



Joint DNR-Partner Land Acquisition Continuous Improvement Project

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Project Goal:

Bring together DNR staff and partners to identify and implement ways to streamline and shorten acquisition timelines while maintaining the department's responsibility to steward state resources.

Project Participants

DNR Sponsors

- Joe Henderson, Director, DNR Lands and Minerals
- Dave Olfelt, Director, DNR Fish and Wildlife

DNR Staff

- Katherine Sherman-Hoehn, OSD Grants Unit
- Greg Heyblom, LAM Appraisal Unit
- Chad McDonald, LAM Acquisition Unit
- Derek Hilding, LAM Legal Unit
- Jeff Tillma, FAW Acquisition Coordinator

Acquisition NGOs

- Bob McGillivray, Trust for Public Land
- Tanner Bruse, Pheasants Forever (formerly)
- Sabin Adams, Pheasants Forever
- Kathy DonCarlos, Northern Waters Land Trust
- Jon Schneider, Ducks Unlimited
- Joe Pavelko, Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Committee

DMAIC Method: A structure method for process improvement



Define

Project Objective
Define the problem.

What are we trying to accomplish?



Measure

Strategies/drivers
Quantify the problem.

How is the process currently working?
Where should we focus?



Analyze

Root Causes
Identify the cause of the problem.

What gets in the way?
What causes our challenges?



Improve

Solutions
Solve the root cause & verify the improvement

How might we make it better?
What should we do first?



Control

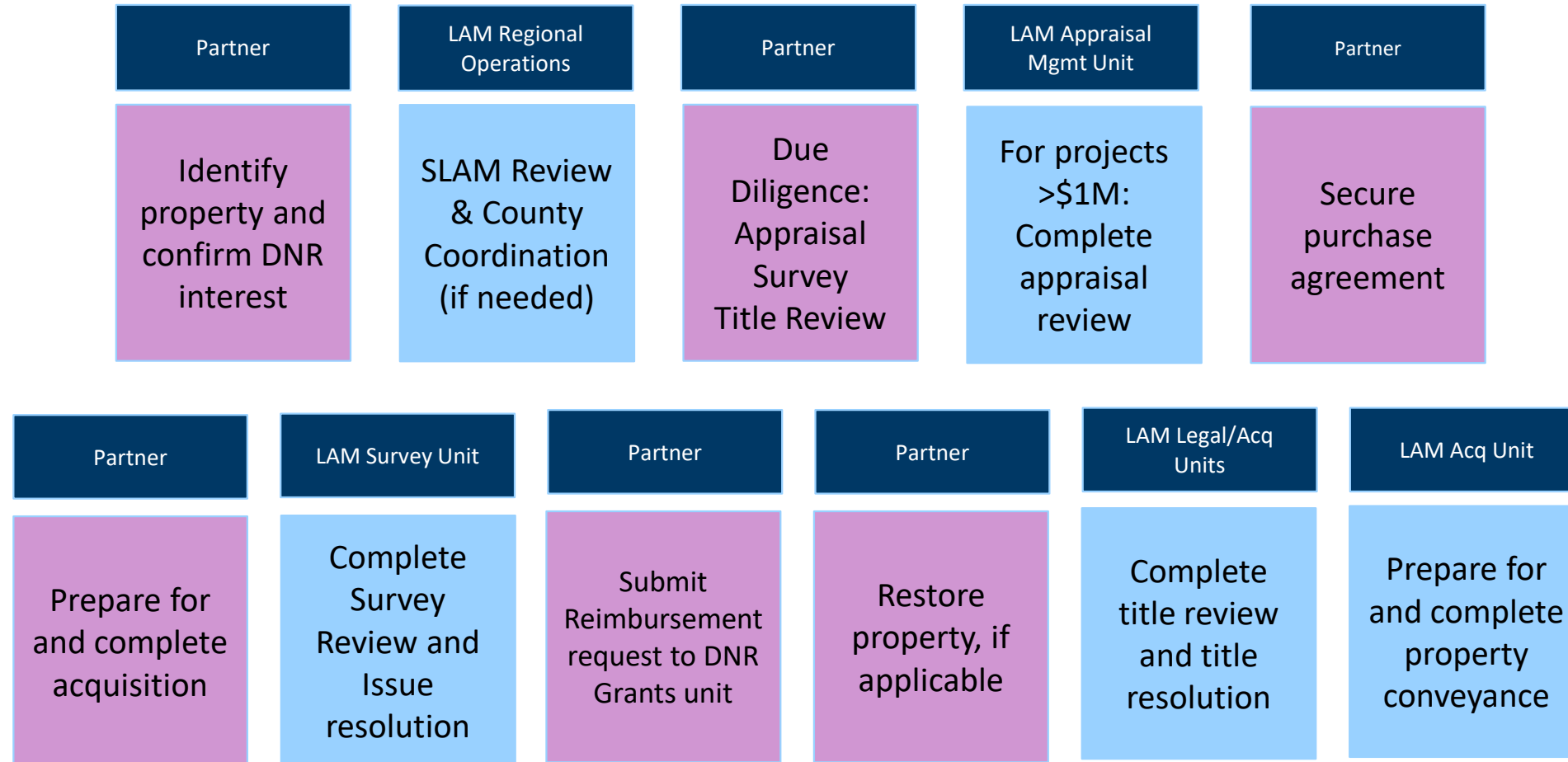
Controls
Maintain the gains.

