wildlife species. Two bald eagles were observed on the bluff across the river to the north of the site during the November 2012 site visit.

As a result of the significant past disturbance from grazing and row crop farming, and the high levels on nonnative vegetation in the oak woodland, former pasture pioneer forest, and conifer plantation areas these areas are of moderate to poor quality for native plant species composition and have minimal potential to serve as habitat for rare plants or animals.

A formal request and GIS shape files were submitted to the MnDNR Natural Heritage Information System on November 1, 2012 for data and review input on potential impacts to rare, unique or sensitive plant communities, plants and/or wildlife that may occur in the project vicinity.

The Department of Natural Resources responded in a letter dated December 7, 2012. The letter stated that they agreed with the assessment of the field-based ecological evaluation and summary findings that given the level of past site disturbance, there is minimal potential for state-listed species to occur within the project boundary.

MnDNR also stated the northern portion of the project contains an area that the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) has identified as a Site of Moderate Biodiversity Significance. Sites ranked as Moderate contain occurrences of rare species and/or moderately disturbed native plant communities, and/or landscapes that have a strong potential for recovery. They stated the portion of the MSB Site within the project boundary contains steep wooded slopes but does not contain any MBS mapped native plant communities or known occurrences of rare species. They also stated that this area serves as a buffer from the Root River and is part of a larger ecologically significant matrix that does contain native plant communities and rare plant species and that avoidance of the MBS Site was recommended.

As currently proposed, this new State Veterans Cemetery will result in the development of approximately 58 of the overall 176 acre cemetery site at completion of the final future phase. Approximately 118 acres or 67 percent of the total site will be preserved as permanent open space and remain in a natural condition.

Approximately 17 acres in the northeast part of the site that includes the steep ravine slopes and the rocky bluffs overlooking the Root River identified by the MnDNR as containing an area

of Moderate Biological Significance (MBS) will remain undisturbed and be preserved as permanent open space. Preservation of this area is in accordance with MnDNR's recommendation for avoidance of this area.

MnDNR also stated that the milk snake, a Species in Greatest Conservation Need in Minnesota's State Wildlife Action Plan has been documented in the vicinity of the proposed project and may be encountered on site. They recommended that erosion control blanket needed during construction be limited to bio-netting' or 'natural-netting' type. The project will follow this recommendation to minimize potential impacts to reptiles, birds and potentially affected wildlife.

## **PLANNING AND ZONING EVALUATION**

The site is located in both Carrollton and Preston Townships in Fillmore County. A portion of the southwest corner of the site including the parcel needed for access is located in the City of Preston. Fillmore County and the City of Preston both have jurisdiction for regulating the planning and zoning review and approvals for portions of the site.

### **Fillmore County**

The site is located in the county Agricultural (Ag) District. In the Ag District new cemeteries are allowed as Conditional Uses and cemetery expansions are allowed as Permitted Uses. The development of a new cemetery will require county Conditional Use Permit review and approval.

#### **Section 611. Scenic Trail District**

The site abuts the DNR Harmony-Preston Valley State Trail along the entire eastern boundary. The Fillmore County Zoning Ordinance, Section 611 Scenic Trail District (ST) prohibits conducting commercial or industrial businesses within 200 feet of the centerline of the trail in an Agricultural District. The ordinance does not reference setbacks for institutional uses.

The cemetery maintenance/storage building is approximately 300 feet from the trail and appear to meet the setback requirement if applicable.

This section of the ordinance also prohibits advertising signs or advertisements of any other nature within 200 feet of the trail in an Agricultural District unless such signs conform to the natural appearance of the surroundings. Requirements under this section and the sign ordinance may require county review for the design and development of a future public access trail connection with the cemetery.

#### **Section 612. Shoreland District (SH)**

This section applies to all land designated as Shoreland area within Fillmore County and includes lands within 300 feet of the ordinary high water level of the Root River. Only the northernmost part of the site is within 300 feet of the river and subject to this section of the

ordinance. This northern portion is topographically isolated from the developable parts of the cemetery and is being acquired to protect the cemetery's northern boundary area and viewshed from future development. Cemetery development is not planned within this area. This area will be preserved as permanent natural open space.

