

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fiscal Year 2018 / ML 2017 Request for Funding



Date: June 15, 2016

Program or Project Title: RIM Wetlands - Phase VIII (WA03)

Funds Requested: \$25,000,000

Manager's Name: Dave Rickert

Title: Easement Specialist

Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources

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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:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Abstract:

Utilizing the new CREP III partnership to secure permanent conservation easements, this continuation of the RIM Wetlands Program will protect and restore 10,000 acres of previously drained wetlands and adjacent native grasslands on approximately 115 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 local SWCD, NRCS, and FSA staff in the 54 county CREP area. It is estimated that \$1 of OHF will be leveraged with at least \$2 of Federal funds through CREP.

Design and scope of work:

Wetland and prairie landscapes have been lost at an alarming rate over the last 150 years. Prairies once comprised nearly 20 million acres in Minnesota. Less than 1% of this native prairie remains. Minnesota has lost an estimated 42% of its original 16 million acres of wetlands to drainage or fill activities. The loss of wetlands is most severe in the prairie regions of the state (approximately 90% loss).

The typical sites this Program will enroll are currently drained and farmed. These sites offer very limited ecological benefits in their current state. Through a combination of eligibility screening followed by a scoring and ranking process, the RIM Wetlands Program evaluates each application, selecting those applications which will provide the greatest habitat and environmental benefits after restoration and protection.

The RIM Wetlands Program will protect and restore wetlands and adjacent upland area to native grassland via the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This request is for \$25,000,000, with an expected FSA match of at least \$50,000,000 (2:1 Federal to State

ratio). The project area will consist of the 54 Counties within the CREP area and the expected results are a total of 10,000 acres of permanently protected and restored wetlands and uplands on approximately 115 easements through this request. These acres will provide a healthy and plentiful supply of habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, especially for waterfowl and upland birds.

RIM Wetlands will be implemented through the CREP process, which utilizes both a 15 year CRP contract and a 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 will enroll permanently protected wetlands and floodplain easements using a combination of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program.

RIM Wetlands is a local-state-federal partnership delivered locally by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and 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. In addition, BWSR Staff 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 of the RIM Wetlands Program. There is increased local workload expected with CREP signup 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:

- H5 Restore land, wetlands and wetland-associated watersheds
- H7 Keep water on the landscape

Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:

- Long Range Duck Recovery Plan
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

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

Permanent habitat protection is vital to the future of waterfowl, grassland birds and other wildlife dependent on native and restored prairies, shallow lakes, wetlands, and grasslands. RIM Wetlands will protect and restore 10,000 acres of previously drained wetlands and adjacent 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.

The Long Range Duck Recovery Plan's primary strategy is the restoration and protection of 2 million additional acres (30% wetland, 70% grassland) of habitat in wetland/grassland habitat complexes. The science-based scoring criteria used by the RIM Wetlands Program expands current complexes used by migratory waterfowl. This Plan states that breeding duck numbers are driven primarily by wetland abundance, while productivity of breeding ducks is driven primarily by grassland abundance. The CREP Partnership leverage of this proposal provides 10,000 acres of permanent habitat.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:

Prairie:

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

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, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna with an emphasis on areas with high biological diversity

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 permanent protection and restoration of 10,000 acres of previously drained wetlands and adjacent native grasslands on approximately 115 permanent easements through this proposal advances the legacy outcomes listed below for each section.

The loss of wetlands is most severe in the prairie regions of the state (approximately 90% loss). The permanent protection and restoration of wetland habitat through RIM Wetlands will advance the Prairie Section legacy outcome of a healthy and plentiful supply of habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, especially for waterfowl and upland birds. Another priority of the Prairie Section, expiring CRP contracts will also be targeted through the RIM Wetlands Program in order to permanently protect these acres.

The corridors and complexes this Program targets and restores 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.

Targeting permanent conservation on acres that provide important connections and wildlife habitat advances the Metro/Urbanizing Area Section legacy outcome of complexes and corridors of biologically diverse habitat by providing multiple enduring conservation benefits.

One of several ways RIM Wetlands advances Southeast Forest legacy outcomes is through increased water retention, providing healthy terrestrial and aquatic habitat for fish, game and other wildlife species. Drained wetlands contribute to erosion and sedimentation of streams, negatively impacting aquatic species. The restoration of wetland areas will permanently protect and improve the habitat of aquatic and terrestrial species.