How will we sustain improvements?

Standard Phases of the Land Acquisition Process

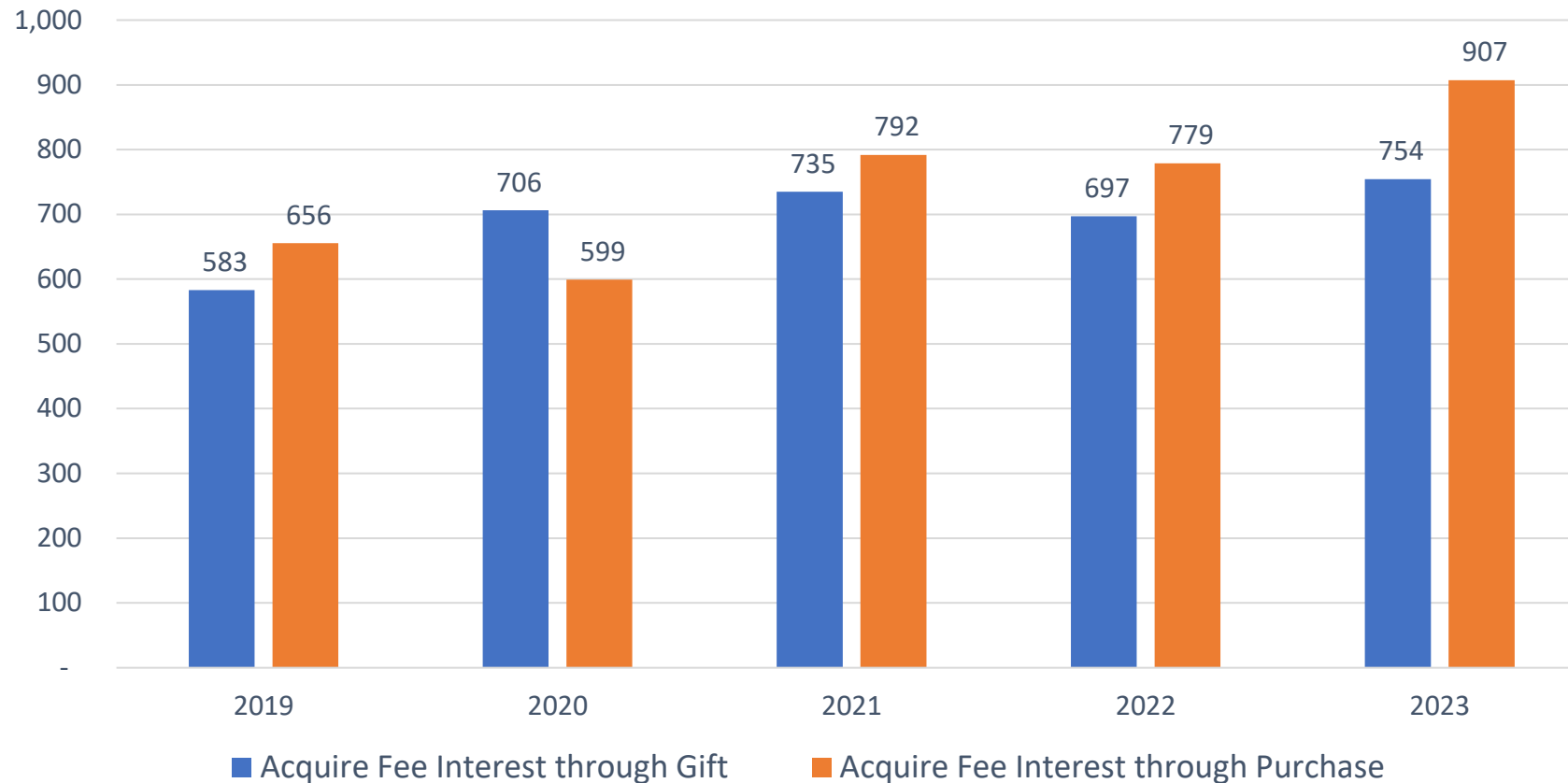


Partner-led DNR Land Acquisition Process



Measure the Problem

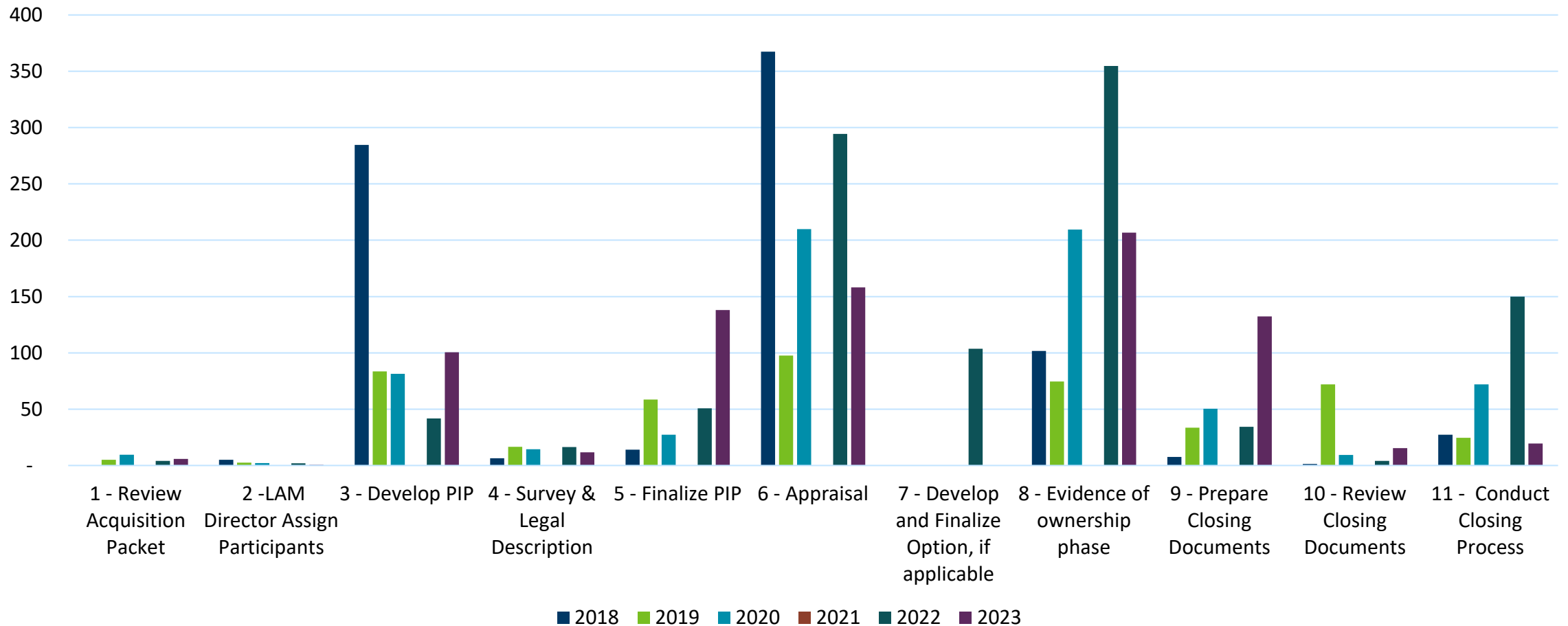
Average Days Elapsed from Project Initiation to Conveyance to DNR



- Begins when partner flags the project for DNR
- Includes multiple hand-offs between DNR and partners
- Ends when partner has completed their purchase and conveyed the land to DNR

