

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2018 / ML 2017 Request for Funding



Date: June 15, 2016

Program or Project Title: RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase VII (PA07)

Funds Requested: \$10,000,000

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County Locations: Not Listed

Regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Southeast Forest
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Prairie

Abstract:

Utilizing the new CREP III partnership to secure permanent conservation easements, this Phase 7 continuation of the RIM Buffers Program will protect and restore riparian buffer areas, totaling 7,970 acres on approximately 498 easements over a five year period. This Program will continue to utilize a science-based ranking and selection process and be implemented locally, working with SWCD, NRCS, and FSA staff in the 54 county CREP area. It is estimated that \$1 of OHF will be leveraged with \$1 of Clean Water Funds and at least \$4 of Federal funds through CREP.

Design and scope of work:

The project area will consist of the 54 County CREP area and the expected results are a total of 7,970 acres of expanded habitat buffers on approximately 498 easements through this request. RIM Buffers uniquely leverages the Clean Water Fund and the Outdoor Heritage Fund to expand basic water quality buffers into high quality wildlife habitat. Outdoor Heritage Funds will double the size of Clean Water Fund (CWF) easements to provide additional wildlife benefits on areas that are not required by law or rule to have buffers, enhancing protection values from a water quality focus to a multi-benefit habitat-oriented corridor.

Due to the unique nature of the State's CWF/OHF match, each dollar of OHF is leveraged by 5:1, with five Federal & CWF dollars leveraged for each OHF dollar. OHF funded buffers, when linked to CWF buffers, will yield a total of 7,970 acres of buffers. Due to guidance from LSOHC, only the acres (3,985) and funding (\$10 million) from OHF have been displayed in the Output Tables.

Minnesota continues to see a net loss of grasslands and CRP acres each year. This exodus is being driven by high land prices, increased pressure for alternative uses, and declining federal budgets for conservation programs. Minnesota's primary strategy to mitigate the loss of CRP is to target expiring contracts for enrollment into Continuous CRP practices (like buffers) and permanent easements.

RIM Buffer easements will be secured via Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) permanent easement acquisition, utilizing both a 15 year CRP contract and permanent RIM easement. This will be Minnesota's third CREP, and is able to offer a large-scale impact due to the unique opportunity to utilize a substantial federal match. Over the five year CREP period, we look to enroll permanently protected buffers using a combination of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program.

RIM Buffers is a partnership delivered locally by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and at the State level by BWSR. In addition, the CREP partnership is possible through collaboration among many local, state and federal partners including the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Pheasants Forever (PF), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and over 70 supporting organizations and agencies.

BWSR staff will coordinate with federal partners on the overall CREP process and program oversight and will be responsible for easement acquisition. Local staff will promote CRP contracts and RIM easements, assist with easement processing and provide key essential technical assistance and project management services. Due to the reliance on local staff for implementation, the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP) is included as a component in the RIM Buffers Program. There is increased local workload expected with CREP sign-up and implementation, as a significantly increased number of easements will be secured within the CREP III area throughout the CREP timeframe.

Which sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are applicable to this project:

- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes
- H7 Keep water on the landscape

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Describe how your program will advance the indicators identified in the plans selected:

A strategy of the Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN is to increase enrollment of perennial grassland in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Through the extensive leverage of Clean Water Funds and federal funds, 7,970 acres of buffers will have permanent protection, providing extensive perennial grassland habitat for both game and nongame wildlife.

Permanent habitat protection is vital to the future of waterfowl, grassland birds and other wildlife dependent on native and restored prairies. RIM Buffers will permanently protect and restore 7,970 acres of native grasslands, advancing the end result of a healthy and plentiful supply of habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, especially for waterfowl and upland birds.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

- Protect expiring CRP lands

Forest / Prairie Transition:

- Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

Metro / Urban:

- Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

Southeast Forest:

- Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:

The Prairie Section continues to experience a loss of CRP lands. Due to CRP acreage caps, landowners currently have limited options to retain the habitat they already have in place. RIM Buffers remains a viable option for expiring CRP lands, offering permanent protection of these existing habitat areas. A May 2016 USDA announcement declared that due to the CRP acreage cap, the FSA was only able to enroll 9% of the eligible CRP applications submitted in Minnesota, amounting to 3,000 acres. This unmet demand for CRP enrollment will allow this CREP initiative to draw from a pool of candidate sites, selecting the most outstanding sites that will provide the greatest habitat impact through permanent protection.