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, RIM Wetlands evaluates each application on its potential to restore wetland/upland 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, ability to build upon existing corridors and complexes, and site-specific features which highlight the benefits of selection for permanent protection and habitat with associated environmental benefits.

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: proximity to T&E Species, contributing watershed area, and proximity of drainage to DNR Protected Waters, and the USFWS Habitat and Population Evaluation Team (HAPET) developed GIS Wildlife Habitat Potential Model for environmental evaluation.

This HAPET model is a consolidation of models representing an array of migratory birds that use the Minnesota Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) for breeding or migration. This has proved to be a reliable analysis of critical habitat for migratory birds and wetland dependent wildlife, accounting for the following indicator species:

- Waterfowl (Thunderstorm map – combined score for Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Pintail)
- Migrant Shorebirds (Modeled spring migrant stopover landscapes. Combined the models for: Marbled Godwit, Willet, American Avocet; Wilson's Phalarope, Semipalmated Sandpiper; Upland Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, Dunlin, White-rumped Sandpiper)
- Breeding Shorebirds (landscape model for breeding Marbled Godwit)
- Grassland birds (combined score for Bobolink, Clay-colored Sparrow, Dickcissel, Grasshopper Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Sedge Wren, Western Meadowlark, Greater Prairie-chicken)
- Waterbirds (Black Tern)

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 expect similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM Wetlands Program. The Site Evaluation Form from the most recent RIM Wetlands 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:

An expansion of wetland and prairie habitat availability through this proposed Program may alleviate pressure on those species that are

most sensitive to habitat changes occurring on the landscape. This proposal targets wetlands and prairies, two of the three most important habitats used by the Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN).

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 Wetlands area include the Five-lined Skink, Blanding's Turtle, 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.

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 our commitment to protecting native pollinators. Complexes and corridors targeted through RIM Wetlands provide areas that are safe from pesticides and natural passageways for pollinators. Targeted pollinator species include the Monarch Butterfly and solitary bee species including Leafcutter Bees, Mason Bees, and Yellow-faced Bees.

"A statewide look at the species-habitat relationships show that prairies, rivers, and wetlands are the three habitats used by the most Species of Greatest Conservation Need" (Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild & Rare, p.30). Prairie wetlands are particularly important for migratory waterfowl. Although the North American pothole region contains only about 10% of the waterfowl nesting habitat on the continent, it produces 70% of all North American waterfowl. This extensive loss of Minnesota's prairie and wetland habitat has led to the decline of many wildlife and plant species. RIM Wetlands will protect and restore this habitat.

Habitat loss in southeastern Minnesota is equally staggering, with over 100 resident plants and vertebrates listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern. Any threats to groundwater are amplified by the Karst geology of this area, and current land use also leads to sedimentation of trout streams.

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:

- Wetland and upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands, and restored shallow lakes and wetlands. A summary of the total of wetland acres and associated native grasslands 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 wetland and associated native grassland habitat availability within a certain region are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland-dependent and 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:

- Core areas protected with highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities, including native prairie, Big Woods, and oak savanna. A summary of the total of wetland acres and associated native grasslands 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 wetland and associated native grassland habitat availability within a certain region are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland-dependent and 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:

- Stream to bluff habitat restoration and enhancement will keep water on the land to slow runoff and degradation of aquatic habitat. A summary of the total of wetland acres and associated native grasslands 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 wetland and associated native grassland habitat availability within a certain region are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland-dependent and 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:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands. A summary of the total of wetland acres and associated native grasslands 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 wetland and associated native grassland habitat availability within a certain region are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland-dependent and 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 cover costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and any enforcement necessary.

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 on any violations	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney Generals 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 \$2 of USDA funds for every \$1 of OHF funding. This will triple the achievements that OHF would've otherwise accomplished without this partnership, with a result of 10,000 acres instead of 3,333 acres of permanent protection.

Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund
- Clean Water Fund

Describe the relationship of the funds:

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. The progression of the RIM Wetlands Program to reflect our standard RIM process meshes well with the use of FBAP technicians.