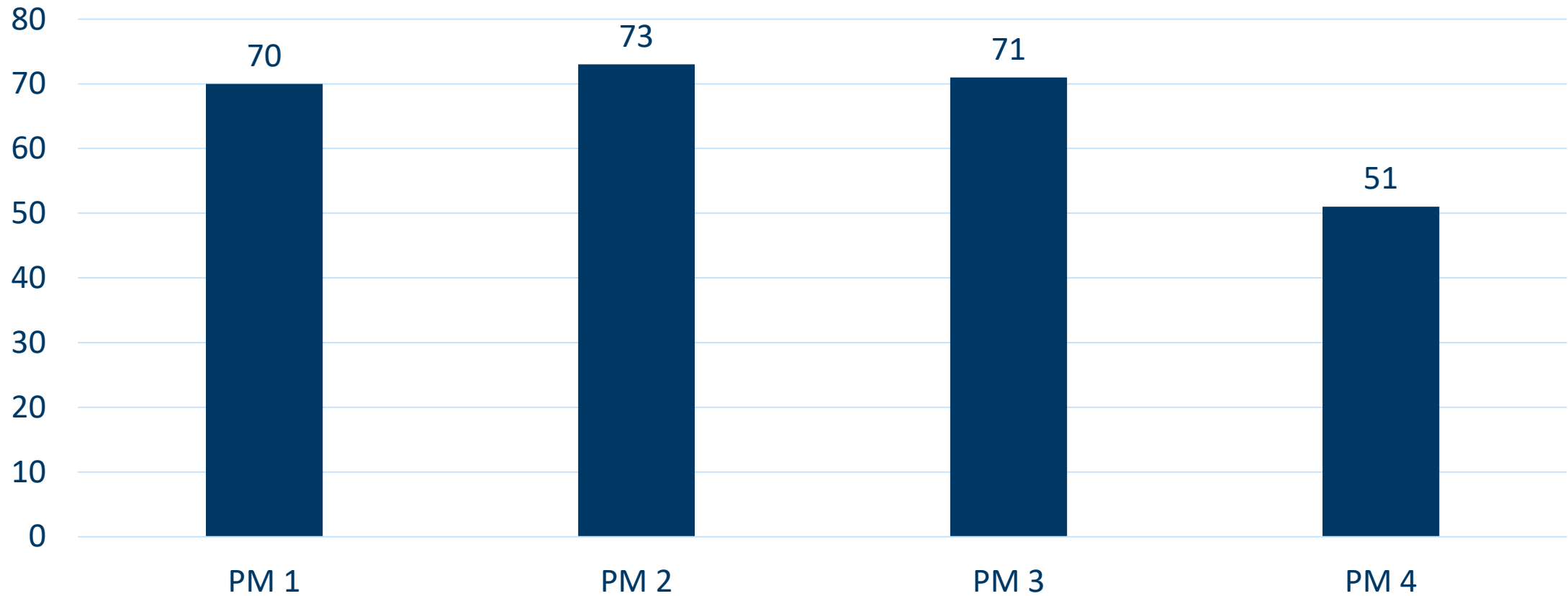
Measure the Problem: Steps of the Process

Average number of days in acquisition step, by year, for gift acquisitions over \$1 million



Measure the Problem: Project Manager Project Load

Transactions per Project Manager, Summer 2023



Project Focus Areas



For projects under \$1 million:

Why does it take a long time to prepare and complete title review?



For projects over \$1 million:

Why does it take a long time to finalize a property information packet and complete an appraisal review?

Root Causes: Duration of Title Review Phase



DNR project manager capacity to quickly begin work on projects is limited



DNR legal capacity to efficiently review projects is limited



DNR real estate staff don't always receive the right information early in the process to quickly evaluate projects



Partner and DNR attorneys aren't always reviewing for the same things, increasing the risk that partners will need to resolve title issues before DNR can take ownership

Root Causes: Timeline for Appraisal Reviews (projects over \$1 million)



Information from NGOs is not always enough for DNR to quickly scope and complete an appraisal review



DNR creates a Property Information Packet at an inefficient point in the process



Appraisal instructions sometimes aren't adequate to get a good appraisal back from the appraiser, requiring more work to remedy



Some internal DNR processes are unnecessarily dependent on each other

Solutions Brainstorm



Implementation Plan

Solutions	Implementation Status
Pilot the ability, in some circumstances, to complete early DNR title review	Operational on a limited pilot basis
Create a form to speed-up communication about legal issues and questions	Operational on a pilot basis
Increase capacity within the LAM acquisition and legal units	Hiring in process for 3 additional FTE Hiring pending for +1 attorney
Define, systemize and clarify the data the DNR needs to complete the acquisition and grant compliance processes using a PI Form	Roll-out begins July 1, 2024
Allow certain processes to run concurrently	Roll-out targeted for July 1, 2024
Use a quality threshold for appraisal reviews instead of a dollar threshold	Project begins July 1, 2024
Formalize NGO training on how to best to work with DNR	Pending
Develop time-related benchmarks for each step in the acquisition process	Pending

Plan:

- Test each proposed solution for six months and evaluate impact
- Course correct and redirect as necessary
- Does it reduce transaction times and/or improve DNR's & partners' ability to complete transactions together?

Thank you

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