Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Wetlands - Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota

ML 2023 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/16/2022

Proposal Title: RIM Wetlands - Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota

Funds Requested: $10,000,000

Manager Information

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Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

- Forest / Prairie Transition
- Prairie
- Metro / Urban

Activity types:

- Protect in Easement
- Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

RIM Wetlands - Restoring the most productive habitat in Minnesota will protect and restore approximately 1260 acres of previously drained wetlands and adjacent native grasslands on approximately 28 easements across the State to restore wetlands and associated uplands for habitat and associated benefits. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will utilize the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCDs) to target, protect and restore high priority habitat. The program will utilize a ranking and selection process and be implemented locally by SWCD staff.

Design and Scope of Work

Wetlands are a home to many species of migratory and resident birds, reptiles and amphibians, fish, insects, and plants. They also benefit society by storing floodwaters, filtering pollutants, serving as a carbon sink, and providing recreation sites for boating and fishing. 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).

Up to one-half of North American bird species nest or feed in wetlands and provide a home to at least one third of all threatened and endangered species. "Prairie potholes are highly productive ecosystems of unparalleled importance to breeding waterfowl and many other species of wetland wildlife. Moreover, they are important nutrient sinks, store runoff that reduces flooding, sequester carbon, and provide other environmental and socioeconomic values" The past, present, and future of prairie potholes in the United States. May 2008 Journal of Soil and Water Conservation 63(3).

The typical sites this program prioritizes and targets are drained and farmed wetlands and associated uplands that offer little habitat or ecological benefits in their current state. Through a combination of eligibility screening and a scoring and ranking process, the program evaluates and selects applications that provide the greatest habitat and environmental benefit after restoration and protection via a BWSR RIM easement.

RIM Wetlands is a local-state partnership delivered by SWCDs and BWSR. BWSR staff provide program oversight and manage the easement acquisition process and restoration design. Local staff promote RIM easements, assist with easement processing and provide technical assistance and project management services.

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?

Tomorrow's Habitat for the Rare and Wild (MN DNR) states "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." This proposal targets wetlands and prairies, two of the three most important habitats used by the Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). An expansion of wetland and prairie habitat through this program will alleviate pressure on those species that are most sensitive to habitat changes occurring on the landscape.

SGCN in the proposal areas 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 Blanding's Turtle, Dakota Skipper, Poweshiek Skipperling, and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.

Prairie wetlands are particularly important for migratory waterfowl. Although the North American prairie pothole region contains only about 10% of the waterfowl nesting habitat on the continent, it produces 70% of all North American waterfowl. The extensive loss of Minnesota's prairie and wetland habitat has led to the decline of many wildlife and plant species. The RIM Wetlands program continues to restore this habitat and protect it through perpetual easements.

Diverse vegetation, access to water, and protection from pesticides are important to Minnesota's native pollinator species. BWSR's native vegetation guidelines and pollinator initiative demonstrate a commitment to protecting native pollinators. Complexes and corridors targeted through RIM Wetlands provide natural passageways and habitat for pollinators. Targeted pollinator species include the Monarch Butterfly and several solitary bee species.

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

In 2023 throughout Minnesota an additional 65,999 acres of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will expire in Minnesota. These acres currently provide critical habitat and are at risk of conversion. RIM Wetlands program scoring and ranking criteria will include expiring CRP land and prioritization of restoration and protection of wetlands in comprehensive water plans, including One Watershed One Plans.

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:

Science-based considerations historically used by the RIM Wetlands program will continue to be used. Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, the RIM Wetlands program evaluates each application on its potential to restore wetland/upland functions and values to optimize wildlife habitat and provide other benefits, including water quality. Each site is evaluated on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, ability to build upon existing corridors and complexes, and site-specific features that highlight the benefits of selection for permanent protection and habitat and associated environmental benefits.

During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size is conducted to determine a site's importance as a corridor or as an extension to existing habitat complexes. Other examples of the science-based targeting used include proximity to threatened and endangered species, contributing watershed area, proximity to DNR Protected Waters, and the USFWS Habitat and Population Evaluation Team's (HAPET) Wildlife Habitat Potential Model. The HAPET model is a consolidation of models representing an array of migratory birds that use the Minnesota Prairie Pothole Region for breeding or migration.