These other projects have only an indirect relationship due to the use of RIM perpetual easements:

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 keep water on the land in order to decrease sediment, pollutant and nutrient transport, reduce hydrological impacts to surface waters and increase infiltration for groundwater recharge. Some of these funds have been combined with LSOHC funding for buffers to increase the width and add wildlife habitat benefits to clean water buffers.

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
2008, 2011, 2012	Bonding	Over \$13 million
2009-2012	Federal Wetlands Reserve Program	Approximately \$47 million

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: \$25,000,000

Budget and Cash Leverage

BudgetName	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$1,279,200	\$0		\$1,279,200
Contracts	\$287,500	\$0		\$287,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$22,035,700	\$50,000,000	USDA-FSA-CRP	\$72,035,700
Easement Stewardship	\$747,500	\$0		\$747,500
Travel	\$131,300	\$0		\$131,300
Professional Services	\$0	\$0		\$0
Direct Support Services	\$275,000	\$0		\$275,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$0	\$0		\$0
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$187,500	\$0		\$187,500
Supplies/Materials	\$56,300	\$0		\$56,300
DNR IDP	\$0	\$0		\$0
Total	\$25,000,000	\$50,000,000	-	\$75,000,000

Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Easement Processing	1.47	3.00	\$287,500	\$0		\$287,500
Engineering/Eco Services	2.89	3.00	\$866,700	\$0		\$866,700
Program Management	0.25	5.00	\$125,000	\$0		\$125,000
Total	4.61	11.00	\$1,279,200	\$0	-	\$1,279,200

Amount of Request: \$25,000,000

Amount of Leverage: \$50,000,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 200.00%

DSS + Personnel: \$1,554,200

As a % of the total request: 6.22%

Easement Stewardship: \$747,500

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 3.39%

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 one dollar of LSOHC funds would result in a loss of two federal dollars of match. 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	3,400	6,600	0	0	10,000
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3,400	6,600	0	0	10,000

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	\$8,500,000	\$16,500,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$8,500,000	\$16,500,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000,000

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	500	1,000	500	8,000	0	10,000
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	500	1,000	500	8,000	0	10,000

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	\$1,250,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,250,000	\$20,000,000	\$0	\$25,000,000
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$1,250,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,250,000	\$20,000,000	\$0	\$25,000,000

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	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$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	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

0

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 targeted outreach, and then eligibility screening, followed by a scoring and ranking process, RIM Wetlands evaluates each application on its potential to restore wetland/upland 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, ability to build upon existing corridors and complexes, and site-specific features which highlight the benefits of selection for permanent protection and habitat.

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: proximity to T&E Species, contributing watershed area, and proximity of drainage to DNR Protected Waters, and the USFWS Habitat and Population Evaluation Team (HAPET) developed GIS Wildlife Habitat Potential Model for environmental evaluation.

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 expect similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM Wetlands Program. The Site Evaluation Form from the most recent RIM Wetlands 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.