Protection and restoration of riparian buffers provides habitat for both game and nongame wildlife, which is a priority in the Southeast Forest Section. This Program targets and restores existing corridors and complexes, as well as those areas where complexes exist but the addition of a buffer provides a needed connection. This reflects the Forest/Prairie Transition Section legacy outcome of diverse and productive grasslands and wetlands that are connected by corridors, providing multiple benefits in the face of climate change and other major stressors. The focus on corridors in the Metro Section is no different, as sites are analyzed for their function as habitat linkages.

Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:

Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, each site is considered on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, as well as the site-specific features which highlight the benefits of selection for permanent protection.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to indicate a site's usefulness as a corridor or extension to an existing habitat complex. In addition, other examples of the science-based targeting used include: drainage to shallow lakes, buffering along lakeshore, planned vegetative diversity, and proximity to land open to public hunting.

The Farm Service Agency and BWSR are currently formulating the signup criteria and scoring process, which will be finalized in the summer of 2016. However, with CREP we will utilize similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM Buffers Program. The Site Evaluation Form from the most recent RIM Buffers signup has been attached to this proposal for reference.

How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species:

Buffers are commonly viewed as simply a water quality practice, but buffers have notable positive impacts on wildlife due their unique upland and riverine habitat interaction. This is especially true for expanded width buffers enrolled through this Program. Not only are upland grasslands protected or restored, detrimental impacts to stream-reliant biota is reduced. Many species of amphibians, such as southern MN's Northern Cricket Frog (endangered) rely on aquatic habitat during the breeding season and then spend most of their lives in upland habitat. In Southeastern MN, reptiles such as the Blanding's Turtle (endangered) rely on meandering streams, rivers, and adjacent lands.

The Sedge wren, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) most commonly associated with grassland habitat, is encountered in buffer areas. Bird use is influenced by buffer width, with greater widths experiencing greater abundance and diversity of birds and grassland species. However, bird use is negatively associated by the amount of edge exposure. As an effort to limit this exposure through this Program's scoring and ranking process, sites which may serve as corridors or expand current complexes are most desirable.

Diverse vegetation, access to a water resource, and protection from pesticides are important to Minnesota's native pollinator species. BWSR's native vegetation guidelines and pollinator initiative have outlined the RIM Program's commitment to protecting native pollinators. Complexes and corridors targeted through RIM Buffers provide areas that are safe from pesticides and are natural passageways for pollinators. Targeted pollinator species include the Monarch Butterfly and solitary bee species including Leafcutter Bees, Mason Bees, and Yellow-faced Bees.

Of the nearly 1200 known wildlife species in Minnesota, 292 species, or approximately one-fourth, are at risk because they are rare; their populations are declining due to loss of habitat. SGCN in the RIM Buffers area include the Five-lined Skink, Two-spotted Skipper, Northern Pintail, American Black Duck, Grasshopper Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Dickcissel, and Western Grebe. In addition to the SGCN, the threatened or endangered species targeted in this proposal include the Dakota Skipper and Poweshiek Skipperling.

Identify indicator species and associated quantities this habitat will typically support:

DNR staff, in consultation with a variety of experts in NGOs and other agencies, have compiled a select group of indicator species and associated quantities to be used by any applicant to answer the question above.

Pheasant

By looking at the ratios of CRP acres in Minnesota to pheasant harvest, we can estimate that every three acres of grassland habitat has the potential to produce one harvested pheasant rooster.

Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrow

The breeding territory size of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows is 1.7 and 2.1 acres respectively in high quality habitat in Wisconsin. If all of the habitat was occupied, a 100 acres of habitat could potentially hold approximately 60 and 48 pairs of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows respectively.

Monarch Butterfly

Research from the University of Minnesota has shown that it takes approximately 30 milkweed result in one monarch butterfly contributing to the overwintering Mexican population. Grasslands can have between 100-250 milkweed stems per acre. An acre of restored or enhanced grassland could potentially contribute 3 to 8 monarchs to the population.

Mallards

Both the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture and the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture (UMRGLRJV) – use the mallard as a focal species. The biological model used in the UMRGLRJV to estimate habitat needs to support mallard population growth uses a simple but accepted rate of 1 mallard pair per hectare (1 mallard pair per 2.47 acres) of wetland habitat (noting that upland habitat for nesting is also obviously needed).

