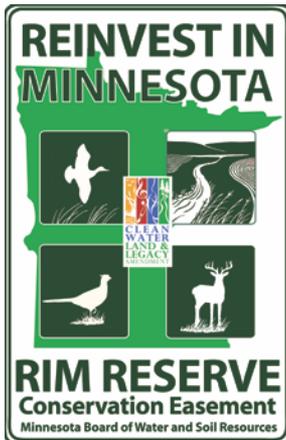


2013 BWSR Academy

RIM Updates & Opportunities



Monday, October 28
10:30 - 12:00



Presenters: Tabor Hoek – BWSR
and others!

Session Outline

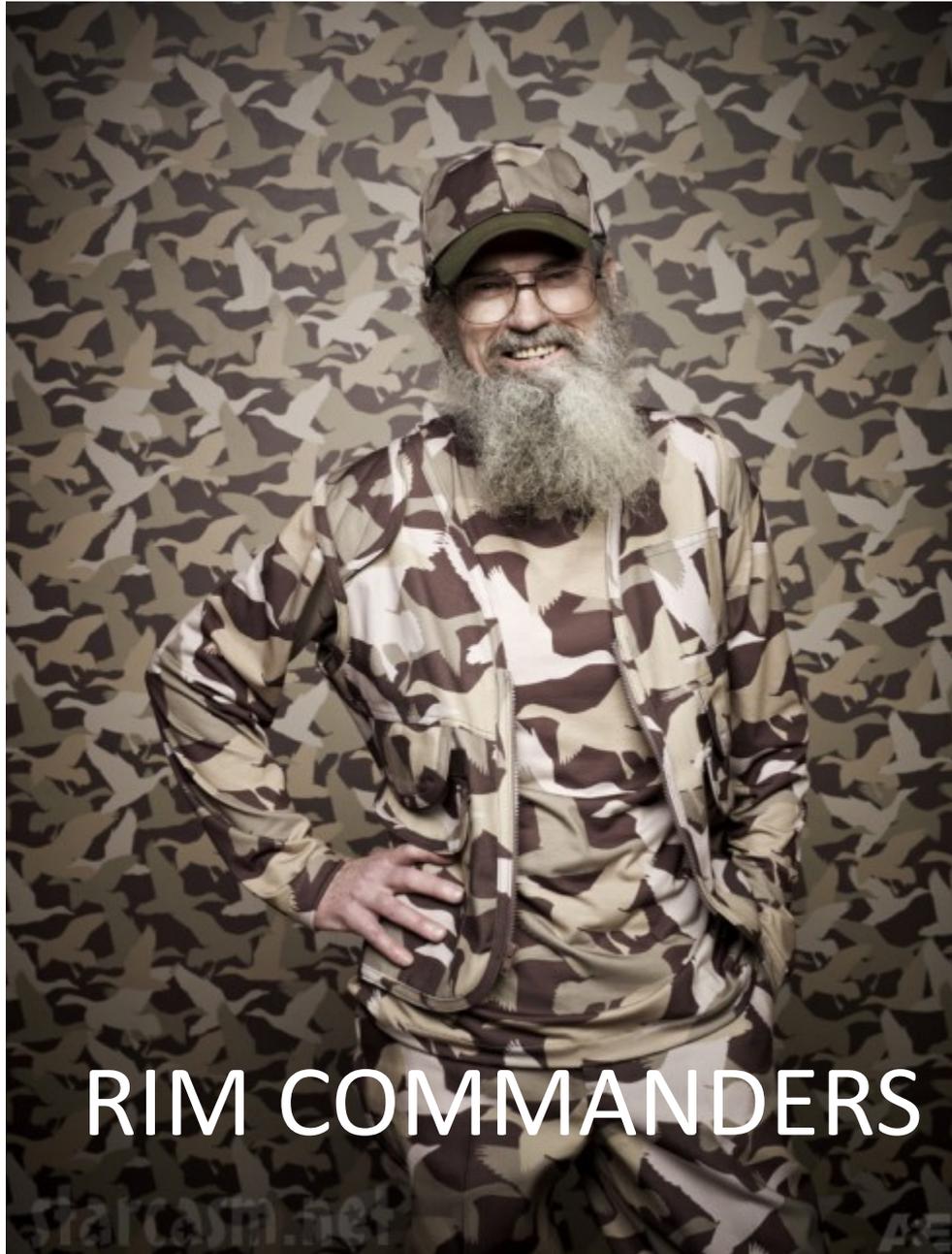


- RIM Staffing Update
- 2013 Accomplishments
- 2013 Issues
- RIM Flavors
- Riparian Buffer
- RIM Bonding Program
- RIM-WRP
- LGU Success Stories - LeSueur&Blue Earth
- MN Farm Bill Assistance Project
- RIM Grasslands and the MN Prairie Plan
- RIM Housekeeping Items
 - Stewardship (monitoring, data base, enforcement)
 - Vegetation Management - Haying & Grazing
 - Vegetation Enhancement
 - Conflicting Easements
 - Easement Boundary Posting





RIM COMMANDERS



RIM COMMANDERS





FBA MONKEY



RIM easements and property tax valuation

August 2013

Conservation easements are an important conservation tool that provides a variety of significant public benefits, including clean water, wildlife habitat and flood mitigation. Conservation easements also keep lands in private ownership and on the tax rolls. According to a recent report by the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA), there are currently about 600,000 acres of land protected by state-funded conservation easements in Minnesota. Approximately half these acres are enrolled in BWSR's RIM programs.

The effect of a conservation easement on a parcel's property value depends on a variety of factors, including the location of the property and the restrictions on use and development of the property put in place by the easement. Until a recent change in law, local assessors were allowed to determine the effects of a conservation easement, if any, on the property tax assessment on a case-by-case basis.

A change in law

In 2013, the Minnesota Legislature included a provision in the Tax Bill affecting the way in which local assessors must treat conservation easement when valuing property for tax purposes. This change *prohibits* a reduction of property value based on a conservation easement unless the easement falls into one or more of the following categories:

1. Easements covering riparian buffers along lakes, rivers, and streams that are used for water quantity or quality control
2. Easements in a county that has adopted, by referendum, a program to protect farmland and natural areas since 1999
3. Easements entered into prior to May 23, 2013

Exceptions to the new law

Given the new law and its exceptions, landowners considering a RIM easement should talk with the local tax assessor to better understand how the easement will affect taxes on their individual parcel. The following information is intended to assist SWCD staff and landowners.

Riparian easements

The Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program is authorized in Minnesota Statute, and the Statute (103F.511) provides a definition of "riparian land" that applies to RIM easements. Under this definition, "riparian land" defines lands adjacent to public waters, drainage systems, wetlands or locally designated priority waters.

County program to protect farmland and natural areas

The only county that has adopted (by referendum) a program to protect farmland and natural areas since 1999 is Dakota County.

Easements entered into prior to May 23, 2013

All RIM easements are signed and dated by the landowner prior to being recorded. To determine whether an easement was entered prior to May 23, 2013, landowners should check the date on which the easement was signed.

Subd. 4a. Riparian buffer payments; reporting. When clean water funds are used
44.4 to purchase riparian buffer easements, payments for the first 50 feet of riparian buffer that
44.5 are noncompliant with Minnesota Rules, part 6120.3300, may not exceed non-cropped
44.6 rates as established under section 103F.515. The Board of Water and Soil Resources must
44.7 include in its biennial report on clean water fund appropriations the funding spent on
44.8 easements for riparian buffers that are not compliant with Minnesota Rules, part 6120.3300.