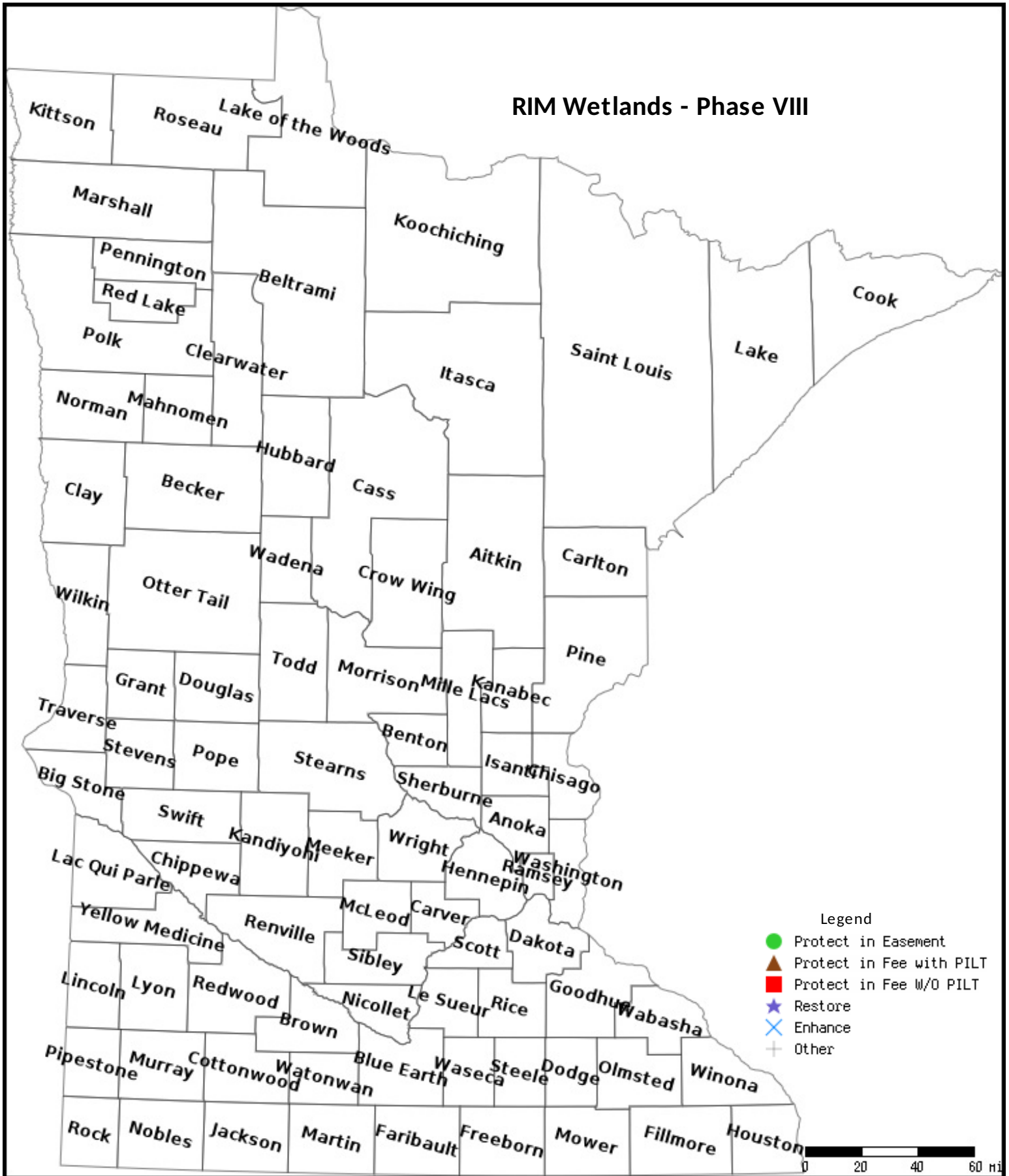
Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

Parcel Map



Data Generated From Parcel List



RIM Wetlands Phase 8

Dirt to Ducks

May 2016



Phase 8 Request: Making a Difference – Leveraging CREP with OHF

- \$25 million of OHF funds will leverage federal funds at 2:1 to permanently protect and restore 10,000 acres.
- BWSR’s RIM Wetlands is Minnesota’s primary private lands easement program that focuses on restoring wetlands and associated uplands.
- Permanently protects, restores, and manages resources while private ownership continues.
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) will leverage federal USDA CRP funds to increase wildlife habitat.
- Outcomes – Benefits to Minnesotans:
 - Restores and permanently protects wildlife habitat that supports healthy populations of wetland dependent species
 - Improves hunting and fishing by building permanent wildlife complexes
 - Creates and sustains Minnesota jobs

Using Leverage to Maximize Benefits



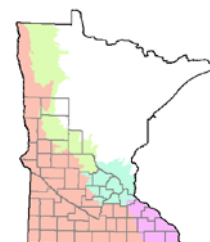
Using OHF as a base, federal funds can be leveraged to increase the overall acres protected.

From Bare Soil to Best Habitat

- Focusing on private lands primarily in the Prairie Pothole Area with:
 - Significantly altered habitat
 - Migratory (and other) Species of Greatest Conservation Need
 - Pheasant habitat on private lands
- Targeting expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, a LSOHC priority
 - Willing landowners
 - Key critical acres protected - expired land much harder to re-enroll
- Due to CRP acreage cap, only 9% of Minnesota’s eligible CRP applications were enrolled
 - Unmet demand for conservation enrollment
 - Opportunity to select sites with the greatest habitat impact



A completed RIM Wetland restoration in Mower County.