Outcomes:

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced aspen parklands and riparian areas *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat availability within a certain region is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife within that region. This would have a positive impact on both game and nongame species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these complexes are restored.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

- A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat availability within a certain region is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife within that region. This would have a positive impact on both game and nongame species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these complexes are restored.*

Programs in southeast forest region:

- Rivers, streams, and surrounding vegetation provide corridors of habitat *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat availability within a certain region is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife within that region. This would have a positive impact on both game and nongame species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these complexes are restored.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Expiring CRP lands are permanently protected *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat availability within a certain region is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife within that region. This would have a positive impact on both game and nongame species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these complexes are restored.*

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended:

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for maintenance, inspection and monitoring into perpetuity. The BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry-out oversight, monitoring and inspection of its conservation easements. Easements are inspected for the first five consecutive years beginning in the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and partners' staff document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and stewardship costs have been calculated at \$6,500 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship covers costs

of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and enforcement.

Explain the things you will do in the future to maintain project outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2017-Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Compliance Checks first 5 years then every 3rd year.	Corrective actions of any violations	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General office
2017-Ongoing	Landowner Responsibility	Maintain compliance with easement terms		

What is the degree of timing/opportunistic urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible:

The CREP will only have a five year window to secure federal leverage, CRP contracts continue to expire (with nearly 600,000 acres expiring in the next five years), and farming pressure leads to more fragmentation.

A May 2016 USDA announcement declared that due to the CRP acreage cap, the FSA was only able to enroll 9% of the eligible CRP applications submitted in Minnesota, amounting to 3,000 acres. This unmet demand for CRP enrollment will allow this CREP initiative to draw from a pool of candidate sites, selecting the most outstanding sites that will provide the greatest habitat impact through permanent protection.

How does this proposal include leverage in funds or other effort to supplement any OHF appropriation:

The Governor and 5 State Agency leaders (BWSR, DNR, MDA, MPCA, and MDH) have supported a Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for over 2 years. In December of 2015 the Governor submitted a CREP proposal to the USDA Secretary. Negotiations are nearly complete and an official approval and signing ceremony is expected to be conducted in the summer of 2016.

At a minimum, the CREP leverage will be \$4 of USDA funds for every \$2 of State funding. Since the State's contribution is split 1:1 between the Clean Water Fund and Outdoor Heritage Fund, each \$1 of OHF funds leverages a combination of \$5 of Clean Water Funds and federal USDA-FSA-CRP funds. This is a substantial increase in achievements that OHF will accomplish through this partnership. The combination of these unique opportunities produces a result of 7,970 acres instead of 1,330 acres of permanent protection.

Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Clean Water Fund

Describe the relationship of the funds:

This project brings two of the major components of the Legacy Amendment together by matching OHF with the Clean Water Fund for the RIM Buffer Program. Partners will leverage the Outdoor Heritage Funds with CREP funding sources to permanently protect buffers within landscapes that add value for grassland wildlife.

Beginning in 2009, the BWSR has received FY10-11, FY12-13, FY14-15, and FY16-17 funding for a total of \$59.65 million through the Clean Water Fund (from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment) to establish and restore permanent RIM Reserve Riparian easements for buffers to reduce runoff in order to decrease sediment, pollutant and nutrient transport, reduce hydrological impacts to surface waters and increase infiltration for groundwater recharge.

The Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP) with BWSR, DNR, PF, NRCS, MASWCD, and SWCDs as primary partners, provides funding to SWCDs to utilize technicians to promote the conservation provisions of the Federal Farm Bill and other conservation program opportunities to private landowners. The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) via LCCMR recommendations provided \$1.0M in FY10-11, \$625,000 in FY12-13, \$3.0M in FY 14-15 and \$1.0M in FY 16-17. With CREP, we will need funding of approximately \$4.5 million per year from all sources to support this effort.

As an indirect relationship, BWSR has also received funding in FY10-11, FY12-13, FY14-15, and FY16-17 totaling \$11 million from CWF for RIM Reserve easements in areas where the vulnerability of the drinking water supply management area is designated high or very high by the Minnesota Department of Health and in certain groundwater recharge areas in SE MN. These funds have not been matched with OHF funds but have, as secondary benefits, put 1700 acres of wildlife habitat on the ground.

