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Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve Buffer Easement Program sign-up now available

St. Paul, Minn. — Partnering with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) announced the 2014 Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Riparian Buffer Easement Program sign-up is now open.

"The RIM Buffer program plays an important role in advancing Minnesota's goals to protect and improve water quality and wildlife habitat," said John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director. "Anchored in the work of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the program helps manage and conserve our state's wildlife, water and soil resources."

The program creates vegetated buffers on riparian crop land adjacent to streams and lakes through the purchase of conservation easements. These easements provide permanent protection of natural resources and retain local ownership of the land. Using an innovative approach, the RIM Riparian Buffer Easement Program connects both Outdoor Heritage Funds and Clean Water Funds to expand buffers to provide additional wildlife habitat benefits.

The sign-up period began June 1, 2014, with funding decisions expected by mid-July. Eligibility focuses on cropland near streams, lakes, or drainage ditches. This is a great opportunity for both new contracts and landowners with existing Conservation Reserve Program land who would like to permanently take their land out of agricultural production. Demand for this program may exceed available resources and payment rates have never been higher, so interested landowners should contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District soon.

More information about the RIM program can be found at BWSR's website: www.bwsr.state.mn.us.

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