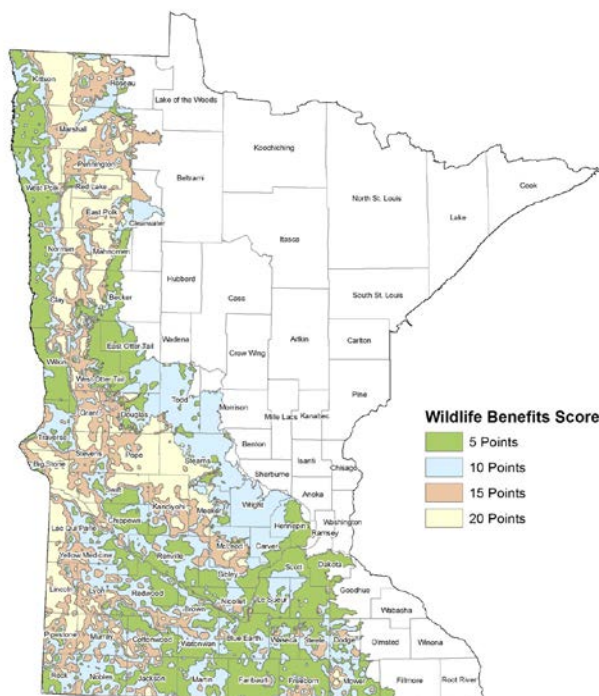
Targeted LSOHC Sections and Counties

Using science-based targeting and best restoration strategies

- Existing Minnesota Conservation Plans (such as the Pheasant Plan, Duck Plan, and Prairie Plan) focus prioritization of protection and restoration efforts.
- Scoring and criteria-based ranking system achieves maximum wildlife habitat benefits.
- Basing restoration on standards and specifications that convert marginal cropland to highly functioning wetland and native grassland complexes.

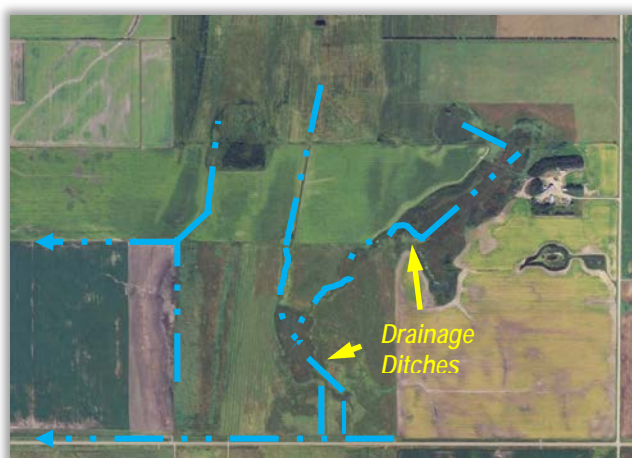
Leverage

- 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.
- At 2:1 leverage, this LSOHC proposal's \$25M request will leverage \$50M of federal USDA funds.

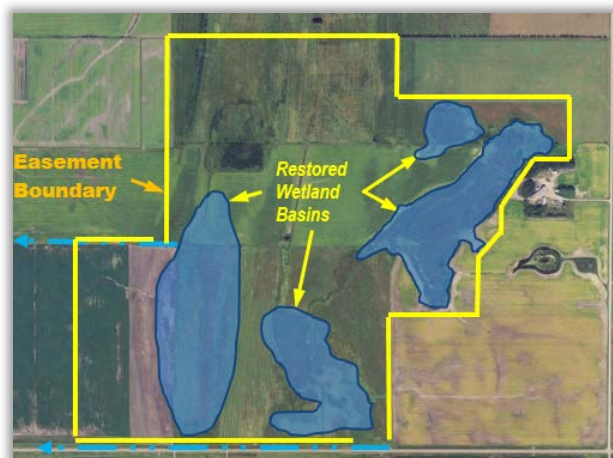


An example of a science-based scoring tool used with RIM Wetlands.

An example of a multi-landowner wetland restoration in Norman County.



Before restoration begins.



After restoration is complete.