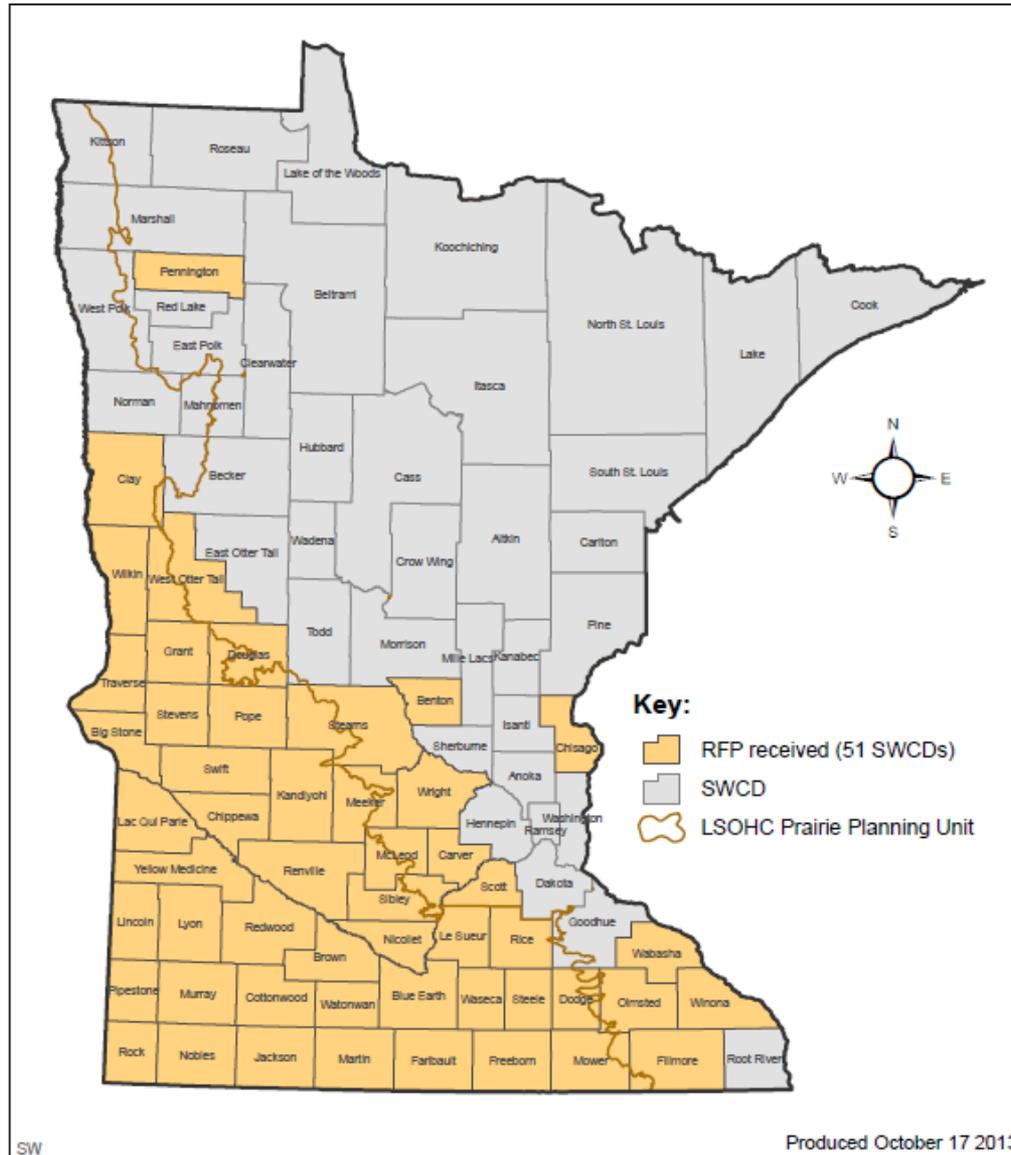






Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve

CWF/LSOHC RIM Riparian Buffers: RFPs received as of 10/17/2013





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

8/16/12



Introduction

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

LSOHC-\$2.249m available FY 2012 \$2.09m available FY 2013-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 / program policy:

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 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. Frequently/Occasionally flooded areas out to 350' for clean water floodplain.
5. Clean water buffers are also eligible when adjacent to and used to solve bluff land erosion problems.
6. 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.*
7. Eligible land must have been owned by the landowner for 1 year prior to application.
8. 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.*
9. CWF funded only buffers will contain easement language that allows haying July 15-Sept.1 annually at the landowner's discretion. No further action required by SWCD or BWSR.

Sign-up criteria:

1. SWCD RFP conducted for signup participation. Selection by BWSR prior to signup start.
2. Application process will be ongoing with a SWCD funding cap of \$1m. Pending projects beyond that limit will be considered for remaining funds no later than June 1 each year.

3. Scoring criteria established for wildlife component.
4. Priority should be placed upon land in existing or new CRP contracts that had crop history prior to enrollment in CRP.
5. 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.
6. Whenever possible, land on both sides of the stream or ditch must be enrolled.
7. 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.
8. Minimum 3 ac. total easement size per application, unless part of a larger project initiative.
9. 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. 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. 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, easement processing questions to tim.fredbo@state.mn.us.



RIM Reserve Bonding SWCD Program Guidance

8/16/12

Bonding-Up to \$6.0m available FY 2013 and unallocated FY 2012 Bonding project funds.

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 and wetland restorations. 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. Riparian areas and wetlands enrolled in CRP.
4. Buffers must be adjacent to intermittent streams or wetlands, or otherwise not eligible for CWF buffers. Or funding not available from CWF.
5. Wetland restorations not meeting RIM-WRP criteria for funding.
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. SWCD RFP conducted for signup participation. Selection by BWSR prior to signup start.
2. Application process will be ongoing until funds encumbered.
3. 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.
4. Whenever possible, land on both sides of the stream or ditch must be enrolled.
5. 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.
6. Minimum 3 ac. total easement size per application, unless part of a larger project initiative.
7. NRCS standard 393 for Filter Strip will serve as the technical resource for buffers. NRCS CP21 Filter Strip eligibility worksheet must be completed and in the file of each buffer easement.
8. Projects exceeding traditional cp21 and cp23 or cp23a criteria will need individual project approval by BWSR prior to submittal for consideration. Projects should be sent for review to tabor.hoek@state.mn.us. BWSR reserves the right to accept or deny applications based upon BWSR resolution adopted for these funds and corresponding staff evaluation.

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. 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, easement processing questions to tim.fredbo@state.mn.us.



December 21, 2012

Memo for the Record

The MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) acknowledges that when a Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) easement is secured with a landowner:

1. We are aware of the existence of a CRP-1 representing an active Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract; and
2. We agree that the participant will be able to comply with all CRP provisions, including, but not limited to maintenance, mowing, spraying, re-establishment of cover, etc.

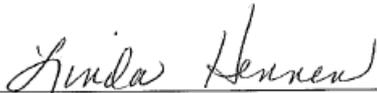
This *Memo for the Record* may be rescinded by either party.

Please contact BWSR RIM Easement Staff at 651-297-1894 if there are any questions.

Sincerely,

 12/18/12
 John Jaschke, Executive Director, MN BWSR

Concurred by:


 Linda Hennen, State Executive Director, USDA-FSA

12/18/12
 Date

Bemidji 403 Fourth Street NW Suite 200 Bemidji, MN 56601 (218) 755-2600	Brainerd 1601 Minnesota Drive Brainerd, MN 56401 (218) 828-2383	Duluth 394 S. Lako Avenue Suite 403 Duluth, MN 55802 (218) 721-4752	Fergus Falls 1094 Frontier Drive Fergus Falls, MN 56537 (218) 736-5445	Mankato 1160 Victory Drive South Suite 5 Mankato, MN 56001 (507) 389-6784	Marshall 1400 East Lyon Street Marshall, MN 56258 (507) 537-6060	New Ulm 261 Highway 15 South New Ulm, MN 56073 (507) 359-6074	Rochester 3555 9 th Street NW Suite 350 Rochester, MN 55901 (507) 206-2889
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Central Office / Metro Office