Describe the source and amount of non-OHF money spent for this work in the past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2009 to 2015	Clean Water Fund	59,650,000
2008, 2011, 2012 and 2014	Bonding	17,640,206

Activity Details

Requirements:

If funded, this proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056 - **Yes**

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection - **Yes**

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program - **Yes**

Is the activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 - **Yes (RIM Perpetual Easements)**

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **Yes**

Are the funds confirmed - **No**

What is the approximate date you anticipate receiving confirmation of the federal funds - **Summer 2016.**

The Governor and 5 State Agency leaders have supported a Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for over 2 years. In December of 2015 the Governor submitted a CREP proposal to the USDA Secretary. Negotiations are nearly complete and an official approval and signing ceremony is expected to be conducted in the summer of 2016.

Land Use:

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **Yes**

Explain

In certain circumstances food plots for wildlife are an allowable use on RIM easements and must be part of an approved Conservation Plan. Food plots on narrow buffers, steep slopes and wet areas are not allowed. RIM policy limits food plots to 10% of the total easement area or 5 acres whichever is smaller. There is no cost share for establishment of food plots and upon termination the landowners must reestablish the vegetation as prescribed in the Conservation Plan at their own expense. Food plots are a rarely selected option by landowners, to date only 2.2% of RIM easements have food plots.

Are any of the crop types planted GMO treated - **No**

Will the eased land be open for public use - **No**

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list - **Yes**

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:

This appropriation is funding a program that will have a parcel list identified at a later time. Roads or trails are typically excluded from the easement area if they serve no beneficial purpose to easement maintenance, monitoring, or enforcement. This question is being answered with utmost flexibility in absence of a LSOHC definition of trails and specified trail types (permanent or temporary, beneficial for maintenance, animal trails, etc.).

Will the trails or roads remain and uses continue to be allowed after OHF acquisition - **Yes**

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5 years and then every 3rd year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), implement a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms.

Under the terms of the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Easement Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost shared from a variety of sources.

Will new trails or roads be developed as a result of the OHF acquisition - **Yes**

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:

Though uncommon, there could be a potential for new trails to be developed, if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g. firebreaks, berm maintenance, etc). This question is being answered with utmost flexibility in absence of a LSOHC definition of trails and specified trail types (permanent or temporary, beneficial for maintenance, animal trails, etc.).

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished:

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5 years and then every 3rd year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), implement a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms.

Under the terms of the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Easement Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost shared from a variety of sources.

Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Obtain applications from eligible landowners	June 30, 2018
Allocations to specific parcels	July 30, 2018
Easements recorded	June 30, 2021
Restorations completed and final report submitted	June 30, 2026

Budget Spreadsheet

Total Amount of Request: \$10,000,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$764,700	\$764,700	Clean Water Fund, Clean Water Fund, Clean Water Fund	\$1,529,400
Contracts	\$622,500	\$622,500	Clean Water Fund	\$1,245,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$6,834,300	\$46,834,300	Clean Water Fund, USDA-FSA-CRP	\$53,668,600
Easement Stewardship	\$1,618,500	\$1,618,500	Clean Water Fund	\$3,237,000
Travel	\$17,500	\$17,500	Clean Water Fund	\$35,000
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$110,000	\$110,000	Clean Water Fund	\$220,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$25,000	\$25,000	Clean Water Fund	\$50,000
Supplies/Materials	\$7,500	\$7,500	Clean Water Fund	\$15,000
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$10,000,000	\$50,000,000		\$60,000,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.25	5.00	\$62,500	\$62,500	Clean Water Fund	\$125,000
Easement Processing	6.38	3.00	\$622,500	\$622,500	Clean Water Fund	\$1,245,000
Engineering/Eco Services	0.53	3.00	\$79,700	\$79,700	Clean Water Fund	\$159,400
Total	7.16	11.00	\$764,700	\$764,700		\$1,529,400

Amount of Request: \$10,000,000

Amount of Leverage: \$50,000,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 500.00%

DSS + Personnel: \$874,700

As a % of the total request: 8.75%

Easement Stewardship: \$1,618,500

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 23.68%

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program:

BWSR calculates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

Does the amount in the contract line include R/E work?

No. The contract line amount will be used for payments to SWCD staff for easement implementation (includes Farm Bill Assistance Partnership).