Which two sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are most applicable to this project?

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

Which two 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 restoration and protection is vital to the future of waterfowl, grassland birds and other wildlife dependent on native and restored prairies, shallow lakes, wetlands and grasslands. 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. The plan states that breeding duck numbers are driven primarily by wetland abundance, while productivity of breeding ducks is driven primarily by grassland abundance.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

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

Prairie

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

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 approximately 1260 acres of previously drained wetlands and adjacent native grasslands on approximately 28 permanent easements through this proposal advances the legacy outcomes listed below for each section.

Prairie - The loss of wetlands is most severe in the prairie regions of the state. The permanent protection and restoration of wetland habitat and associated uplands through RIM Wetlands will advance the Prairie Section 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.

Forest/Prairie Transition - The corridors and complexes this program targets and restores reflects the Forest/Prairie Transition Section 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 including keeping water on the land.

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

What other fund may contribute to this proposal?

- Clean Water Fund

Does this proposal include leveraged funding?

No

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

Non-OHF Appropriations

Year	Source	Amount
2008, 2011, 2012, 2014	Bonding	Over $19 million
2009-2012	Federal Wetlands Reserve Program	Approximately $47 million

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

BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of RIM easements. BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry out oversight, monitoring and inspection of conservation easements. Easements are inspected every year for the first five years beginning 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 document findings and report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at $6,500 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship includes costs of SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight and any enforcement necessary.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2021-Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspection every year for the first 5 years; then every 3rd year	Corrective actions on any violations	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General office
2021-Ongoing	Landowner Responsibility	Maintain compliance with easement terms	-	-

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).

How will the program directly involve, engage, and benefit BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and diverse communities:

For our statewide programs, BWSR will pilot designating a percentage of the easement acquisition budget line for applicants who self-certify as emerging farmers or from underserved populations, including Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). If funds remain at the end of a predetermined number of scoring/ranking periods and there are no additional applicants, the remaining funds would be added to the larger easement acquisition pool of funding.

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 (easement) 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 restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15?
Yes

Where does the activity take place?

- Other : RIM Perpetual Easements

Land Use

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

Explain what will be planted:
In certain circumstances, wildlife food plots are an allowable use on RIM easements as 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 re-establish vegetation as prescribed in the Conservation Plan at their expense. Food plots are infrequently used by landowners, to date less than 3% of RIM easements have food plots.

Will the eased land be open for public use?
No

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the proposed acquisitions?
Yes

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:
Existing trails and roads are identified during the easement acquisition process and are often excluded from the easement area if they serve no purpose to easement maintenance, monitoring or enforcement. Some roads and trails, such as agricultural field accesses, are allowed to remain.

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

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?
Under the terms of the RIM Easement, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. Easements are monitored annually by SWCDs in cooperation with BWSR for the first five years and then every third year after easement acquisition to assure compliance with easement terms.

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 or improved as a result of the OHF acquisition?
Yes

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:
Though uncommon, new trails could be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit

the easement site (e.g. fire breaks, berm maintenance). Unauthorized trails are in violation of the easement.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?
The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of BWSR's RIM Reserve Program that has over 7,000 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first five years and then every third year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, 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 the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this proposal's funding and availability?
Yes

Other OHF Appropriation Awards

Have you received OHF dollars in the past through LSOHC?
Yes

Approp Year	Approp Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Leverage Reported in AP	Leverage Realized to Date	Acres Affected in AP	Acres Affected to Date	Complete/Final Report Approved?
2022	$4,199,000	-	-	-	-	-	No
2021	$3,051,000	-	-	-	-	-	No
2009	$9,058,000	$9,058,000	-	$13,100,200	5,800	7,276	Yes
2010	$6,895,000	$6,895,000	-	$9,805,200	4,620	4,166	Yes
2011	$13,000,000	$13,000,000	$20,800,000	$11,065,000	5,828	5,559	Yes
2012	$13,810,000	$13,810,000	$5,956,600	$4,517,500	3,841	3,385	Yes
2013	$13,390,000	$13,292,600	$35,000	$35,000	2,500	2,041	Yes
2014	$9,710,000	$9,019,000	$15,000	-	1,765	1,392	Yes
2016	$13,808,000	$9,811,300	$27,616,000	-	5,480	3,620	No
2017	$10,398,000	$5,270,200	$20,796,000	-	4,137	1,643	No
2018	$10,000,000	$4,493,100	$23,622,300	-	3,920	1,216	No