520 Lafayette Road North

Saint Paul, MN 55155

Phone: (651) 296-3767

Fax: (651) 297-5615

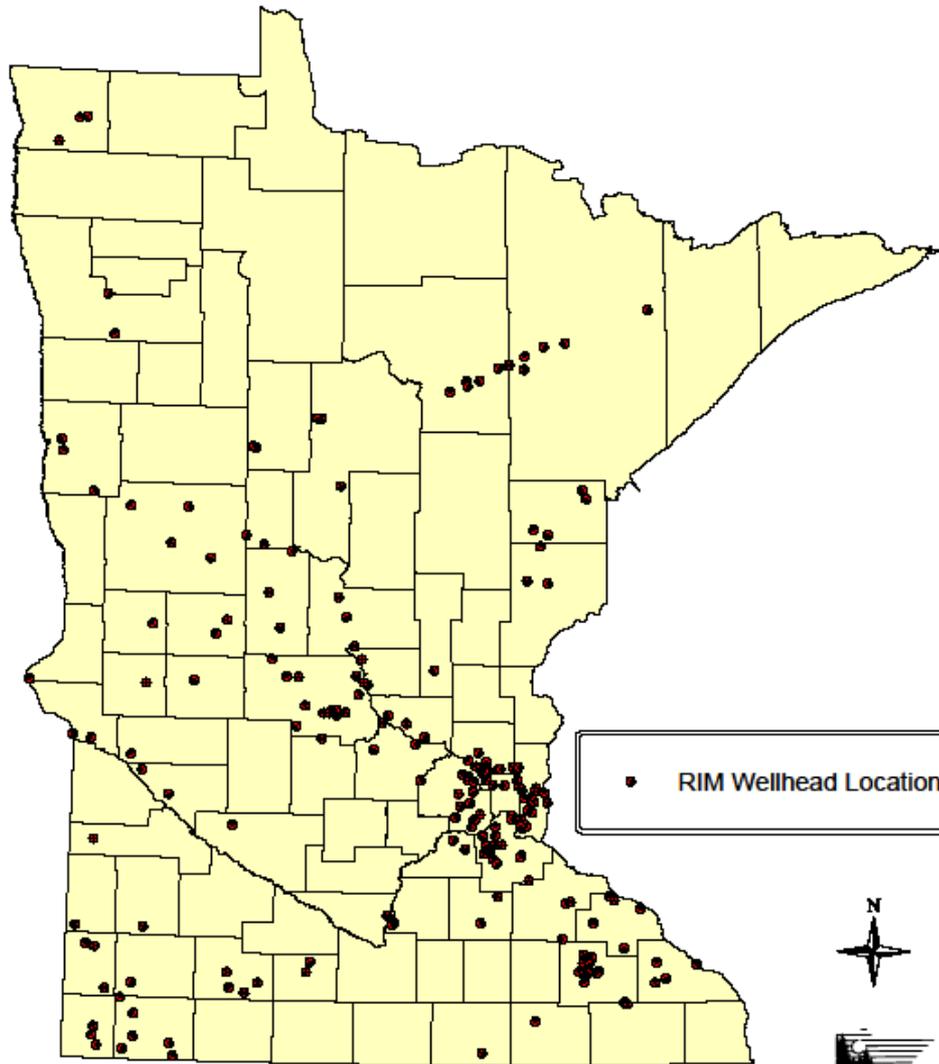
www.bwsr.state.mn.us

TTY: (800) 627-3529

An equal opportunity employer

RIM - WRP

RIM Wellhead Protection Areas



• RIM Wellhead Locations



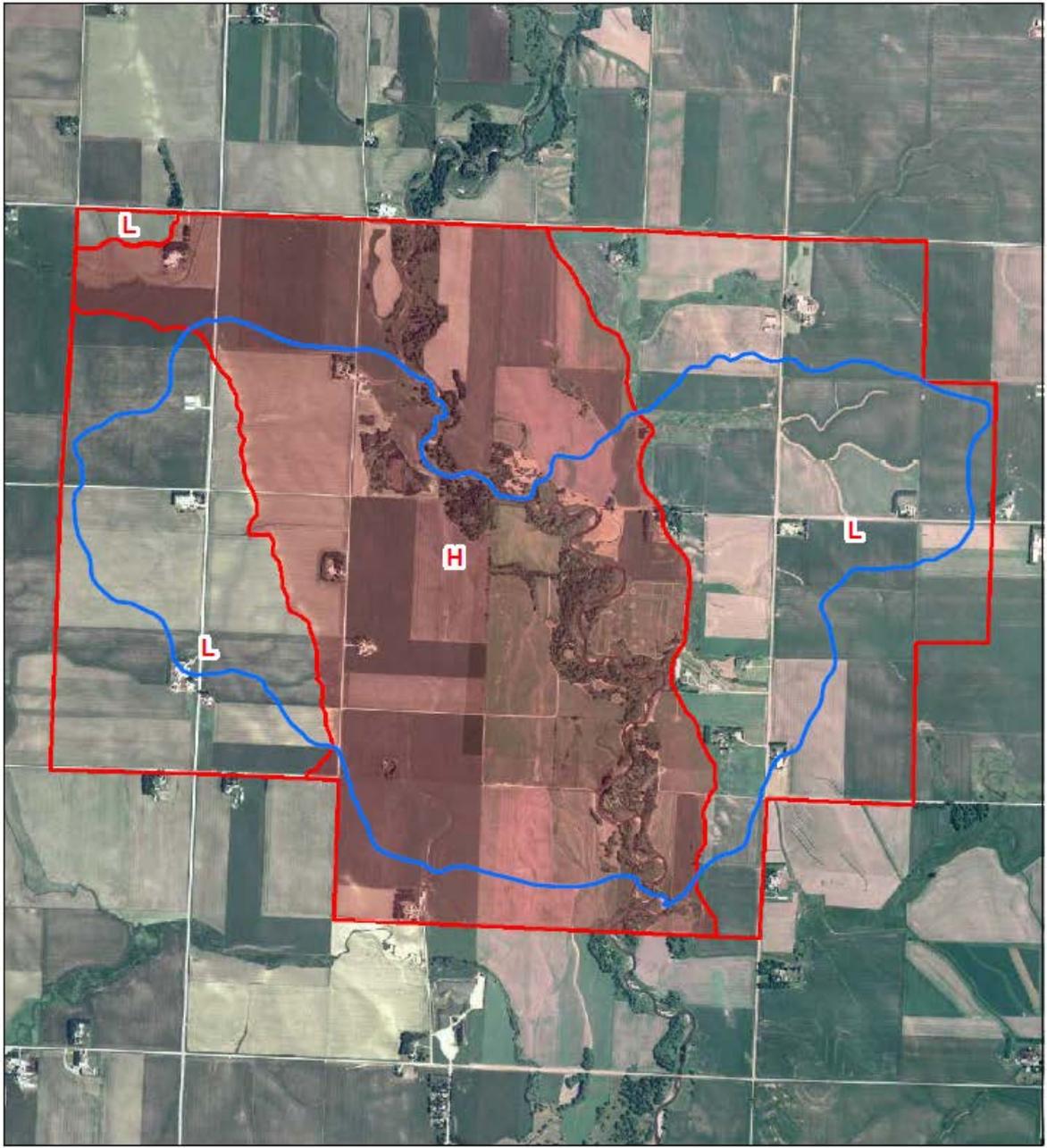
Rock County Rural Water System

Drinking Water Supply
Management Area

DWSMA ID - 96

-  Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA)
-  DWSMA
-  Vulnerable DWSMA - High or Very High Vulnerability
-  Municipal Boundary

VH = Very High Vulnerability
H = High Vulnerability
M = Moderate Vulnerability
L = Low Vulnerability





RIM Reserve Clean Water Fund-Wellhead SWCD Program Guidance

11/30/11

Introduction

\$1.3 M available for each year of the biennium (FY 2012 and 2013)

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 wellhead protection 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. Enrollment must occur in Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPA) identified by Minnesota Dept. of Health (MDH) and mapped as high or very high vulnerability.
4. Eligible land must have been owned by the landowner for 1 year prior to application.
5. 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. Continuous sign-up until all available funds are encumbered. Contact BWSR Easement staff for prior approval of the project site. Applications do not need to be ranked or prioritized by the SWCD prior to submittal to BWSR.
2. Only land in existing or new CRP contracts that had crop history prior to enrollment in CRP are eligible.
3. Lands ineligible for CRP, or lacking crop history, that contribute to wellhead degradation will be reviewed on a case by case basis by BWSR, SWCD and MDH for eligibility and potential enrollment in RIM.
4. A majority, greater than 51%, of the site must be within the WHPA. This criteria should be used to deal with logical boundaries and remaining areas that are infeasible to farm.
5. Use easement numbering xx-xx-12-10.

(continued)

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 to an annually planted crop 2 of the last 5 years. CRP is considered cropland for this sign-up. Payment rates will be provided to SWCDs.

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. For new CRP contracts plan \$s will be available to cover planting cost that CRP does not cover. 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.