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental? - No

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging:

The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:

In December of 2015 the Governor submitted a CREP proposal to the USDA Secretary. Negotiations are nearly complete and an official approval and signing ceremony is expected to be conducted in the summer of 2016.

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable? - Yes

Tell us how this project would be scaled and how administrative costs are affected, describe the “economy of scale” and how outputs would change with reduced funding, if applicable:

A reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally, but note that a reduction of LSOHC funds would result in a loss of matching funds. Program management costs would be the exception, due to program development & oversight remaining somewhat consistent regardless of appropriation.

Output Tables

Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	3,985	0	0	3,985
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	3,985	0	0	3,985

Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	0

Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000,000

Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	399	399	399	2,788	0	3,985
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	399	399	399	2,788	0	3,985

Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$0	\$10,000,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$0	\$10,000,000

Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$2,509	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$2,506	\$2,506	\$2,506	\$2,511	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

80

I have read and understand Section 15 of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Statute 97A.056, and the Call for Funding Request. I certify I am authorized to submit this proposal and to the best of my knowledge the information provided is true and accurate.

Parcel List

Explain the process used to select, rank and prioritize the parcels:

Through a combination of eligibility screening and a scoring and ranking process, RIM Buffers evaluates each application on its potential to restore functions and values (optimize wildlife habitat benefits) and to provide other benefits including water quality. Each site is considered on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, as well as the site-specific features which highlight the benefits of selection for permanent protection.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to indicate a site's usefulness as a corridor or extension to an existing habitat complex.

The Farm Service Agency and BWSR are currently formulating the signup criteria and scoring process, which will be finalized in the summer of 2016. However, with CREP we will utilize similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM Buffers Program. The Site Evaluation Form from the most recent RIM Buffers signup has been attached to this proposal for reference.

Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type protect.

Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

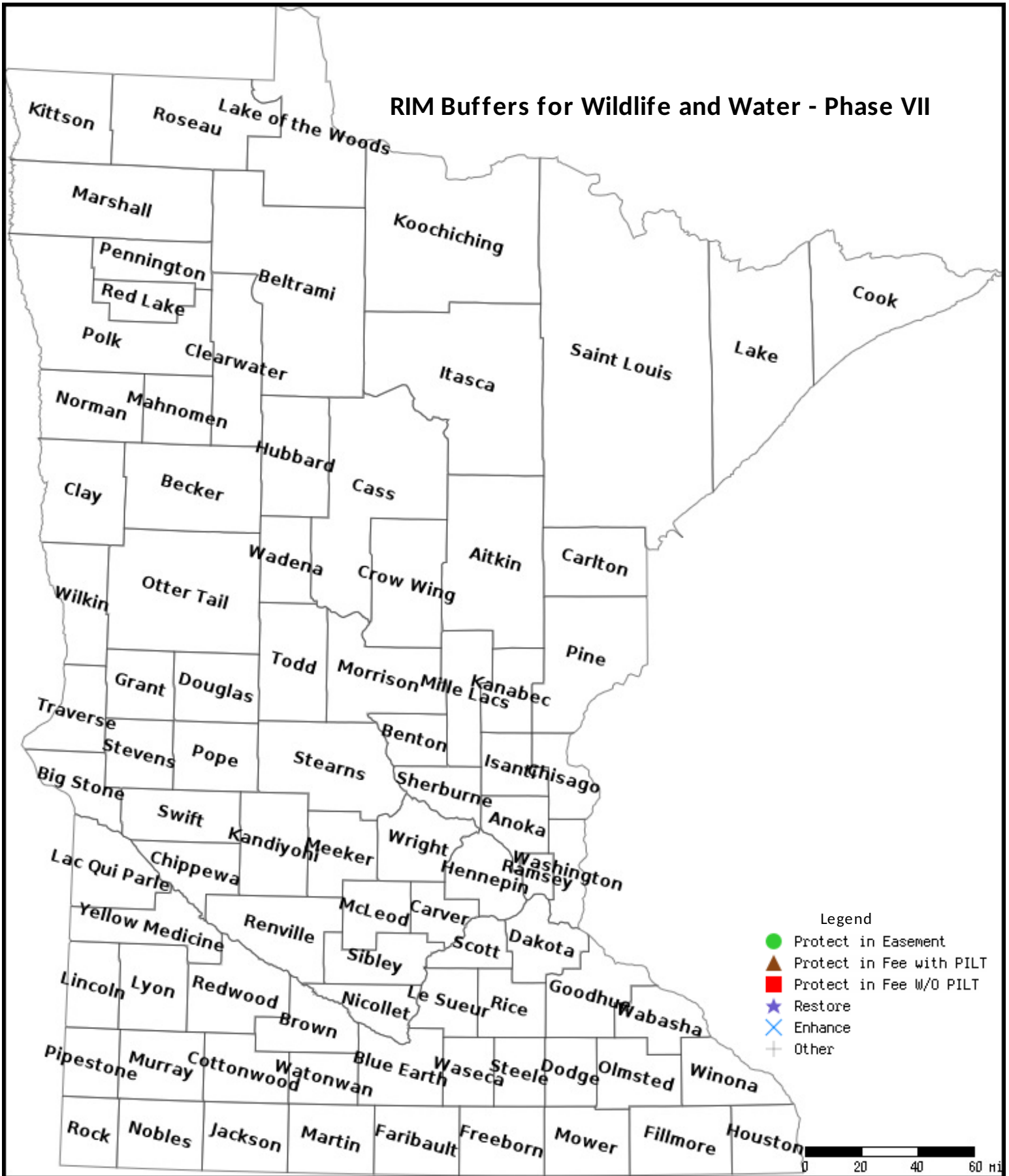
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map