### **Section 613. Bluffland Areas**

The county's bluffland map dated November 2, 2005 shows bluffland along the eastern boundary in the northernmost part of the site. This section of the ordinance states that all structures must be outside of the Bluff Impact Zone and that all residential construction within 200 feet of the top of the bluff is required to have a Site Development Plan prepared by a licensed engineer. The Bluff Impact Zone is defined as the bluff and land within 50 feet of the top and 30 feet of the toe in designated bluffland areas. The definition is more restrictive in designated shoreland areas. Bluffs are defined as areas with 30 percent or greater slope with 50 feet of elevation change. No cemetery development is planned or anticipated in the northern part of the site affecting the designated bluffland or shoreland in that area. Where cemetery development is currently planned it is setback greater than 200 feet from the top of the designated bluffland. In addition, the cemetery development and construction plans are being prepared by a licensed engineer.

### **City of Preston**

The southwest corner of the site is located in the City of Preston and currently zoned I-1 General Industrial District. Cemeteries are not a Permitted Primary Use or a Permitted Conditional Use in the city I-1 District.

Cemeteries are a Permitted Primary Use in the city's R-1 Agricultural/Residential District and other R-Residential Districts. The development of the cemetery appears to require a change in Zoning and Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

It appears the cemetery identification sign will be limited to 24 square feet of display area in the R- District under the city sign regulations. The identification sign will be designed to meet the identification needs of the cemetery and to comply with the sign ordinance as feasible. A variance could be required if cemetery identification needs cannot be met within the ordinance size requirements.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

A federal environment assessment has been prepared and will be published for review and comment prior to cemetery development. The federal Department of Veterans Affairs environmental review process requires a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project to be developed.



## **EXISTING UTILITIES – AVAILABILITY, CAPACITY AND MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING**

The local utility companies and service providers have to been contacted to determine the availability and capacity of Natural Gas, Electric and Data/Com services for the cemetery.

**Electric Utilities** – Adequate electrical capacity and service are available from Tri-County Electric Cooperative and the City of Preston Electrical Utility. A cooperative agreement is being developed to provide electric service to the cemetery from the closest source.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative currently has an electric transmission line and easement on the property. This easement will need to be changed from a floating/blanket easement to a fixed easement with a described width and location to enable planning and development of future cemetery phases. Depending on the easement process and schedule, a Memorandum Of Understanding may be needed with the Tri-County Electric Cooperative to address this electric transmission line easement. In addition, an abandoned electric line and easement that served the two previously removed farmsteads will need to be addressed. The line will need to be removed and the associated easement vacated.

**Natural Gas and Data/Com Service** – Natural Gas and Data/Com services with sufficient capacity are available to the cemetery in the Highway 52 right-of-way near the cemetery entrance.

### **Domestic Potable Water**

The City of Preston has an existing dead-end stub water main 6 inch diameter and 1900 feet long that services the Fillmore Co. Recycling Center. This main is approximately 700 feet from the site and 95 feet lower in elevation. Based on the length and elevation differences, this dead end main will not be capable of supplying water of sufficient quality or pressure to meet the domestic needs of the cemetery. Engineering review of these conditions and the costs of extending water service to the cemetery buildings determined that connecting to city water service is not feasible.

The domestic potable water needs of the cemetery buildings will be met through the development of two small domestic wells. The cemetery maintenance and administration/public information buildings will be located 2100 feet apart. Serving both buildings with one potable well is not feasible. Each building will include a domestic potable water well constructed during the Phase 1 development. The wells will be located at least 300 feet from the existing construction and demolition debris fills and 50 feet from the septic drain fields, septic tanks and burial areas.

### **Sanitary Sewer, Septic Systems**

The City of Preston has an existing sanitary sewer located in the Highway 52 right-of-way near the MnDOT truck station. The potential for connecting the cemetery building sanitary systems

to this line was reviewed and determined to not be feasible due to the long distances involved, extent of grade change, steep slopes and shallow depth to bedrock. As proposed, the cemetery buildings will be served by on-site septic systems. The soil conditions at three locations were tested by a licensed septic system subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) professional for suitability for septic systems. Preliminary field design was performed in November of 2012. Two sites were identified for each building. Soil borings performed with a hand auger were taken and all sites were deemed suitable for septic treatment. A final design will be performed in the spring 2013 when Phase 1 construction plans have been finalized. The proposed septic field locations are in areas with undisturbed soil and slopes less than 12 percent. The soil conditions at these locations meet all standards and requirements. The systems are being designed by a licensed septic system designer SSTS professional and will meet all standards and requirements. In addition, the full time cemetery maintenance staff will follow site specific best management practices for monitoring and maintaining these systems and for proper disposal of system generated waste materials.