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Obtain applications from eligible landowners	June 30, 2024
Easements recorded	June 30, 2027
Restorations complete	June 30, 2030

Budget

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$819,100	-	-	$819,100
Contracts	$98,000	-	-	$98,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$8,755,600	-	-	$8,755,600
Easement Stewardship	$182,000	-	-	$182,000
Travel	$17,500	-	-	$17,500
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$95,300	-	-	$95,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$25,000	-	-	$25,000
Supplies/Materials	$7,500	-	-	$7,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$10,000,000**	**-**	**-**	**$10,000,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Antic. Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Easements & Eng.	0.95	8.0	$819,100	-	-	$819,100

Amount of Request: $10,000,000
Amount of Leverage: -
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%
DSS + Personnel: $914,400
As a % of the total request: 9.14%
Easement Stewardship: $182,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 2.08%

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 30% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally. Program management costs are the exception, due to program management & oversight remaining consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?

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

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally. Program management costs are the exception, due to program management & oversight remaining consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
BWSR calculates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Please explain the overlap of past and future staffing and position levels previously received and how that is coordinated over multiple years?
This is Phase 12 of an ongoing program. These funds will pay for staff time spent on new easements associated with this phase.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
The contract line amount will be used for payments to SWCD staff for easement implementation. Estimated restoration costs are included in the easements acquisition line.

Easement Stewardship

What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?
Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at $6,500 per easement and 28 easements are anticipated to be completed. 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.

Travel

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 only includes traditional travel costs of mileage, food and lodging.

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

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.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
None anticipated at this time but we keep a small amount in this budget line for contingencies.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
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	510	750	0	0	1,260
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**510**	**750**	**0**	**0**	**1,260**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	$1,386,000	$693,000	-	-	$2,079,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$2,621,000	$5,300,000	-	-	$7,921,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$4,007,000**	**$5,993,000**	**-**	**-**	**$10,000,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
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	10	500	0	750	0	1,260
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**10**	**500**	**0**	**750**	**0**	**1,260**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	$104,000	$75,000	-	$1,900,000	-	$2,079,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$396,600	$3,524,400	-	$4,000,000	-	$7,921,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$500,600**	**$3,599,400**	**-**	**$5,900,000**	**-**	**$10,000,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$5,139	$7,066	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-

Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$39,660	$7,048	-	$5,333	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

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 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 outcomes are maintained. An increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as 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 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 outcomes are maintained. An increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as complexes are restored.*

Programs in prairie region:

- Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *A summary 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 outcomes are maintained. An increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as complexes are restored.*

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?
Yes

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Through a combination of targeted outreach and eligibility screening followed by a scoring and ranking process, the RIM Wetlands program evaluates each application on the potential to restore wetland/upland functions and values; optimizing wildlife habitat benefits and providing other benefits including water quality. Each site is evaluated on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, ability to build upon existing corridors and complexes, and site-specific features that highlight the benefits of 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. Other examples of the science-based targeting used include proximity to threatened and endangered species, contributing watershed area, proximity to DNR Protected Waters, and use of the USFWS Habitat and Population Evaluation Team's (HAPET) Wildlife Habitat Potential Model for environmental evaluation.

BWSR will continue to utilize similar science-based considerations that have been historically used by the RIM Wetlands program. The current scoring and ranking criteria for CREP wetland practices is attached as an example of the score sheet and criteria that will be used.