RIM Buffers for Wildlife and Water - Phase VII

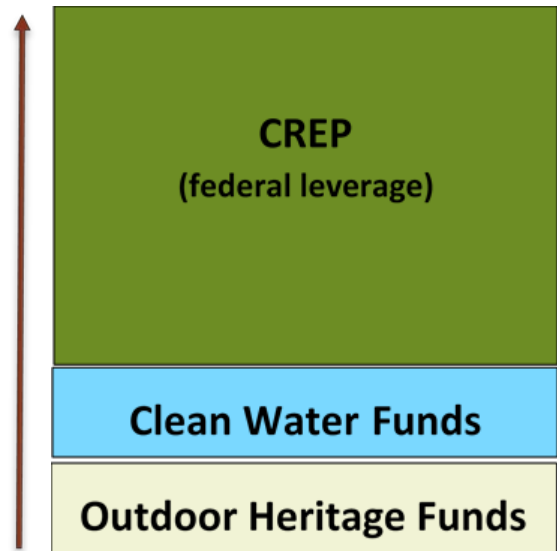


Data Generated From Parcel List

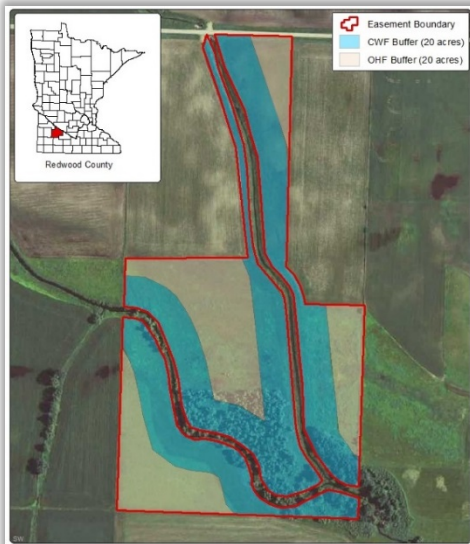
Phase 7 Request: Making a Difference – Leveraging CREP with OHF

- Permanent protection and restoration of 7,970 acres.
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) will leverage federal USDA CRP funds to increase wildlife habitat.
- \$10 million of OHF leverages \$50 million
 - \$10 million CWF
 - \$40 million USDA-FSA-CRP
- Permanently protects, restores, and manages resources while private ownership continues.
- Outcomes – Benefits to Minnesotans:
 - Restores and permanently protects wildlife habitat that supports healthy populations
 - Improves hunting and fishing by building permanent wildlife complexes
 - Creates and sustains Minnesota jobs

Using Leverage to Maximize Benefits



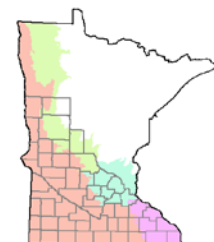
Using OHF as a base, CWF and federal funds can be leveraged to increase the overall acres protected.



This Redwood County easement combines OHF buffers and CWF buffers on a 1:1 ratio, providing benefits for wildlife and water quality.