### **TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT – EXTERNAL**

Access to the cemetery is only available from US Highway 52. Due to the 55 mph speed limit, spacing of the existing adjacent driveways, distance to the Root River bridge, highway width and profile and site topography, there is only one feasible access point available to the cemetery. This access point is coincidental with the existing driveway serving the MnDOT District 6 Preston Truck Station.

The State Veterans Cemetery and MnDOT Truck Station will be required to share this common access. The MnDOT Truck Station is a small facility that is the base of operations for the highway maintenance and snowplow trucks serving the state highway system in this area. Highway maintenance and tandem snowplow trucks receive routine maintenance and are dispatched from this station. The station also receives semitrailer deliveries of sand-salt mix which are stored at the station. The station is most active during inclement weather in the winter months.

The county obtained fee title to the parcel needed for cemetery access during the spring of 2012. MnDOT is cooperating to reconvey a portion of the highway easement to the country and state to remove highway easement restrictions. The State Department of Administration Real Estate And Construction Services, Fillmore County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation MnDOT are working cooperatively to complete the property transfer and easement reconveyance.

This shared access is located on the outside of a long radius sweeping curve that climbs a long hill into Preston from the south. The grade at this location is approximately 4 percent and the curve is super-elevated. The highway section at this location includes a single southbound lane, two northbound lanes (one a truck passing lane), a southbound striped left turn lane for the truck station and 8' wide paved shoulders. Sight distances exceed 1000 feet in both directions.

The striped southbound left turn lane and the additional northbound lane will facilitate convenient turning movements and access into the cemetery.

There are four adjacent uses with direct highway access located near the cemetery access. Along the south side of the highway; a small commercial business is located 200 feet to the west; a concrete ready mix plant is located 140 feet to the east and a metal fabrication company is located 350 feet to the east of the cemetery access. The Country Recycling Facility access is located 350 feet east of the cemetery access on the north side of the highway.

The following access and traffic considerations are recommended.

1. No highway geometry changes are needed for the access or operations of the cemetery.
2. As the only feasible cemetery entrance must be shared with the MnDOT Truck Station and both facilities have mission critical access needs, close communications and cooperation between the cemetery and MnDOT staff will be needed to coordinate activities, deliveries, services and cortege schedules to avoid potential conflicts.
3. The steep hill, landform and existing woods west of the proposed cemetery entrance screen the views of the entrance from the west. The MnDOT Truck Station and landform screen the views of the entrance from the east. The cemetery entrance treatment is being designed and will be maintained to provide more open views of the entrance; to emphasize the cemetery as the dominant use and to screen and buffer the MnDOT Truck Station.
4. The geometry and design of the shared entrance will provide for cortege arrivals and MnDOT semi-truck deliveries and large tandem snowplow truck activity. The existing lane geometry and stripped left turn lane on US Highway 52 provide safer access to the cemetery.
5. The entrance walls, piers, gates and design features will create the first impression for those passing or arriving at this State Veterans Cemetery. The treatment of the entrance will set the tone for the cemetery experience for the veteran's families and public. The design is currently planned to incorporate limestone veneer walls and piers, ornamental metal gates and fencing, ground lighting, landscaping and a clear but understated sign system.
6. The MnDOT Truck Station will be buffered and screened by the piers, gates, fences and landscaping.
7. The cemetery and the MnDOT truck station are currently anticipated to include motorized gates with touch key access panels for security and facilitate truck station screening.

## **CIRCULATION – INTERNAL**

### **Vehicular**

The site's challenging topography prevents the development of a compact loop and interconnected road system. The potential layout and location of the roads will be governed by the land forms and grade changes. The resulting road system will be long and winding to fit the land and connect dispersed burial areas and facilities. The main road system is expected to be over 12,260 feet in length at final completion of the cemetery.

