



United States Department of Agriculture



Reinvest In Minnesota/Conservation Reserve Program Partnership

Overview:

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is establishing a new Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) subprogram – RIM Wetlands. The purpose of the RIM Wetlands Program is to identify and enroll under permanent easement, lands that contain drained/alterd wetland systems and adjoining buffers where the functions and values of those wetland systems can be restored. One of the primary eligibility requirements is that the parcel offered must have a restorable or previously restored wetland on it. Many landowners want to offer parcels where some or all of the parcel is currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). BWSR welcomes the opportunity to convert limited duration contracts into perpetual easements. However, there is a potential conflict between some CRP practices and the intent of the RIM Wetlands Program as certain CRP practices do not allow for wetland restorations. The purpose of this document is to provide clarity and guidance pertaining to which CRP practices allow for wetland restorations and which ones do not and describes the process for CRP contract modification.

CRP authority that governs the installation of non-cost share conservation measures on existing CRP acres is found at 2 CRP, Paragraph 429 – “Modifying Approved Conservation Plans”. Modification to an approved conservation plan must be in the best interest of CRP. Wetland Restorations on eligible general CRP and CCRP practices meets the purpose of enhancing the contract for wildlife and/or water quality per 2-CRP, Paragraph 429. Additionally, wetland restorations on eligible general sign-up practices would also increase the EBI score from that originally offered.

Guidance:

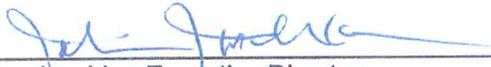
- All wetland restorations must meet NRCS Practice Standard 657 – Wetland Restoration.
- SWCD/BWSR is responsible for wetland restoration technical and financial assistance.
- Restoration design, cost estimates and completion date estimates will be provided by the SWCD/BWSR.
- All wetland restorations and associated vegetative seeding must be completed within 24 months not to exceed 36 months of COC approval.
- Constructed Wetland (656), Wetland Creation (658) and Wetland Enhancement (659) practices are ineligible.
- Wetland Restorations may include either hydrology restoration (ditch plug, tile break etc.) and/or cropping cessation on those altered wetlands that were only cropped under natural conditions.
- Certain CCRP and General CRP sign-practices (primarily tree practices) would not be suitable for the RIM-CRP partnership. The following is a listing of practices eligible for the partnership.

General CRP Practices - all general practices are eligible EXCEPT the following: CP3, CP3A, CP25 (Red/White Pine and Oak Savanna), CP42 and CP4D (woody component).

Continuous CRP Practices - the following CCRP practices are eligible: CP21, CP23, CP23A, CP27, CP28, CP29, CP30, CP31, CP37, CP38 and CP41.

CRP Contract Review and Modification Process:

1. SWCD will identify potential eligible CRP contracts.
2. SWCD will market the partnership to eligible CRP participants.
3. SWCD will coordinate and review with the DC, interested participant contracts to determine the extent of eligible wetland restorations.
4. Participant is responsible for requesting a plan modification from the FSA County Committee (COC).
5. NRCS will complete a plan modification on COC approved contracts utilizing restoration cost estimates and completion date estimates provided by the SWCD/BWSR.
6. The FSA County Committee has final approval of the modified conservation plan.



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Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

1/20/15
Date



Debra Crusoe, State Executive Director
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1/20/2015
Date



Walter Albarran, Acting State Conservationist
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2/17/15
Date