



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



5/21/14

## Introduction

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

## Statute requirements / program policy:

1. Easements will be acquired via the RIM Reserve program (MS 103F.501).
2. Permanent easements only.
3. Cropland within the first 50' of a Clean Water Fund buffer adjacent to a PWI water must be in compliance with MN DNR Shoreland Rule at time of application or paid at non-crop rate only.
4. Clean water buffers are also eligible when adjacent to and used to solve bluff land erosion problems.
5. Buffers must be adjacent to: streams, lakes, ditches and intermittent streams, excluding wetlands. Mapping for eligible streams and lakes, public drainage systems and intermittent streams can be found on DNR PWI & 24k Streams layers.
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.*
8. Managed haying and grazing to maintain vegetation allowed for habitat management purposes under an approved plan developed by the SWCD, Landowner and BWSR.

## Sign-up criteria:

1. SWCD RFP conducted for signup participation. Active RFP on file or to be submitted. Buffer applications must fit within the priorities identified within the RFP.
2. BWSR will identify specific periods during the year when applications will be accepted based upon available funding and other RIM program enrollment options.
3. Buffer widths must be a minimum of 50 feet for clean water. Maximum average width of 350' is based upon site conditions to solve the resource problem using the NRCS 393 standard for filter strips. 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. In the LSOHC Prairie Section, buffers may be extended for wildlife habitat purposes. Scoring worksheet established for LSOHC wildlife expansion of Clean Water Buffer. Minimum buffer

total for wildlife is 200' while maximum would be 700'. Acres and funding split evenly between both sources. Prairie planning unit only.

5. Priority should be placed upon land in existing CRP contracts that had crop history prior to enrollment in CRP.
6. Buffer vegetation should include deep rooted native species for nitrate uptake and also focus on pollinator habitat requirements. Consider scheduling restoration of the site if existing vegetation is inadequate.
7. Existing vegetation area between eligible cropland and riparian source must be included in the easement acreage. Payment is authorized for this area not to exceed 50% of the eligible cropland acres. Non-crop acres over 50% must be donated. For example, if an eligible area contains 10 ac. of land with crop history, you can compensate for 5 ac. of non-crop riparian land, any balance would need to be donated.
8. Whenever possible, land on both sides of the stream or ditch must be enrolled.
9. Floodplain eligibility is defined as cropland that is frequently or occasionally flooded soils or land substantially altered by recent flooding. Minimal square up is allowed outside of the identified flood plain area. In addition, non- crop provisions of #5 above apply.
10. Minimum 3 ac. total easement size per application, unless part of a larger project initiative.
11. NRCS standard 393 for Filter Strip will serve as the technical resource for clean water buffers. NRCS CP21 Filter Strip eligibility worksheet must be completed and in the file of each buffer easement.

### **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. Priority for funding will be placed on those parcels offered with complete crop history. Grassland or other natural land, legally converted and in compliance, is not eligible as cropland and associated rates until there have been 5 consecutive years of successful crop production. All other acres considered non-cropland.

### **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 \$ will be available for new establishment or to bring cover up to specs. 100% NTE \$300/ac. 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. **DO NOT SEND TO YOUR BWSR Board Conservationist.** Program and policy questions can be directed to [tabor.hoek@state.mn.us](mailto:tabor.hoek@state.mn.us) or [john.voz@state.mn.us](mailto:john.voz@state.mn.us), easement processing questions to [tim.fredbo@state.mn.us](mailto:tim.fredbo@state.mn.us).