The landforms will dictate that some parts of some roads will be steep. The roads will be limited to a maximum 8 percent where necessary to traverse slopes and provide connections between developed areas. The road grades will be reduced to a maximum of 3 percent along the main burial areas and cortege assembly area. The grades will be reduced to 2 percent or less along the columbarium plazas and committal service shelter to facilitate plaza development, parking, and to maintain accessible pedestrian circulation.

The road organization is designed to be simple and understandable and interconnections, pull-offs and bypass routes will be provided at key points where possible to avoid and minimize circulation conflicts between memorial services, visitation, operations and future development activities.

As the site will not support a highly interconnected road system, at full develop the main cemetery connecting road will be two-way. One-way roads will be limited to the cortege staging road, memorial service parking area and the main loop road that provides access to the committal shelter, flag assembly area, columbarium 1 and the maintenance area. Traffic turnarounds will be used where needed to improve the traffic flow and flexibility and redirect visitors.

Visitor gravesite parking will be accommodated on-street throughout the cemetery. Cemetery traffic is slow with speeds limited to 15 MPH. At the columbarium plazas where visitation is expected to be more concentrated visitor parking will be provided in on-street parallel parking bump-out areas.

An on-street cortege assembly queuing area will be provided at the Admin/PIC area to allow efficient funeral cortege staging and convenient access to public restrooms.

Due to the distances and dispersed facilities, the maintenance and storage facilities will be located in the southeastern part of the cemetery. This centralized location provides the shortest and most efficient maintenance circulation routes. This location also provides enough space for the maintenance activities and needed buffering and screening. It also places the memorial rifle squad quarters near the committal shelter and flag assembly areas.

There may be potential for developing a small temporary Memorial Day/event parking area along the edge of the eastern Construction Debris fill. Developing temporary parking in this area will require placing and grading additional soil material atop the fill to reduce the grades to approximately 2 to 3 percent and restoring the area with suitable field grasses. Parking in this area will be limited to approximately 60 cars and will only be available when weather conditions permit.

### **Memorial Walkway**

The cemetery will include a memorial walkway between the Committal Shelter and Flag Assembly areas. This tree lined walkway will be approximately 350 feet long and will provide a sequence of organized spaces for the memorials that will be added to the cemetery over time. This walkway will also provide a visual and physical link between the cemetery facilities and views and vistas of the cemetery and surroundings.

### **DNR Trail Connection**

There appears to be good potential for a pedestrian access connecting the DNR Harmony -- Preston Valley State Trail to the cemetery. The DNR trail is a popular recreation and tourism amenity for the area and region. A future trail connection to the cemetery would enable pedestrian access and increase public awareness of this new State Veterans Cemetery and important national shrine.

A future trail connection would require an appropriately scaled entrance treatment with design and materials similar to the main cemetery entrance and facilities. Development of this connection could include an ornamental gate, security fencing, bicycle parking, and informational signage. The DNR and State Veterans Cemetery may have common interests in developing this connection.

A future phase trail connection will require tree removal and grading and an extended route to maintain the grade to less than 5 percent. One of the two possible trail connection locations is at the existing field road trail crossing.

### **Farm Field Access Road**

The site also includes a field access road easement that provides agricultural access to the actively farmed land east of the site. The county is currently in the process of relocating a portion of that access easement onto the county property south of the site. Approximately 200 feet of the existing field access easement in the eastern part of the cemetery is anticipated to remain in place to maintain access to the actively farmed field. This will require providing an access easement/agreement for that portion of the road, coordination and maintaining a lockable agricultural gate at that crossing.

## **SIGNAGE**

The cemetery will require a low monument **identification sign** and **veterans seal** for the cemetery **at the entrance**. The cemetery entrance sign will be designed to be compatible with the entrance and materials and as small as possible while clearly identifying the cemetery. The entrance and cemetery sign will be **lighted by in-ground or on-ground lighting**. The shared entrance will also require a smaller **MnDOT Preston truck station sign**. These signs are located within the City of Preston and will be governed by the city sign regulations. These signs will be designed to meet the cemetery needs and to comply with city ordinance.