Le Sueur County Soil & Water Conservation District

Le Sueur County SWCD
181 W Minnesota St
Le Center, MN 56057

Tel. (507) 357-4879 Ext. 3
Fax: (507) 357-6982
e-mail: Michael.Schultz@mn.nacdnet.net
e-mail: Sue.Prohal@mn.nacdnet.net

August 20, 2012

Dear CRP Filterstrip Landowner:

The SWCD is promoting a New Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Permanent Conservation Easement Program that pays from \$5,500-\$7,900 Per Acre! Beginning August 1, more than \$10 million is available for riparian buffer easements through the RIM program. The program targets creating native plant buffers on riparian lands adjacent to public waters through the purchase of permanent conservation easements. The RIM Riparian Buffer Easement program offers another option for landowners to target conservation practices and serve as an investment for the long term health of their farm, by enrolling in the program, landowners are compensated to provide plant diversity and keep valuable soil in place.

Eligible landowners must have owned the property for one year prior to the application. Buffer widths must be a minimum of 50 feet for clean water; buffer extensions to a maximum of 200 feet may be granted for wildlife habitat enhancement purposes. All easements must be permanent.

The Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District is sending letters to landowners that currently have CRP filterstrips that may qualify for the program. If you decide to go forward with the easement process, your current CRP contract would not be cancelled and you would continue to receive your annual CRP payments for the duration of the existing CRP contract.

To apply, contact the Le Sueur Soil and Water Conservation District.

The RIM Riparian Buffer Easement program is the only program funded through both Outdoor Heritage and Clean Water Funds (from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment), passed by voters in 2008.

Sincerely,

Le Sueur County Soil & Water Conservation District



***“Farm the Best,
Buffer the Rest.”***



*A drainage ditch before a
Filter Strip was planted*



*A drainage ditch after a
Filter Strip was planted*

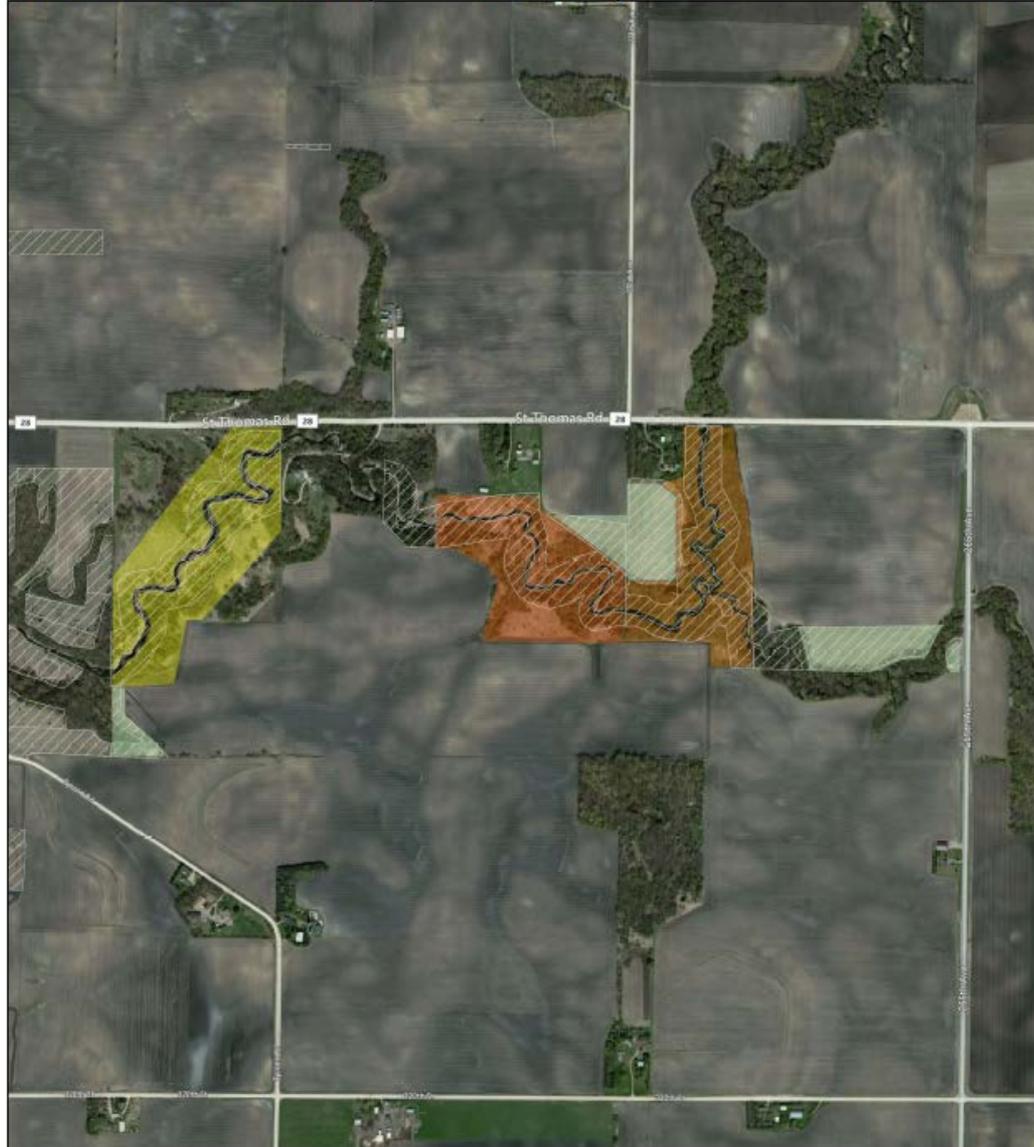
**Le Sueur County Soil & Water Conservation District
181 W. Minnesota Street
Le Center, MN 56057**

**Open Immediately:
A New Conservation Program
is Available to you!**



CWF RIM BUFFER EXAMPLE (HABITAT COMPLEX)

10/22/2013
TYRONE TWP



-  RIM-EXISTING
-  RIM BUFFER 1
-  RIM BUFFER 2
-  RIM BUFFER 3
-  CRP LAND



Maps are for graphical purposes only. They do not represent a legal survey.



Le Sueur SWCD
181 W. Minnesota St.
Le Center, MN 56057

Le Sueur County
Soil and Water
Conservation District

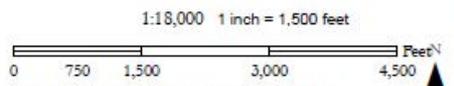
(507) 357-4879 Ext. 3
Fax: (507) 357-6982

RIM CWF BUFFER/BONDING EXAMPLE (HABITAT COMPLEX)