RIM WETLANDS PROGRAM SITE EVALUATION FORM

Landowner/Project Name:	County/SWCD Office:
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Application Total Score

A. RESTORATION BENEFITS (maximum score 50)

Score

Wetland Condition →	Effectively Drained	Partially Drained	Farmed Only	Size of Largest Basin (acres)	Total Grassland : Basin Ratio	
Restorable Depressional Wetlands (Basins)	No. of Basins	Check one <i>(if applicable)</i>	Check one <i>(if applicable)</i>	Check one <i>(if applicable)</i>	Check one <i>(if applicable)</i>	Check one <i>(if applicable)</i>
	1	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	< 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 0	< 1:1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	2	<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	6-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	> 1:1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2
	3	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	11-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 15	> 2:1 <input type="checkbox"/> 3
	4	<input type="checkbox"/> 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 17	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	21-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 20	> 3:1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
	5	<input type="checkbox"/> 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 21	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	31-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 25	> 4:1 <input type="checkbox"/> 6
	6	<input type="checkbox"/> 35	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	> 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 30	> 5:1 <input type="checkbox"/> 8
	≥ 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 40	<input type="checkbox"/> 28	<input type="checkbox"/> 15		> 6:1 <input type="checkbox"/> 10

OR

Wetland Condition →	Effectively Drained	Partially Drained	Farmed Only
Restorable Non- Depressional Wetlands	Wetland Acres	Check one <i>(if applicable)</i>	Check one <i>(if applicable)</i>
	< 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
	10 - 40	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
	41 - 80	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
	81 - 120	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
≥ 121	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

B. ECOLOGICAL/HABITAT BENEFITS (maximum score 10)

Score

Easement Size (acres)	Acres of Permanent Habitat within 1.5 miles
<i>(Check one - if applicable)</i>	<i>(Check one - if applicable)</i>
≤ 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 0	≤ 200 <input type="checkbox"/> 0
41 - 80 <input type="checkbox"/> 3	200 - 500 <input type="checkbox"/> 3
81 - 120 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	501 - 1000 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
121 - 160 <input type="checkbox"/> 8	1001 - 3000 <input type="checkbox"/> 8
> 160 <input type="checkbox"/> 10	over 3000 <input type="checkbox"/> 10

RIM WETLANDS PROGRAM SITE EVALUATION FORM - *Continued*

C. ADDITIONAL WILDLIFE BENEFITS *(maximum score 20)*

Score

<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 20
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Determine score from Appendix 1 map and check appropriate score box

D. EASEMENT VALUE BENEFITS *(maximum score 10)*

Score

Additional points are being offered to landowners who agree to reduce the value of their easement payment. If points are taken, the final easement payment to the landowner will be adjusted accordingly. Please check one of the boxes to the right to indicate the landowners choice and choose the corresponding easement payment adjustment option when completing the Easement Payment Calculation Worksheet.

No Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
5 Percent Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
10 Percent Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
15 Percent Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
20 Percent Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
25 Percent Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> 10

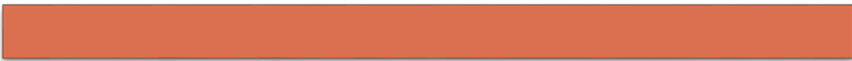
E. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS *(maximum score 10)*

Score

(Check all that Apply)

1	The majority of area within the easement application is within a Prairie Plan Core or Corridor Area.	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
2	Easement application is beneficial to, and within 1 mile of breeding/population of Federal or State listed Endangered or Threatened species as identified by DNR Natural Heritage Database (State Special Concern species shall not be considered). Federal species to be considered include Endangered, Threatened, and Candidate species, including designated critical habitat (e.g. Topeka shiner).	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
3	The restoration resulting from the easement application is a local high priority resource project which is specifically identified in an existing comprehensive plan (site specific projects only, not general focus areas). Qualifying plans include state recognized local implementation plans, such as County Comprehensive Water Plan, Watershed District project plans, or groundwater protection plans.	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
4	The easement application area buffers and/or the majority of runoff from it drains to and is within 1/2 mile of a DNR Protected Waters or designated aquatic management areas.	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
5	The restoration project will result in addressing water quality concerns for conventional pollutants (examples: sediment, phosphorus, hydrology, bacteria, nitrogen) as identified in a TMDL report or implementation plan or a Watershed Restoration and Projection Strategy (WRAPS).	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
6	The majority of area within the easement application is within a defined Wellhead Protection Area	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
7	The predominant soils (more than 50%) within the easement application area are HEL or PHEL.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
8	The majority of the contributing watershed(s) to the easement application area is in agricultural use.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