The city sign regulations do not permit signs within public right-of-way or easements. Cemeteries are permitted used in the R-1 District. The sign regulations in the R-1 District allow one illuminated identification sign not exceeding 24 square feet in area displaying location information for the use.

The cemetery and truck station are located on Highway 52 where the wide highway section and 55 MPH speed limit will affect sign readability. The facility gates will also be set back from the highway to provide for the circulation needs of both facilities. While the intent is to comply with city sign regulations, the size of the cemetery identification sign may need to be increased for legibility subject to city review and variance approval.

The cemetery will also include small facility **identification, cemetery information and regulation, and traffic control signs** located throughout the cemetery. These signs will be designed to Department of Veterans Affairs **National Cemetery Administration standards** to be clear and understated and to minimize visual impact on the cemetery.

## **FENCING**

At completion most of the perimeter will need to be fenced to improve security, restrict unintentional intrusion of conflicting activities, and to identify and define the limits of the public and nonpublic portions of the State Veterans Cemetery. The overall perimeter of the Fillmore Preston site is approximately 14, 885 feet long. Much of the perimeter is on very rugged terrain and in woodlands. Installing and maintaining fencing along the entire perimeter will involve significant installation and ongoing maintenance costs.

Portions of the perimeter boundary are shared with other uses with very specific functional needs. The DNR Harmony-Preston Valley State Trail needs to maintain the natural and rural character of this important trail corridor. The adjacent farmed areas have very specific operational requirements depending on the agricultural row cropping or grazing activities underway.

All portions of site will need to be identified and clearly understood to be part of the cemetery. However, not all parts of the site and facilities will have the same fencing or security needs.

### **Primary Entrance**

The site will need visually strong and enduring walls, piers, ornamental metal gates and fencing at the main entrance and to screen the MnDOT Truck Station.

The site will also need a smaller scaled entrance that reflects the same character, materials and design if a pedestrian entrance along the DNR trail is developed in the future.

### **Accessible Non-agricultural Boundary**

A chain link fence system will be provided along portions of the accessible site boundary where the fence is visually and functionally appropriate. Where used this type of fence will run with the land and be black chain link 4 to 6 feet high. This fence may be installed in phases as needed as the adjacent properties develop or as activity increases.

### **Inaccessible or Agricultural Boundary**

Existing perimeter agricultural fences may be maintained in place depending on condition, use and need. At a minimum the inaccessible and agricultural parts of the cemetery may be posted or signed to identify the cemetery boundary and restricted access.

### **Maintenance Complex**

A chain link fence system with lockable vehicular gates and personnel gates will be provided around the cemetery maintenance compound. Depending on the building design the buildings may form part of the secured edge. The fence and gates will be black chain link 6 feet high.

### **IRRIGATION**

The irrigation system for the cemetery will be a computer managed automatic system with weather station, rain monitor and moisture sensors and computer controls to maximize operational efficiency and minimize water use. Due to the topography and amount of grade change the irrigation system will require two separate wells at full cemetery completion. The first well is proposed to be constructed in Phase 1 and will serve the southern half of the cemetery. This well is planned to be located southwest of the maintenance facility for convenient access and monitoring. The second well is proposed north of the large ravine/valley and will serve the north half of the cemetery.

The need for irrigation water and associated energy consumption will be reduced by limiting the amounts of maintained turf to the burial areas and primary public spaces, through the use of drought tolerant varieties and native plants and cemetery best management practices.

## **STORMWATER**

The Root River is a designated trout stream and a sensitive and valuable resource. The stormwater management system will be designed to control the volume and rate of run off and to treat the storm discharge to required standards and to minimize negative impacts from runoff water quality and temperatures. Portions of the Root River are listed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as impaired waters due to high levels of turbidity.

The stormwater system and pond will be designed and developed to meet the functional needs and requirements of the cemetery and to minimize adverse impacts on the surrounding area. The stormwater management system will direct flow from four defined development areas into a stormwater management system and retention basin on site. Part of an existing wetland that is centrally located in the deep ravine/narrow valley will be modified to form a retention basin that can handle the volume of a 100 year storm event with a release rate of 0.15 cfs/acre. This retention basin will provide sediment control for lesser storm events. This stormwater basin will be configured and landscaped as a visual amenity for the cemetery. At full development of the cemetery, the offsite flow will be of a higher quality and less than the existing offsite flow.