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

May 26, 2022

RIM Wetlands – Restoring the most productive Habitat in Minnesota

Phase XII Request

The RIM Wetlands program is Minnesota's primary private lands easement program that focuses on restoring wetlands and associated uplands. It involves:

- Permanent protection and restoration of over 1,260 acres
- Permanently protects, restores, and manages resources while private ownership continues
- $10 million request

Funding History and Accomplishments

Phases I – VI: $65,863,000

- 240 easements
- 24,000 acres protected

Phases VII-XI: $41,456,000

- 132 easements
- 9,100 acres protected to date
- CREP easements
- Federal leverage

Outcomes – Benefits to Minnesotans

- Restores and permanently protects wildlife habitat that supports healthy populations
- Benefits society by storing floodwaters, filtering pollutants, serving as a carbon sink and providing recreation sites for boating and fishing.
- Creates and sustains Minnesota jobs

Demand

- Landowner interest in CREP wetland restoration practices remains very high. 79% of CREP applications have been for wetland restoration practices
- Will continue to provide an opportunity to protect expiring CRP

Leverage

- Proposed leverage of Clean Water Funds

For More Information

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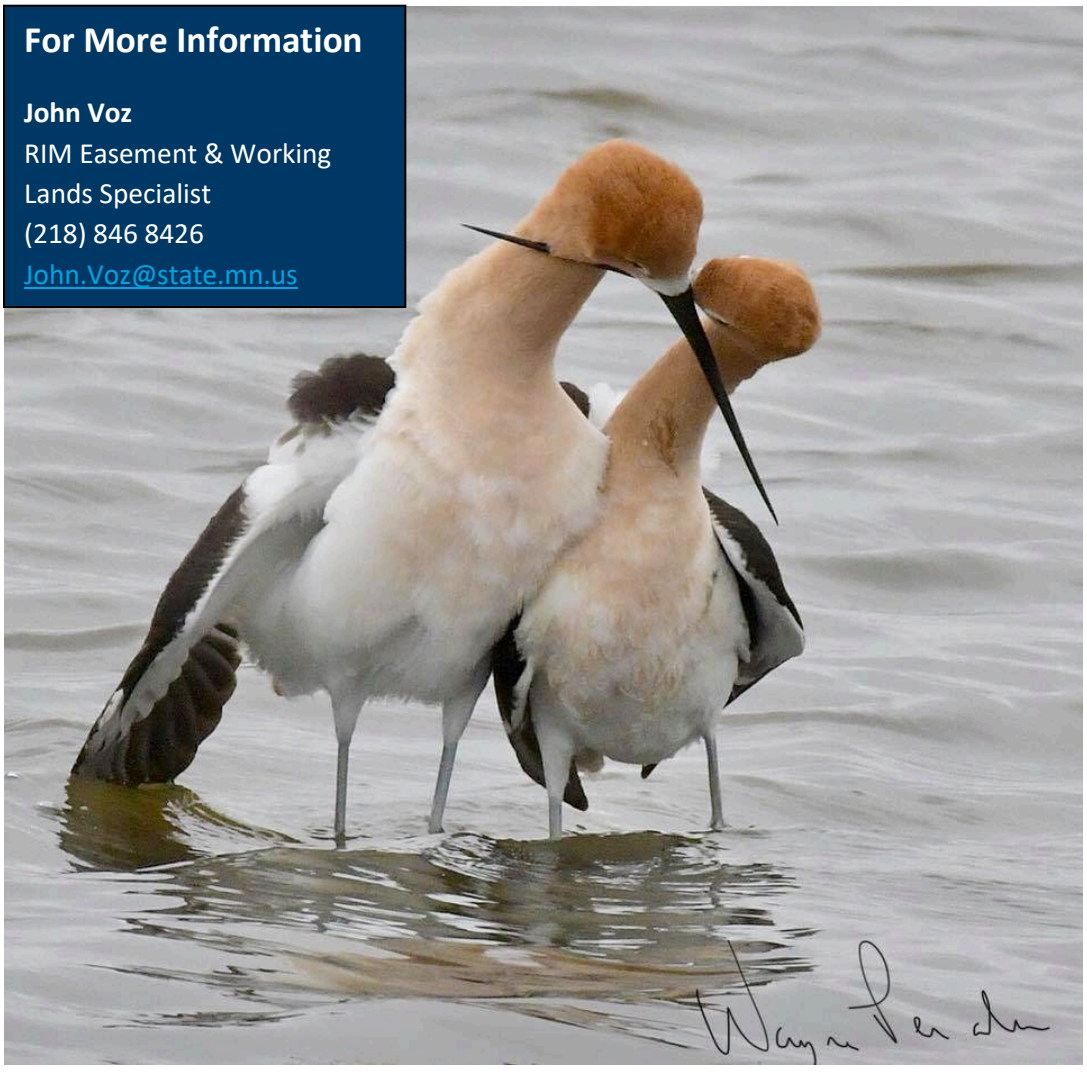