10/22/2013
ELYSIAN TWP



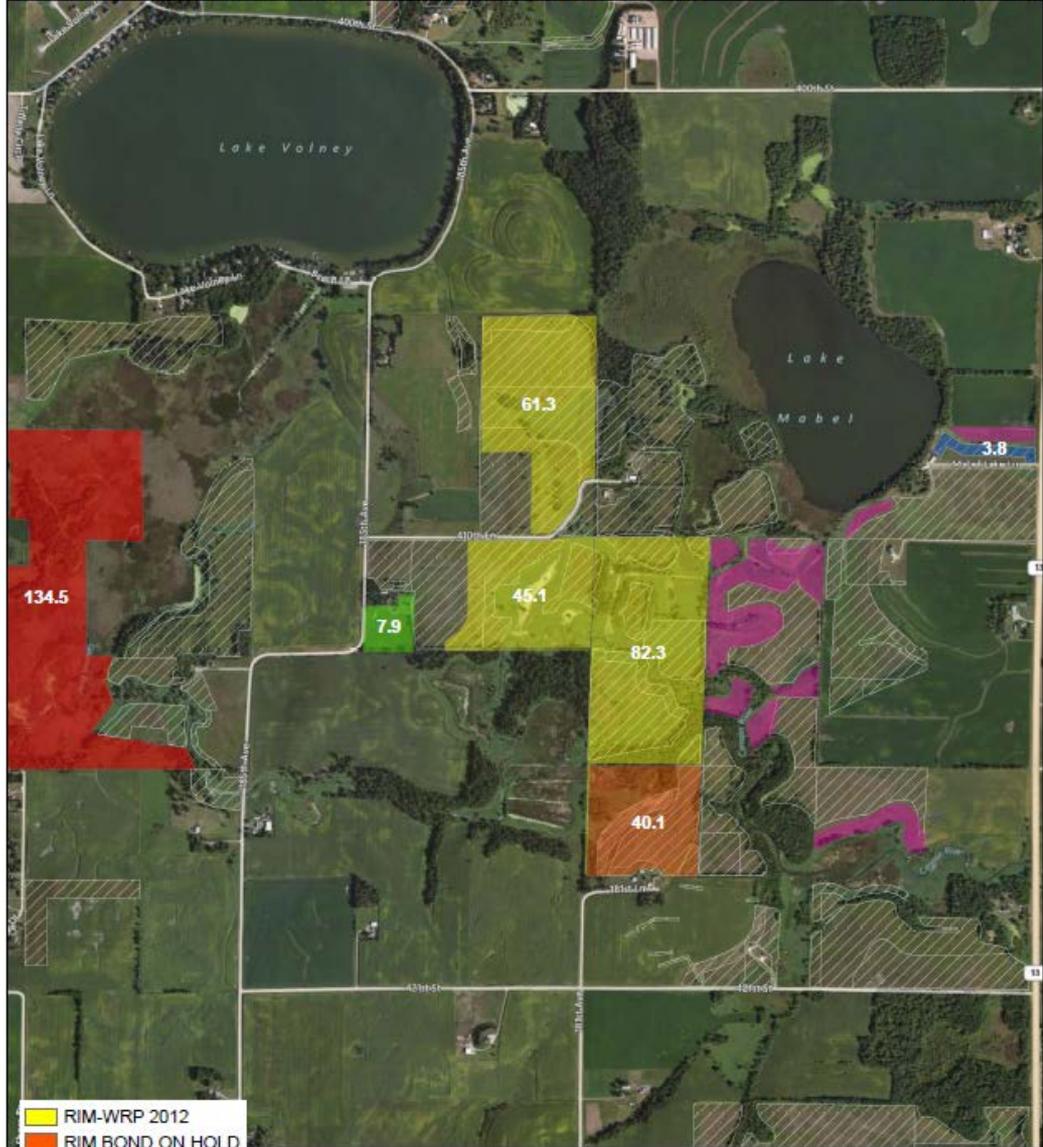
- RIM BUFFER
- RIM BONDING
- WMA
- FWS
- CRP LAND



Le Sueur SWCD
 181 W. Minnesota St.
 Le Center, MN 56057

(507) 357-4879 Ext. 3
 Fax: (507) 357-6882

Maps are for graphical purposes only. They do not represent a legal survey.



- RIM-WRP 2012
- RIM BOND ON HOLD
- RIM BONDING
- RIM CWF BUFFER
- RIM-EXISTING
- CRP LAND
- WMA

1:18,000 1 inch = 1,500 feet



Maps are for graphical purposes only. They do not represent a legal survey.

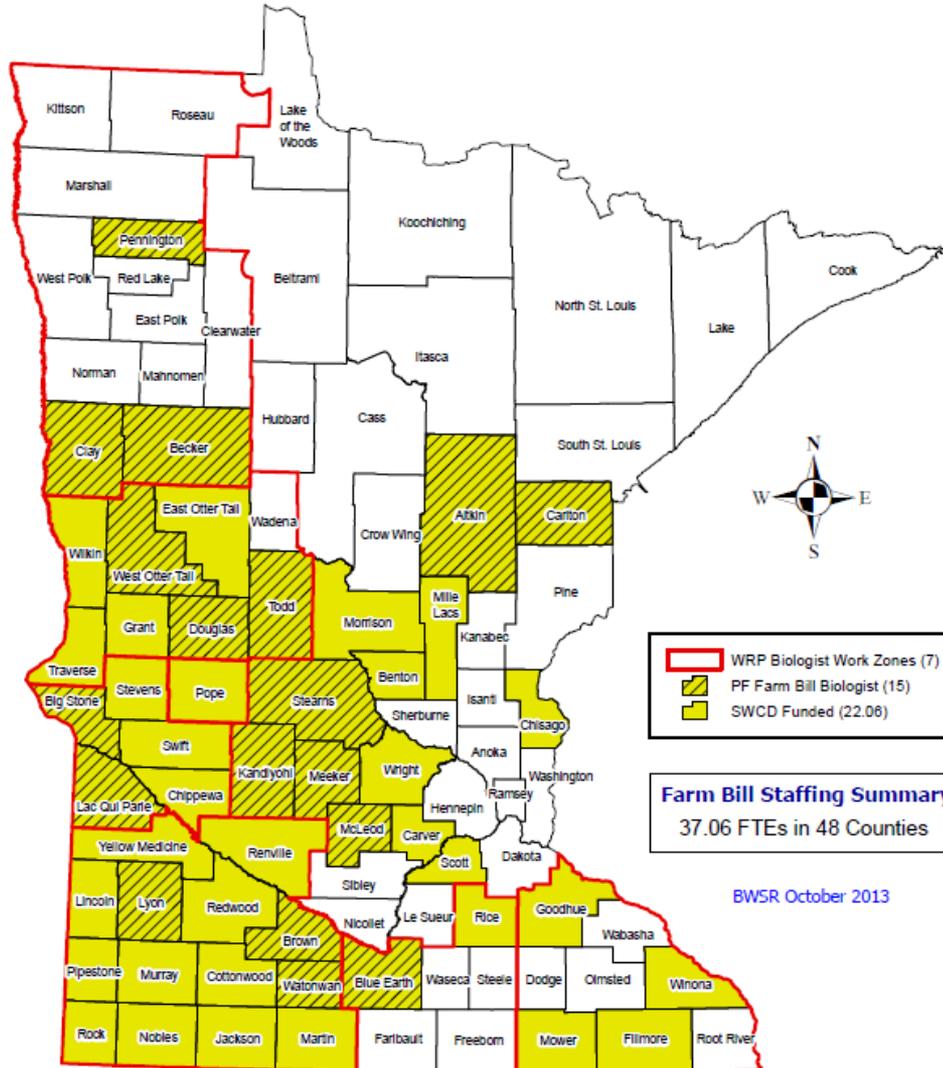


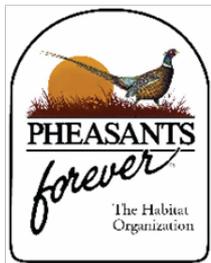
Le Sueur SWCD
181 W. Minnesota St.
Le Center, MN 56057