To minimize stormwater runoff, the cemetery will be developed with narrow roadways, small buildings and small parking areas. Impervious surfaces will be minimized to the extent possible and extensive open space areas with natural and native vegetation will be permanently preserved. Due to the existing soils and potential for Karst features the use of low impact development infiltration systems and practices will be limited. The grading and stormwater management system will be designed to protect the steep slopes, delay runoff, reduce velocities and minimize potential erosion. Graded landforms, curb and gutter, catch basins and vegetation will be designed and used to manage stormwater.

In addition, at full completion the cemetery will maintain approximately 40 acres of turf grass lawn. The remainder of the 176 acre site will be undisturbed existing vegetation or areas of restored native vegetation. While the cemetery will need to use fertilizer and lawn chemicals to grow and maintain healthy cemetery turf, fertilizer and chemical use will be minimized through the use of trained professional grounds staff and best management practices. All turf areas will be bounded by buffers and extensive undisturbed areas of existing and new native vegetation.

The cemetery operations plan and operations staff will monitor and control erosion, street cleaning, deicing chemical use, turf and native grass management practices and all appropriate BMP's to protect the Root River and surrounding area.

## **SITE ENGINEERING**

### **Grading**

The cemetery has been designed to generally limit development to the flatter upland ridgeline and hill tops. The grading has been designed to minimize and balance earthwork to the extent possible. It has also been designed to maintain a minimum depth of soil cover to seal the



bedrock, limit potential infiltration and avoid the high costs of bedrock excavation. In areas where the bedrock protrudes upward, some disturbance may be necessary but will be limited.

The cemetery will be developed in phases and is being designed to balance earthwork quantities on site. Overall earthwork for all construction phases for the completed cemetery is estimated at approximately 420,000 cubic yards. The Phase 1 earthwork is estimated at approximately 215,000 cubic yards. Earthwork and grading will be performed in accordance with VA and state standards and requirements. A Stormwater Pollution Prevent Plan SWPPP will be prepared and all grading and erosion control permits including NPDES/SDS permit will be acquired. Grading operations and erosion control will be monitored, maintained and documented. Erosion control will comply with the SWPPP and NPDES/SDS permit and appropriate BMP's for the specific site conditions.

All cemetery facilities are being designed and will be constructed based on the soils and geologic conditions of the site. The designs and construction documents for cemetery facilities, buildings and structures are being developed to reduce the risk of frost damage to the facilities.

As this site is in a Karst Area, a minimum depth of soil or impervious layer will be maintained between potential infiltration sources (pond, preplaced crypt areas) and the bedrock. If any Karst features are encountered during development, they will be reviewed and evaluated by the design team geotechnical engineer's Karst Specialist and corrected or avoided based on their recommendation. If areas of perched groundwater or springs are encountered during construction, they also will be reviewed and evaluated by the geotechnical engineer and corrected or avoided based on their recommendation.

Additional soil borings will be performed during the cemetery design processes for all buildings and structures and preplaced crypt and casketed burial areas, columbaria and pond areas.

Based on the soil borings to date, surface or subsurface geologic and soil conditions do not appear to present a significant impact or constraint to development of the cemetery.

According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service web soil survey map, the site may include areas of Fayette Silt Loam and Chaseburg and Judson loam that are classified as Prime Farmland. Due to the small size, isolated and fragmented nature of the potential areas identified as prime farmland and the prior conversion to construction demolition debris fills, non-native conifer plantations and non-native successional woodlands any remaining areas of prime farmland will be of marginal utility for agricultural use. Conversion of any remaining prime farmland to cemetery use will result in minimal long term impacts to prime farmland soils. The appropriate Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (Form AD-1006) will be completed and submitted to the NRCS as needed.

## **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

The views and vistas of the woodlands and Root River valley to the east from the high parts of the site are expansive and will be preserved and framed by new landscaping. The views of the cemetery and surround area will be an asset to the cemetery.

The interior views and vistas of the cemetery will be varied and sequential. The views of the cemetery and the dramatic landforms will be unique to this cemetery.