RIM FLOODPLAIN WETLANDS - CP23

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS SCORING SHEET

Landowner Name:	*County/SWCD Office:*

Application Total Score ____

A. RESTORATION BENEFITS *(maximum score capped at 50)*

Score ____

Wetland Condition →		*Effectively Drained*	*Partially Drained*	*Farmed Only*
Restorable Depressional Wetlands (Basins)	No. of Basins	Check one *(if applicable)*	Check one *(if applicable)*	Check one *(if applicable)*
	1	☐ 10	☐ 6	☐ 3
	2	☐ 15	☐ 10	☐ 5
	3	☐ 20	☐ 14	☐ 7
	4	☐ 25	☐ 17	☐ 9
	5	☐ 30	☐ 21	☐ 11
	6	☐ 35	☐ 24	☐ 13
	≥ 7	☐ 40	☐ 28	☐ 15

AND

Size of Largest Basin (acres)	Check one *(if applicable)*
< 6	☐ 0
6-10	☐ 7
11-20	☐ 15
21-30	☐ 20
31-40	☐ 25
> 40	☐ 30

AND

Total Upland : Wetland Ratio	Check one *(if applicable)*
< 1:1	☐ 0
≥ 1:1	☐ 2
≥ 2:1	☐ 6
≥ 3:1	☐ 10

OR

Wetland Condition →		*Effectively Drained*	*Partially Drained*	*Farmed Only*
Restorable Non-Depressional Wetlands	Wetland Acres	Check one *(if applicable)*	Check one *(if applicable)*	Check one *(if applicable)*
	< 10	☐ 5	☐ 3	☐ 1
	10 - 40	☐ 9	☐ 6	☐ 2
	41 - 80	☐ 12	☐ 8	☐ 4
	81 - 120	☐ 16	☐ 11	☐ 6
	≥ 121	☐ 20	☐ 14	☐ 8

AND

Total Upland : Wetland Ratio	Check one *(if applicable)*
< 1:1	☐ 0
≥ 1:1	☐ 2
≥ 2:1	☐ 6
≥ 3:1	☐ 10

B. ECOLOGICAL/HABITAT BENEFITS *(maximum score 20)*

Score ____

Size (total CP23 acres) *(Check one)*	
≤ 40	☐ 0
41 - 80	☐ 3
81 - 120	☐ 5
121 - 160	☐ 8
> 160	☐ 10

AND

LINEAR CORRIDOR CONNECTIVITY - Permanently protected land (fee title or easement) or another Minnesota Water Quality and Habitat CREP eligible offer or approved contract is on: *(check one)*	
☐ 10	**Both ends of offer**
☐ 5	**Only one end of offer**
☐ 2	**The same watercourse and ≤ one mile from either end of offer**
☐ 1	**The same watercourse and > one mile from either end of offer**

RIM FLOODPLAIN WETLANDS - CP23

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS SCORING SHEET - *Continued*

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

Score

☐ 5 ☐ 10 ☐ 15 ☐ 20

Determine score from Additional Wildlife Benefits GIS layer located on the local USDA NRCS office server and check appropriate score box

D. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS *(maximum score 10)*

Score

(Check all that Apply)

1. The majority of the area within the CP23 offered area is within a Prairie Plan Core or Corridor Area.	☐ 4
2. The CP23 offered area 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).	☐ 2
3. The CP23 offered area 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 Protection Strategy (WRAPS).	☐ 2
4. The predominant soils (more than 50%) within the CP23 offered area are Highly Erodible Land (HEL) or Partially Highly Erodible Land (PHEL).	☐ 1
5. The majority of the contributing watershed(s) to the CP23 offered area is in agricultural use.	☐ 1

Note: If points are taken for considerations 1 and 2, additional documentation must be provided. Refer to Site Evaluation Form - Instruction documents for further information.

