



RIM Reserve Clean Water Fund- Decorah/St.Lawrence Edge SWCD Program Guidance

January 15, 2013

Introduction

Up to \$2.3M available for FY2013 with Decorah Shale/St. Lawrence edge focus and ongoing Wellhead Protection Areas covered under separate guidance.

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 Sensitive Groundwater areas in areas of Goodhue, Olmsted, Wabasha and Winona counties. 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 the most vulnerable areas of Decorah Shale and St. Lawrence Edge that contribute to groundwater protection.
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 application. Applications do not need to be ranked or prioritized by the SWCD prior to submittal to BWSR.
2. Must be identified as Decorah or St. Lawrence formation as the uppermost bedrock identified by County Geologic Atlas. Due to lack of information on the St. Lawrence formation, priority will be placed upon the Decorah edge.
3. Buffers at the focused groundwater discharge/recharge areas at the Decorah edge outcroppings are designed to interrupt, intercept and remove nitrogen and other pollutants from shallow groundwater flows and seep discharge.
4. Focus enrollment on areas with crop history or expiring CRP. Additional acres of non crop can be added to capture any non crop wetland recharge areas or to square off the boundary. Compensation limited to 50% of the eligible cropland acres.
5. Minimum adjacent buffer width of 50ft upslope and downslope. Maximum extent determined by onsite investigation of site to enroll sufficient upslope catchment area and downslope recharge zone.

6. May extend the end of contour to end of the field.
7. May include whole field where greater than 75% of the field is eligible or less than 1 acre remains.
8. Minimum acreage size 10ac. unless prior approval from easement staff.
9. Use easement numbering xx-xx-12-10.

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 with previous crop history 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 unless agreed by all parties. These practice areas should be listed as RR1b Introduced Grasses already established or RR 2b Native Grasses already established on the Conservation Easement Practice Payment Worksheet (CEPPW) form. Any new or re-establishment seeding is eligible for up to 100% of practice costs not to exceed \$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 RIM staff. DO NOT SEND TO YOUR BWSR Board Conservationist.