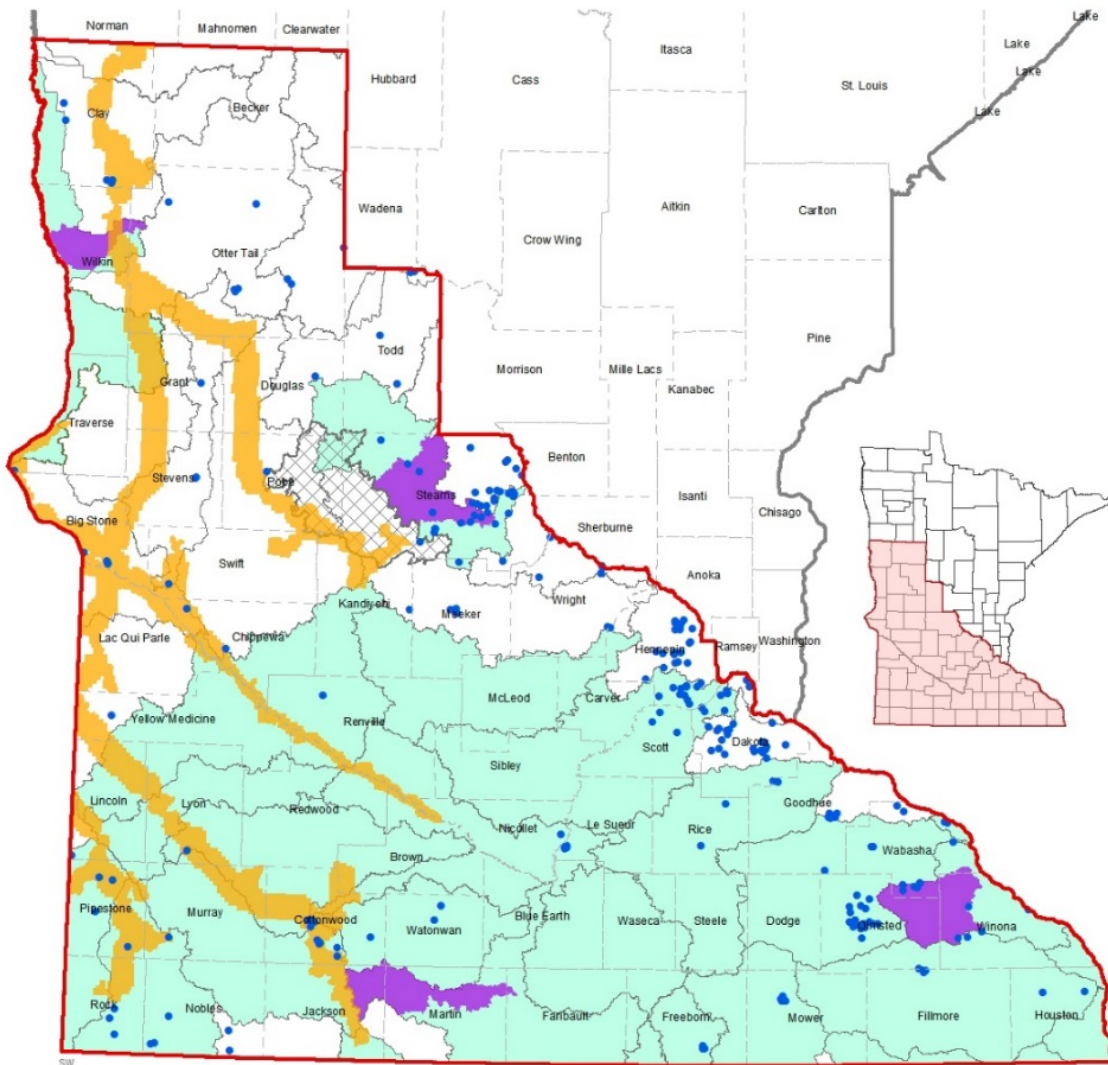
Note: If points are taken for considerations 1 thru 6, additional documentation must be provided. Refer to Site Evaluation Form - Instruction documents for further information.



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