(507) 357-4879 Ext. 3
Fax: (507) 357-6982

Farm Bill Assistance Positions

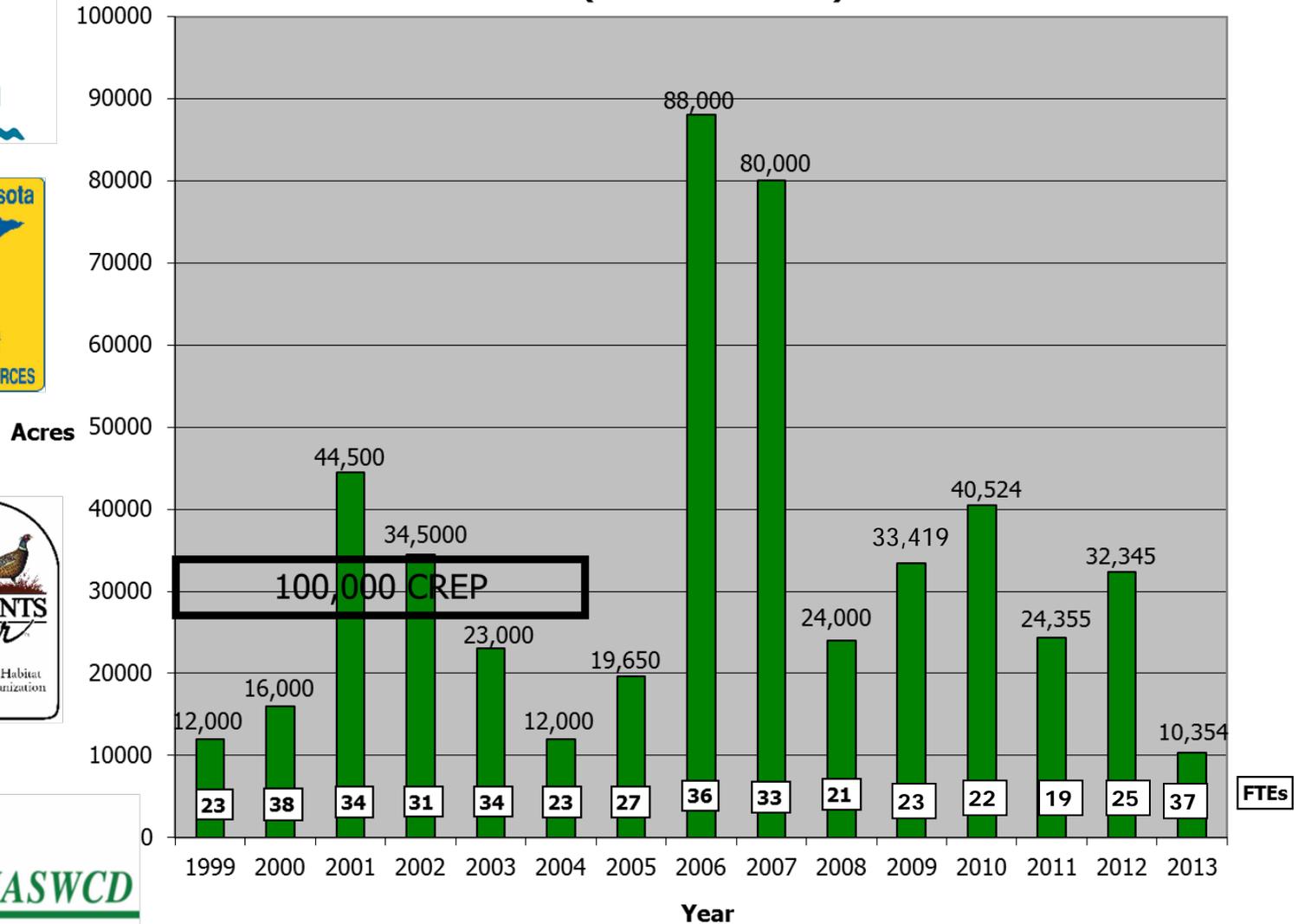
Phase XIII - July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014





Farmbill Assistance Accomplishments

1999-Present (June 30th 2013)



Farm Bill Assistance Funds

- LCCMR remaining funds = \$46,750
- DNR remaining funds = \$145,000
- We currently have enough funds for 4 additional FTEs
- We are currently in Phase 13 of the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership
- Current LCCMR grant is active through June 30th 2015
- These positions are funded 90% by the grant and 10% from local match.

Trainings

- October 28th
 - Informal meeting for all the Farm Bill Assistance staff.
- January 17th
 - Farm Bill Assistance training at the Prairie's Edge Casino in Granite Falls.
- We will be having more meetings as programs become available.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

* **CP Practice Form**



CP Practical Form

* **CP-21 CRP RIM**



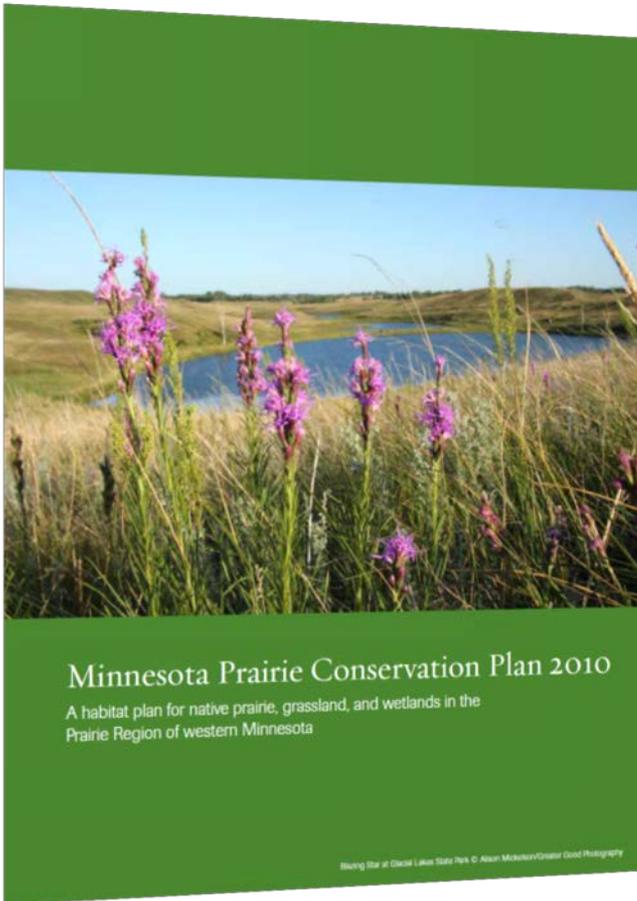
CP-21 CRP RIM

* **General CRP**



General CRP
Worksheet

Implementation of the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan



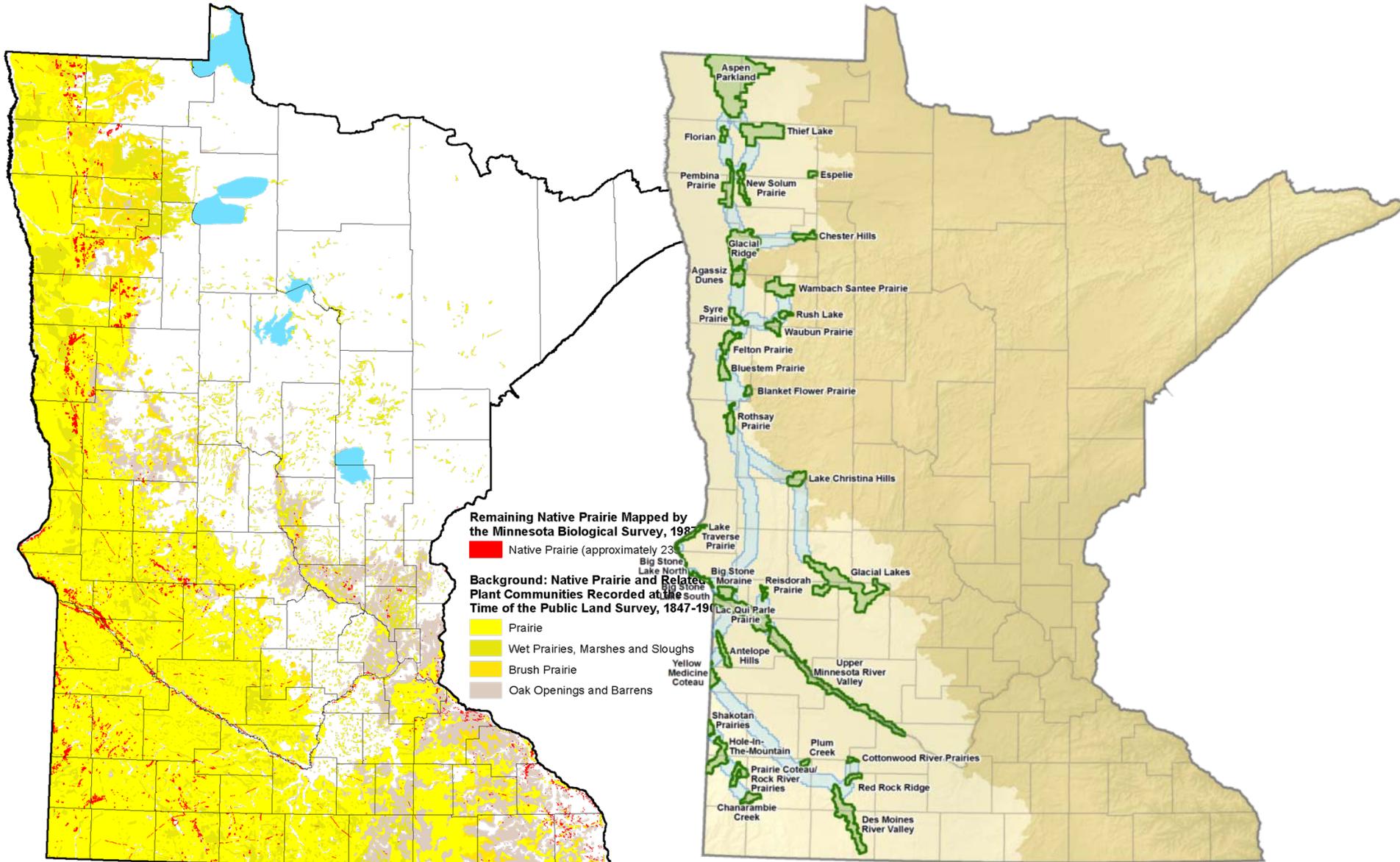
*A habitat plan for native prairie,
grassland, and wetlands in the
Prairie Region of Western Minnesota*