The developable parts of the site are well buffered from existing and future peripheral uses and activities by distance, landforms, natural woodlands and planted pine plantations. This existing buffering will be reinforced by landscape plantings where needed and appropriate.

The proximity to the important DNR Harmony – Preston Valley State Trail has potential to increase public visitation and local and regional awareness of this new State Veterans Cemetery and national shrine.

Site development will require significant tree removal, mostly in the pioneer non-native woods and conifer plantations. New native deciduous trees will be planted in the boulevards along the cemetery roads and to define cemetery spaces and frame views. New deciduous and conifer trees will be also be planted to screen and buffer utilitarian areas and raw edges exposed during construction.

The shared cemetery and MnDOT truck station entrance will include stone walls and piers, ornamental metal fencing and gates, ground lighting, signs and deciduous and conifer tree plantings. This entrance treatment will be designed to establish a strong enduring presence to clearly identify the State Veteran's Cemetery and to buffer and screen the MnDOT truck facility.

Deciduous and/or conifer trees will be planted along the edges of the electrical transmission line easement in future phases to define the burial areas and buffer the transmission line.

## **BURIAL PROGRAM**

At full completion, the new southeastern Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Fillmore County at the City of Preston will provide approximately 37,140 burial sites for full-casket and in-ground gravesites and columbarium niches for cremated remains. The burial areas, a small administrative/public information center building, maintenance/storage/honor guard building, open sided committal service shelter, memorial walkway, flag assembly area, roads and infrastructure will be developed on approximately 58 acres or 33 percent of the overall site. The remainder of the site will be retained as permanent open space to preserve the natural character of the cemetery and area.

## **PHASING**

The cemetery will be developed in phases with the initial phase occurring from 2013 to 2014. The first phase will utilize approximately 26 acres of the overall cemetery site and include the construction of the administration/public information center, maintenance/storage/honor guard building and storage yard, committal service shelter, memorial walkway, flag assembly area, first phase burial areas and columbarium niche banks, ornamental entrance piers, gates, fencing and signs, irrigation system, stormwater management system with an enhanced wetland

and retention basin, two domestic and one irrigation wells, two septic systems, utility infrastructure and roads to serve the initial cemetery development.

Subsequent cemetery phases will be developed at approximate 10 year intervals subject to future analysis of the demographic trends, projected need and available funds through full completion anticipated in approximately 40 years.

## **BUILDINGS/ARCHITECTURE**

The new cemetery will include three buildings. All three buildings are planned for construction during the initial construction phase.

### **Administration Public Information Center Building**

The administration public information center will be a one story slab on grade masonry building approximately 2390 SF in size. As currently planned it will incorporate both natural and engineered low maintenance materials including limestone veneer siding, concrete tile roof, wood paneling and extensive low E glass. It will include two administrative offices, a reception area workroom, small conference room, restrooms, mechanical rooms, foyer with electronic gravesite locator and a large display lobby. It will include east facing windows with expansive views of the cemetery, a covered car port for the cemetery guide vehicle, a small 18 car parking area and the Minnesota and MIA flagpoles.

### **Maintenance, Storage, Honor Guard Building**

The maintenance, storage and honor guard building will be a one story slab on grade masonry building approximately 4300 SF in size. It is currently planned to be a CMU building with a "synthetic stucco" (EFIS) exterior finish, low E windows and a standing seam metal roof. This building will include an honor guard room with storage, restroom and lockers, maintenance office, break room, employee restrooms and lockers and mechanical space. It will include two garage bays with storage space and a wash bay. The building will be designed to add two additional garage/storage bays in a future phase. The maintenance building will be located in a fenced and paved storage yard that will include approximately 8 parking spaces. The maintenance building will be located in the southeastern part of the site and surrounded by an existing pioneer non-native wood. Deciduous and conifer trees will be planted to provide additional landscaping to buffer this facility from the cemetery and surrounding area.

### **Committal Service Shelter**

The veterans cemetery services will be held at the committal service shelter. This shelter is currently planned to be a one story slab on grade masonry open shelter approximately 930 SF in size with limestone veneered piers and concrete tile roof. It will be open on all four sides to accommodate larger groups and to provide views of the cemetery, honor guard and surrounding area. Two of the shelter piers will include enclosed storage.