



RIM Reserve Clean Water Fund-Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund-Riparian Buffers SWCD Program Guidance

11/30/11



Introduction

CWF-\$6.0m available for each year of the biennium (FY 2012 and 2013)

LSOHC-\$2.249m available FY 2012-Prarie Section Only.

The intent of this guidance document is to outline the enrollment criteria and conditions that will govern the landowner application sign-up for this RIM Reserve conservation easement program on eligible riparian buffer lands. This guidance should be considered additive to existing RIM policy and procedure.

Statute requirements / conditions:

1. Easements will be acquired via the RIM Reserve program (MS 103F.501).
2. Permanent easements only.
3. Buffer widths must be a minimum of 50 feet and no more than 100 feet maximum average for clean water. Buffer extensions to a maximum average of 200' may be granted for wildlife habitat enhancement purposes (Prairie Section only). Measurements start at top of bank for streams and ditches or water's edge for lakes. Width can be less than 50 feet if there is a natural impediment beyond the landowner's control, for example a road or property line.
4. Clean water buffers are also eligible when adjacent to and used to solve bluff land erosion problems.
5. Buffers must be adjacent to public waters defined as: streams, ditches and lakes, excluding wetlands; as shown on the DNR Protected Waters Inventory (PWI) maps. *Streams are solid blue lines, ditches are dashed lines, and basins marked as a P on the DNR PWI maps. Basins marked with a W on the inventory maps are not eligible for buffering.*
6. Eligible land must have been owned by the landowner for 1 year prior to application.
7. Eligible landowners – any individual or entity that is not prohibited from owning ag land under MS 500.24 Corporate Farm Law. *Farm corporations need to be certified by the MN Dept. of Agriculture, contact 651-297-2200.*

Sign-up criteria:

1. Local project areas requested by SWCD via RFP. Selection by BWSR prior to signup start.
2. Application and scoring periods will be established.
3. Scoring criteria established for wildlife component, minimum wildlife score of 50 required.
4. Local screening committee will rank applications for funding at the conclusion of the signup period.

5. Priority should be placed upon land in existing or new CRP contracts that had crop history prior to enrollment in CRP.
6. Existing vegetation area between eligible cropland and riparian source must be included in the easement acreage. This existing non-crop area shall not exceed 50% of the entire offered acreage. Non-crop acres over 50% must be donated.
7. Whenever possible, land on both sides of the stream or ditch must be enrolled.
8. It is the intent of these buffers to focus on upland riparian sites. Floodplain areas that exceed these narrow buffer width's are not eligible and are to be enrolled under other programs that target floodplains.
9. Minimum 3 ac. total easement size per application, unless part of a larger project initiative.
10. Use easement numbering xx-xx-12-09.

Easement Payment rates

Annually the BWSR establishes payment rates for easement programs. See the most current rate table for this information. Cropland is defined as cropped with an annually planted crop 2 of the last 5 years. CRP is considered cropland for this sign-up.

Conservation Practice Payments

For land in existing CRP contracts, no changes in vegetative cover will be required. These practice areas should be listed as RR 2b Native Grasses already established on the Conservation Easement Practice Payment Worksheet (CEPPW) form. Conservation plan \$s will be available for new establishment or to bring cover up to specs. These new planting practice areas should be listed as RR 2a Native Grasses to be established on the CEPPW.

Forms and items needed to complete the RIM application materials

A complete application package containing all the items listed in the document titled '*RIM Reserve application materials to submit for CWL buffers and wellhead protection easements*' should be prepared and submitted directly to BWSR St. Paul RIM staff. DO NOT SEND TO YOUR BWSR Board Conservationist.