Linking Water and Wildlife

- Expands basic water quality buffers into high quality wildlife habitat
- Uniquely leverages both OHF and CWF funds, maximizing Federal fund leverage
- Prioritizes most important expiring CRP
- Scoring and criteria-based ranking system achieves maximum wildlife habitat benefits



Targeted LSOHC Sections and Counties

Leverage

- Leveraging federal funds through a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).
- Federal USDA funds pay most of the landowner payment.
- State contribution pays the majority of the technical assistance, stewardship and easement processing expenses.
- This LSOHC proposal's \$10M request leverages \$50M of CWF and Federal USDA funds.



Progressing through the buffer continuum from no buffer to required buffer to an OHF/CWF buffer demonstrates the clear benefits to habitat as protection increases.



No buffer



Minimum required



OHF/CWF buffer



Both game and nongame wildlife are dependent on diverse grassland habitat.
Pheasant photo credit: Michigan.gov



Monarch photo credit: nwf.org

RIM Buffers for Wildlife & Water Scoring Form

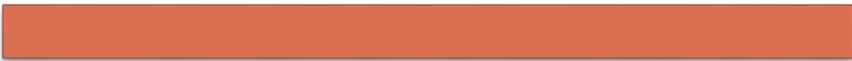
Landowner/Project Name:	County (Field Office):	Prepared By:	Date:
EXAMPLE HIGH SCORING	PROJECT		6/4/2015

Instructions: For each enrollment requesting a Wildlife Habitat Buffer Expansion, complete the highlighted sections of this score sheet. For question 1-7 select the response from the dropdown that best answers the question. Print and include it with your signup materials. A minimum score of 50 points is required to be eligible.

Offer must meet these minimum criteria to be eligible:

- Offer is within the prairie section identified on the LSOHC map.
- Offer has maximum enrollment (200 feet average).
- Offer is built upon a Clean Water Fund buffer.
- Offer scores a minimum of 50 points on the following factors.

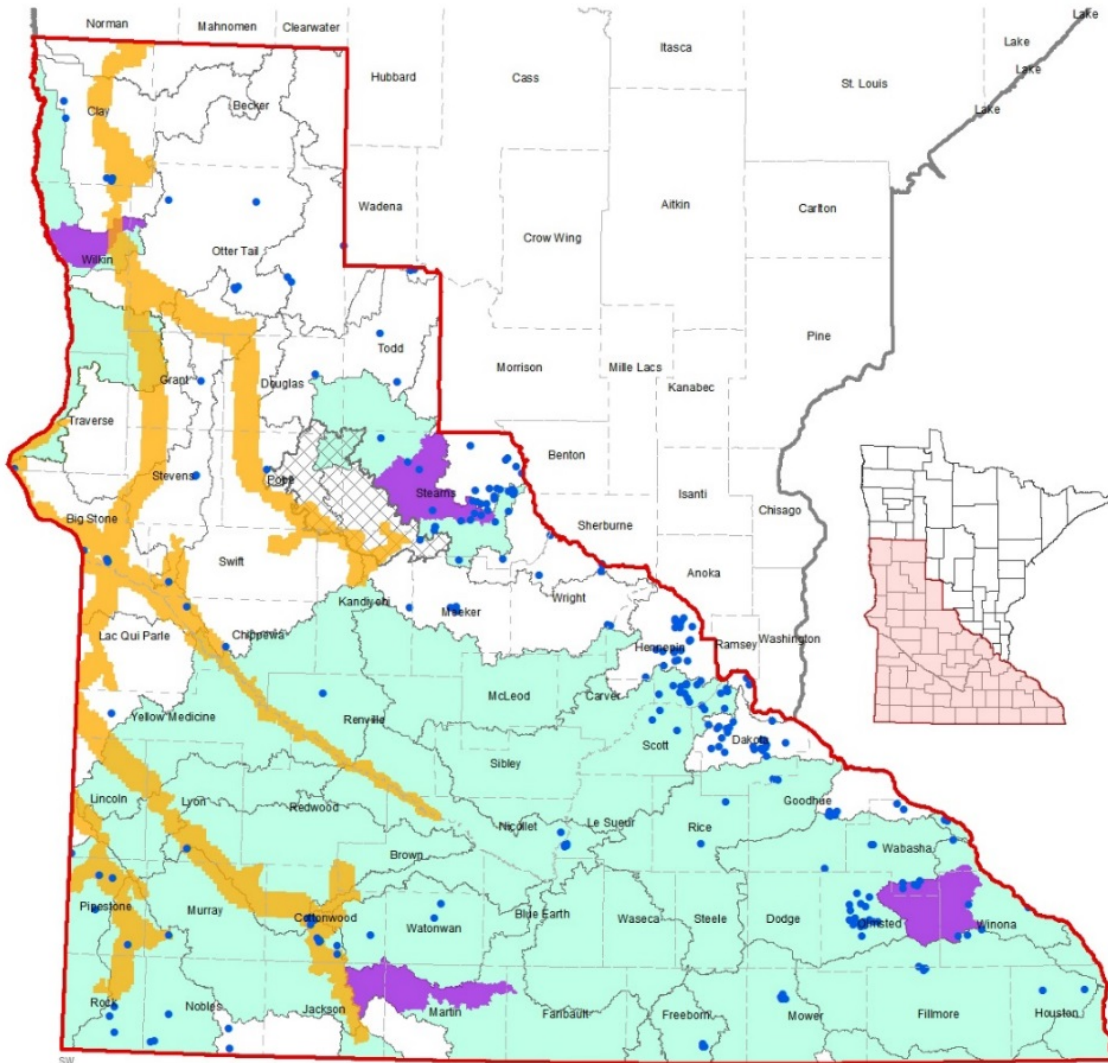
	Score
1. Will this offer preserve an existing CRP contract?	
Yes - 10 points	10
2. Is the offer within the watershed of an identified shallow lake?	
Yes - 15 points	15
3. Proximity to an existing protected habitat complex that is larger than 160 acres?	
Connects two protected habitats together - 20 points	20
4. Proximity to public land that is open for public hunting?	
Immediately adjacent - 15 points	15
5. Type of water resource being buffered	
Lake - 15 points	15
6. Type Vegetative Diversity on proposed site?	
Greater than 20 native species exist or planted - 10 points	10
7. Combined Easement Size	
Greater than 20 acres - 15 points	15
Total Score	100