Marybeth Block
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Fish & Wildlife
Prairie Habitat Section

Unprecedented Cooperation



Landscape Approach



Core Areas

40% Grassland and 20% wetland cover

Corridors

40% Grassland and 20% wetland cover complexes at 6 mile intervals

Ag Matrix

***Support Grass-based
Agriculture***





***10 Local
Technical
Teams have
organized***

Strategies:

- Local implementation by multi-disciplinary teams
- Permanent protection of quality prairie landscapes
- Retain restored and natural grassland
- Enhance the quality and function of prairie habitat



- Local policies
- Local advocacy groups
- Reality checks

Local
Advisors

State
Partners

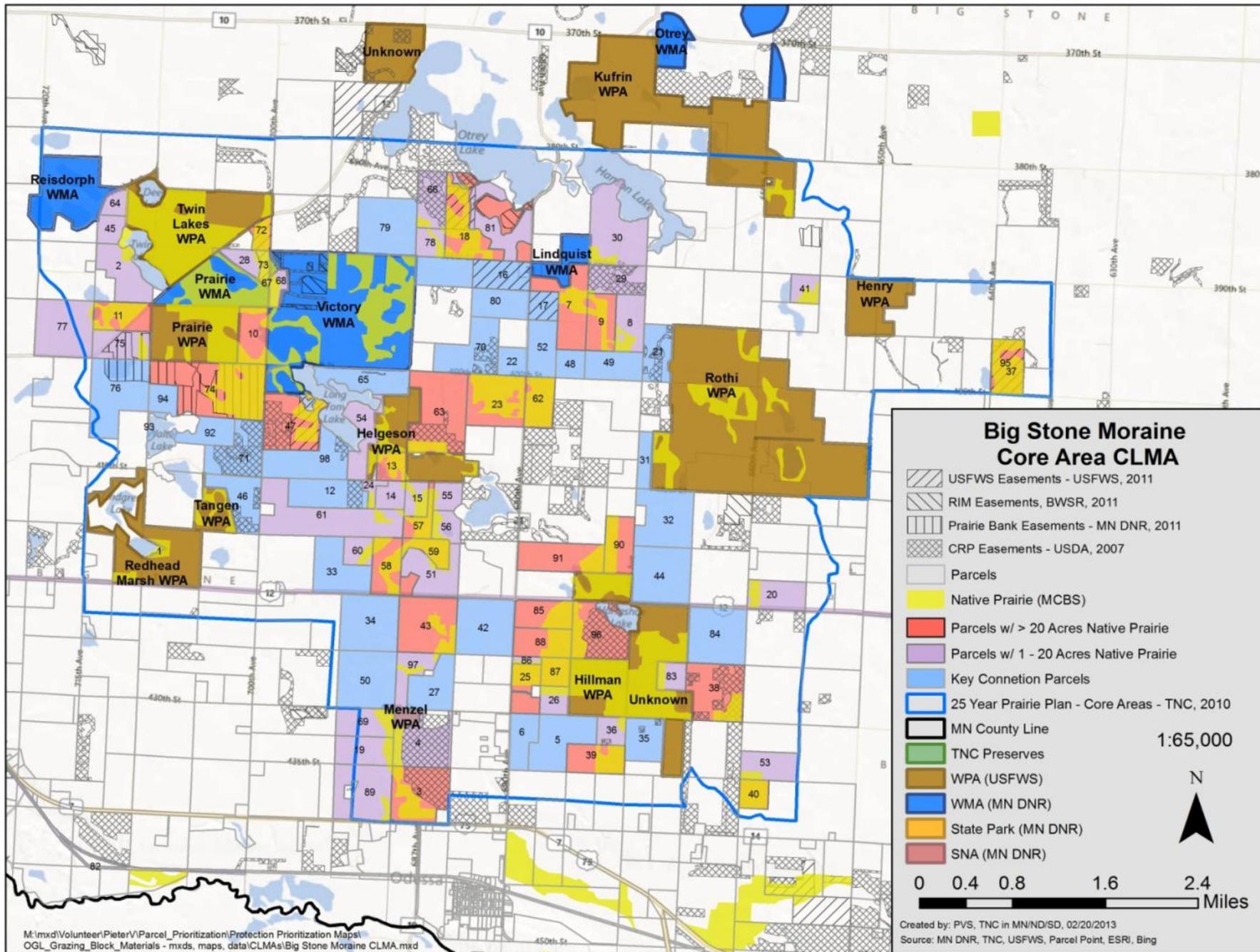
Regional
Advisory
Network

- Landscape analysis
- Training
- Outreach experts
- Producer groups

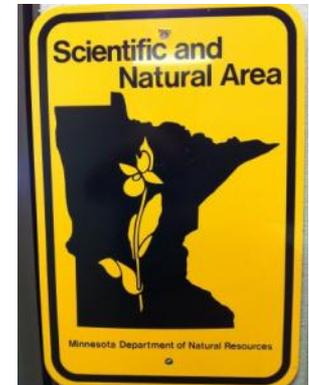
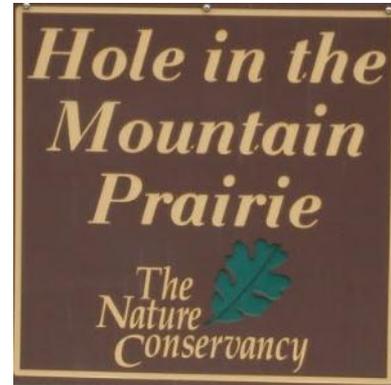
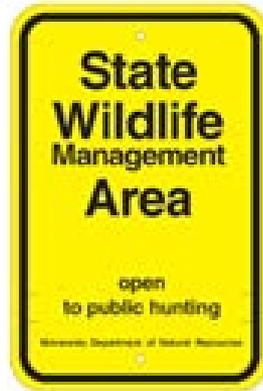
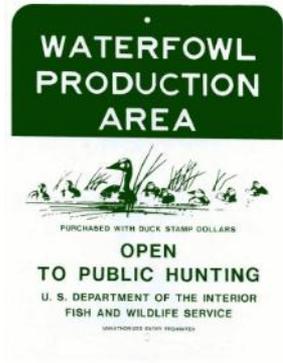
Local
Technical
Teams

- Secure funding
- Develop tools
- Advocate for prairie grassland conservation

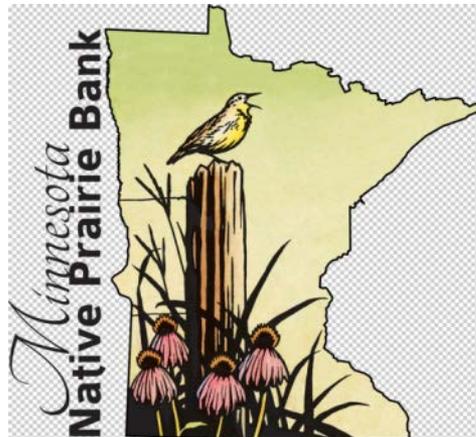
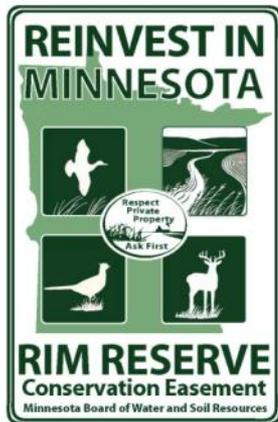
- Prioritize parcels
- Contact Landowners
- Well versed in protection & restoration options



Protection Tools



Fee Title Acquisition Options



Conservation Easement Options

Restoration



Management



Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) 2013 Emergency Haying and Grazing

Subd. 4. Nature of property rights acquired. (a) A conservation easement must prohibit:

- (1) alteration of wildlife habitat and other natural features, unless specifically approved by the board;
- (2) agricultural crop production and livestock grazing, unless specifically approved by the board for conservation management purposes or extreme drought; and

WHEREAS, the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) administers the RIM program under MN Statute 103F in cooperation with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs); and

WHEREAS, the state of Minnesota has been declared a Federal and State emergency for the lack of forage available for livestock; and

WHEREAS, BWSR has numerous types of RIM easements and partnerships with other federal programs that may be opened to emergency haying and grazing by that partner agency; and

WHEREAS, RIM easements contain sensitive features that should be protected, but may also have grasslands that would be beneficial to the livestock industry in a time of need; and

WHEREAS, BWSR staff continue to work with partner agencies and programs to achieve consistency in the haying and grazing options that will be available to landowners with easements and will be working to develop consistent guidelines and criteria.