#NAME?

RIM WETLANDS PROGRAM - CP23a

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS SCORING SHEET

Landowner Name:	*County/SWCD Office:*

Application Total Score ____

A. RESTORATION BENEFITS *(maximum score capped at 50)*

Score ____

Wetland Condition →		*Effectively Drained*	*Partially Drained*	*Farmed Only*
Restorable Depressional Wetlands (Basins)	No. of Basins	Check one *(if applicable)*	Check one *(if applicable)*	Check one *(if applicable)*
	1	☐ 10	☐ 6	☐ 3
	2	☐ 15	☐ 10	☐ 5
	3	☐ 20	☐ 14	☐ 7
	4	☐ 25	☐ 17	☐ 9
	5	☐ 30	☐ 21	☐ 11
	6	☐ 35	☐ 24	☐ 13
	≥ 7	☐ 40	☐ 28	☐ 15

AND

Size of Largest Basin (acres)	Check one *(if applicable)*
< 6	☐ 0
6-10	☐ 7
11-20	☐ 15
21-30	☐ 20
31-40	☐ 25
> 40	☐ 30

AND

Total Upland : Wetland Ratio	Check one *(if applicable)*
< 1:1	☐ 0
≥ 1:1	☐ 2
≥ 2:1	☐ 6
≥ 3:1	☐ 8
≥ 4:1	☐ 10

OR

Wetland Condition →		*Effectively Drained*	*Partially Drained*	*Farmed Only*
Restorable Non-Depressional Wetlands	Wetland Acres	Check one *(if applicable)*	Check one *(if applicable)*	Check one *(if applicable)*
	< 10	☐ 5	☐ 3	☐ 1
	10 - 40	☐ 9	☐ 6	☐ 2
	41 - 80	☐ 12	☐ 8	☐ 4
	81 - 120	☐ 16	☐ 11	☐ 6
	≥ 121	☐ 20	☐ 14	☐ 8

AND

Total Upland : Wetland Ratio	Check one *(if applicable)*
< 1:1	☐ 0
≥ 1:1	☐ 2
≥ 2:1	☐ 6
≥ 3:1	☐ 8
≥ 4:1	☐ 10

B. ECOLOGICAL/HABITAT BENEFITS *(maximum score 20)*

Score ____

Size (Total CP23a acres) *(Check one)*	
≤ 40	☐ 0
41 - 80	☐ 3
81 - 120	☐ 5
121 - 160	☐ 8
> 160	☐ 10

AND

Acres of Permanent Habitat within 1.5 miles of the CP23a offered area *(Check one)*	
≤ 200	☐ 0
200 - 500	☐ 3
501 - 1000	☐ 5
1001 - 3000	☐ 8
over 3000	☐ 10

RIM WETLANDS PROGRAM - CP23a

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS SCORING SHEET - *Continued*

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

Score

☐ 0 ☐ 5 ☐ 10 ☐ 15 ☐ 20

Determine score from Additional Wildlife Benefits GIS layer located on the local USDA NRCS office server and check appropriate score box

D. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS *(maximum score 10)*

Score

(Check all that Apply)

1. The majority of the area within the CP23a offered area is within a Prairie Plan Core or Corridor Area.	☐ 4
2. The CP23a offered area 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).	☐ 2
3. The CP23a offered area buffers and/or the majority of runoff from it drains to and is within 1/2 mile of a DNR Public Waters or designated aquatic management areas.	☐ 2
4. The CP23a offered area 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 Protection Strategy (WRAPS).	☐ 2
5. The predominant soils (more than 50%) within the CP23a offered area are Highly Erodible Land (HEL) or Partially Highly Erodible Land (PHEL).	☐ 1
6. The majority of the contributing watershed(s) to the CP23a offered area is in agricultural use.	☐ 1

Note: If points are taken for considerations 1 thru 3, additional documentation must be provided. Refer to Site Evaluation Form - Instruction documents for further information.

#NAME?