The Minnesota CREP



MN CREP Proposed Project Area



2014 CREP Project Area	Prairie Corridor, MN Prairie Conservation Plan
County Boundary	MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Pilot Watersheds
Major Watersheds	Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area
Nit. & Phos.: High Priority, MN Nutrient Reduction Strategy	High or Very High Vulnerability, Drinking Water Supply Mgt. Areas

Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Coalition

Supporting Organizations List as Assembled by Pheasants Forever

Audubon Minnesota
Conservation Minnesota
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Fergus Falls Fish & Game Club
Fish & Wildlife Legislative Alliance
Fox Lake Conservation League
Freshwater Society
Green Corridor, Inc.
Izaak Walton League
Land Stewardship Project
Martin County Conservation Club
Minnesota Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates
Minnesota Land Trust
Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance
Minnesota Pheasants, Inc.
Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society
Minnesota Rural Water Association
Minnesota Sharp-Tailed Grouse Society
Minnesota Trappers Association
Minnesota Trout Association
Minnesota Waterfowl Association
Montgomery Sportsman's Club
Morgan Sportsmen's Club
National Wild Turkey Federation – MN Chapter
Natural Resources Club at Central Lakes College
New Prague Sportsman's Club
New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen
Nicollet Conservation Club
Osakis Sportsmen's Club
Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Quail Forever, Inc.
Sportsmen For Change
Swan Lake Area Wildlife Association
The Coalition For A Clean Minnesota River
The Conservation Fund
The MN Chapter of The Wildlife Society
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust For Public Land
Trout Unlimited
United Northern Sportsmen
Viking Sportsmen's Club
Water Resources Center - MN State University-Mankato
Water Resources Center - University of Minnesota
Worthington City Mayor - Mike Kuhle
Worthington Public Utilities Power & Light Commission
MN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
Area II Minnesota River Basin Project
Buffalo-Red River Watershed District
Cannon River Watershed Partnership
Cedar River Watershed District
Clearwater Watershed District
Heron Lake Watershed District
Lac qui Parle/Yellow Bank Watershed District
Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
North Fork Crow River Watershed District
Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District
Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area
Sauk River Watershed District
Scott County Environmental Services Program
Shell Rock River Watershed District
Turtle Creek Watershed District
Upper MN River Watershed District
Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Org.
Yellow Medicine River Watershed District
Zumbro Watershed District