NOW THEREFORE, the BWSR hereby authorizes staff to develop and implement Emergency Haying and Grazing provisions for RIM easements effective immediately with and end date of September 30, 2013.

Date: _____

Brian Napstad, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

POLICY

DECEMBER 17, 2008

VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION EASEMENT LANDS

The MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) recognizes the need to establish a policy and procedure for vegetative management and enhancement of conservation easements. This may include the practices of mowing, haying, grazing, harvest for seed or energy, prescribed burning, establishment of native grasses, forest land and wetland management. This policy applies to conservation easements held by the BWSR and is to compliment language already stated in the easement terms and conditions. Easements held in partnership with other agencies may have limitations that prohibit some or all of the activities outlined in this policy.

A Conservation Plan exists for each easement that identifies the location and type of practices found on the site. Easements require ongoing management to assure their quality is maintained. To that end this policy supports landowner efforts to achieve the highest degree of quality from every easement. A Management Plan needs to be developed and attached to the Conservation Plan for all activities being conducted on the easement site.

In some cases financial assistance will be available for certain practices, while others will be at the owner expense, entirely or partially. Certain practices may produce an economic return to the landowner, as long as wildlife benefits are protected. Practices to be implemented are best determined by the landowner in consultation with the SWCD and BWSR staff. The Management Plan shall be signed by all three parties. Consultation will be made with other professionals as deemed necessary by this group. Activities eligible for financial assistance must be consistent with the RIM program guidelines and approved by BWSR prior to practices being implemented.

Easement vegetation can be broken into three distinct cover types:

I. Grassland Management: For purposes of species diversity, wildlife habitat, water quality and erosion control, it may be necessary to undertake practices to enhance or modify some or all of the cover of a conservation easement. Practices may include:

A. Mechanical (mowing, haying, harvest, energy)

Mechanical methods can successfully manipulate growth stages of habitat. Annual mowing and mowing of entire stands is not allowed without technical justification from the resource manager preparing the management plan. Removal of biomass can increase the vigor of desirable vegetation, remove stored nutrients for water quality and provide a seed bed for restoration or enhancement. Generally, mechanical treatment will be done no more frequently than once every third year, with no more than one third of the acreage mowed each year. In some cases it may be not be practical to manage smaller sites in stages, especially, if they are within a larger habitat complex. Mowing, haying, or harvest is not allowed during the nesting season May 15 to August 1. Minimum stubble

heights are 4-6 inches. Any modifications to these criteria should be explained and specified in the management plan.

B. Chemical/Biological

Chemical Application: Herbicides used must follow label restrictions and be conducted in a way that maintains plant diversity and wildlife habitat. Care should be taken to minimize impacts to desired vegetation while controlling target species as specified in the Management Plan.

Biological Control: Biological control agents may be used for the control of invasive plant species. Minnesota DNR and Minnesota Department of Agriculture guidelines for using biological control agents should be followed and incorporated into the Management Plan.

C. Grazing

Livestock may be used to manage health and vigor of permanent vegetative cover when done in accordance with a grazing plan. Grazing on easement lands requires very careful management to assure the site is not overgrazed. Grazing should not be recommended unless the landowner fully understands the plan and is capable of managing the system. Grazing plans are to be developed according to applicable NRCS practice standards. Generally, grazing will not be done more often than once every three years on the same acres, and only one third of the area will be grazed each year. In some cases it may be not be practical to manage smaller sites in stages, especially if they are within a larger habitat complex. Grazing shall not occur during the primary nesting season of May 15 to August 1. Minimum stubble heights are 4-6 inches. Livestock will be removed from the site when the grass on the site is grazed to these stubble heights. Any modifications to these criteria should be explained and specified in the management plan.

D. Prescribed Burning

Improvement of plant species diversity, control of brush, and recycling of nutrients can be achieved by controlled burning. Burning will be allowed on cool season as well as warm season grass stands. The Management Plan will indicate the timing of burns for the area being treated. Appropriate permits must be obtained by the landowner prior to performance of a prescribed burn. Follow appropriate NRCS practice standards for prescribed burning.

E. Native Prairie Planting.

Enhancement or re-establishment of existing native prairie or replacement of cool season vegetation shall use native grasses & forbs of local eco-type where possible or as required by statute or rule. Quality of habitat can be increased by conversion of introduced grass stands to native grass stands. Follow appropriate NRCS practice standards for habitat management and restoration of declining habitats. BWSR has suggested native grass and forbs seed mixes available as well as recommendations for inter seeding of grasslands.

II. Forest Land Management: Necessary to provide regeneration, maintenance, or conversion of species to manage forest stands for wildlife benefits and stand density.

Easement lands planted to trees need to be managed to maintain and improve preferred species that are critical to providing specific wildlife habitat. When tree cover is requested in the RIM conservation plan and established, the planting should not be considered the final product. The planting should be viewed as a component of the desired future condition to retain tree cover on the site. Harvesting can be done for a variety of purposes such as to create wildlife openings, manage browse for specific wildlife species, and for forest stand improvement. The Management Plan should outline the necessary steps to achieve this desired future condition.

III. Wetland Management:

Wetland management activities for vegetation and water level control are site specific. Wildlife habitat and nutrient reduction benefits of wetlands are affected by: vegetative quality, fish, minnows, invasive species, sedimentation, and water depth to name a few. Detailed plans exist for each restoration project that lay out the engineering of the restoration as well as any vegetative component. The BWSR is updating the MN Wetland Restoration Guide which should be consulted for further information. Any questions or requests regarding management of wetland areas should be directed to the BWSR Easement Program Manager.



Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
Reinvest in Minnesota Easements
Vegetative Enhancement Haying/Grazing
Agreement

County:	Easement #:	
Name: Address:	Period of use limited to August 1 to Sept 30 of each year: Start Year: 20__ End Year: 20__ (3 year maximum rotation)	
RIM Easement Type: (Partnership easements such as CREP or WRP require consent from that respective program)		
Purpose: <input type="checkbox"/> # of acres Haying – one cutting annually <input type="checkbox"/> # of acres – Grazing		
Attach Aerial Photo outlining area to be hayed or grazed identifying the year and location over the rotation period.		
For lands enrolled in both state and federal programs, BWSR will defer to federal guidelines for emergency or mid contract management. For state RIM easements only, BWSR established the following policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managed Haying/Grazing to enhance quality of grassland planting on RIM easement types and/or partnership easements are limited to a single event over 1-3 years and follows the BWSR policy found at this link: http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/VegMgmtPolicy.pdf. This activity will require BWSR approval and signature below.• Tree plantings, foodplots, water control structures, wetland basins, streambanks shall be excluded.• Where practical, mowing will begin in the center of the harvested area to allow wildlife escape routes.• Haying/Grazing will be limited to August 1 –Sept. 30 to protect ground nesting wildlife.• Hay/Graze grasses no shorter than 6" in height to assure regrowth. Stocking rate for grazing will be based upon current NRCS standards and documented in the RIM file.		
Questions regarding implementation of this policy can be directed to tabor.hoek@state.mn.us or john.voz@state.mn.us . SWCD and BWSR authorization are required prior to management activity. Retain original signed document in RIM easement file.		
Landowner Signature:	SWCD Representative:	BWSR Representative:
Date:	Date:	Date:

What is stewardship?

- Monitoring
- Data Base
- Enforcement

MISCELLANEOUS RIM

- Vegetation Enhancement \$
- Conflicting Easements
- Easement Alterations
- Signs & Staking
- Food Plots
- Payment Rates

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Updated buffer program training
- RIM Grasslands roll-out
- Spring bonding results
- RIM-WRP sign-up
- Federal Farmbill???

REINVEST IN MINNESOTA



RIM RESERVE Conservation Easement

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources