



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Integrating Habitat and Clean Water
ML 2026 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/26/2025

Proposal Title: Integrating Habitat and Clean Water

Funds Requested: \$10,000,000

Confirmed Leverage Funds: -

Is this proposal Scalable?: Yes

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Kevin Roth

Title: Easement Programs Coordinator

Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources

Address: 110 2nd St. S. Suite 307

City: Waite Park, MN 56387

Email: kevin.roth@state.mn.us

Office Number:

Mobile Number: 651-539-2521

Fax Number:

Website: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/>

Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Northern Forest

Southeast Forest

Prairie

Metro / Urban

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Forest

Prairie

Habitat

Wetlands

Narrative**Abstract**

BWSR's Integrating Habitat and Clean Water easement program targets projects prioritized by local watershed management plans in addition to addressing OHF's statewide goals. By focusing on locally identified priorities, BWSR secures easements in areas with the greatest potential for positive environmental impact. This program is dedicated to protecting and restoring critical habitats in all regions of the state.

Design and Scope of Work

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program leverages Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) and Clean Water Fund (CWF) resources to secure permanent conservation easements in high priority locations based on local targeting and OHF's statewide priorities. This BWSR easement program fills a niche for local priorities in addition to addressing statewide habitat goals. Other BWSR easements programs place an emphasis on statewide priorities only which may result in less opportunity for easements in certain areas of the state. Clean Water Funds are also being spent in these priority locations, leading to Legacy funds maximizing both habitats and water quality benefits.

The local priorities are identified through BWSR's One Watershed, One Plan program. This program fosters collaboration among soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), counties, watershed districts, and, where applicable, municipal and tribal governments. This RIM program aims to compliment habitat goals and priorities set in these plans. These partnerships:

- Identify protection and restoration priorities.
- Establish measurable goals for water quality, water quantity, groundwater, drinking water, habitat, and recreation.
- Commit to targeted implementation actions.

The RIM easement program is administered by BWSR and delivered through SWCDs, ensuring local expertise drives implementation. Key features include:

- Scoring and Ranking System: BWSR evaluates easement requests for this program based on local watershed based priorities, measurable goals, and statewide habitat goals.
- Permanent Easements: BWSR acquires and holds easements to ensure permanent water quality and habitat benefits.
- Complementary Funding: OHF funds land protection, while CWF supports water quality projects, such as stream restoration or structural improvements, in the same sub-watersheds.

Project Examples Include:

1. Southeast Minnesota Bluffland Protection:

Local partnerships identify priority bluff areas for easement acquisition.

OHF-funded easements protect critical wildlife habitats, while CWF supports water quality enhancements in the same sub-watersheds.

2. Kandiyohi Stream Restoration Project:

Local priorities included in-stream restoration and habitat work to improve in-stream habitats. BWSR easements protect the in-stream habitat project perpetually

Explain how the proposal addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

This proposal addresses habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement for fish, game, wildlife, and threatened or endangered species through targeted conservation strategies. It focuses on permanent protection and restoration of forests, grasslands, wetlands, and riparian zones.

In northern forests, the proposal prioritizes cold-water aquatic species like cisco and lake trout, vulnerable to land conversion and climate, and cool-water species like walleye and northern pike, facing competition from warmer-water species. Riparian land protection targets sensitive shorelines, benefiting diving birds, common loons, bald eagles, gray wolves, and over 55 Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), including red-shouldered hawk, northern goshawk, black-throated blue warbler, wood turtle, and four-toed salamander. These efforts enhance habitat for game species and migratory songbirds while addressing climate-driven threats.

Grassland restoration targets over 150 SGCN, including greater prairie-chicken, eastern and western meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, chestnut-collared longspur, bobolink, Wilson’s phalarope, sedge wren, plains hog-nosed snake, American badger, prairie vole, plains pocket mouse, eastern spotted skunk, monarch butterfly, and regal fritillary. These species rely on grasslands for breeding, migration, and foraging, and restoration efforts will bolster their populations.

Wetland conservation supports SGCN such as common five-lined skink, two-spotted skipper, northern pintail, American black duck, upland sandpiper, sedge wren, western grebe, and rusty patched bumble bee. Threatened and endangered species, including Blanding’s turtle, Dakota skipper, and Poweshiek skipper, are prioritized through habitat enhancement to ensure their survival.

In forest/prairie transition and prairie zones, the proposal addresses habitat fragmentation, land conversion, and climate change impacts on migratory birds, gray wolves, and long-eared bats by improving habitat quality and quantity in priority areas. In Southeast Minnesota’s bluff lands, which host the state’s highest SGCN diversity, the project enhances habitat to support these species’ populations.

By integrating protection, restoration, and sustainable management, this proposal ensures comprehensive conservation across diverse ecosystems, safeguarding Minnesota’s wildlife and threatened species for future generations.

What are the elements of this proposal that are critical from a timing perspective?

As of May 2025, most Minnesota 1W1P planning boundaries have approved plans, with three still in development.

Funding for new applications has been fully committed since September 2024. ML25 funding (27% of the 2025

ask) will be fully committed for new applications before the end of 2025, creating urgency to secure additional funding now.

Additionally, over 240,000 acres of CRP contracts in Minnesota will expire in federal fiscal years 2026–2027, increasing habitat fragmentation due to farming pressures. Uncertainty surrounding the future of CRP and the new farm bill heightens demand for RIM easements, which offer the most efficient, permanent solution for private land conservation. Timely funding ensures continued habitat protection, prevents loss of critical ecosystems, and aligns with Minnesota’s conservation goals before opportunities diminish.

Immediate action is essential to capitalize on the current demand for private land conservation in Minnesota.

Describe how the proposal expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

The Integrating Habitat and Clean Water RIM program enhances habitat corridors and combats fragmentation, guided by the the program's scoresheet. It integrates locally identified priority areas with statewide goals, expanding opportunities for habitat corridors and complexes.

Local partnerships leverage public input to shape priorities, focusing on protecting riparian zones, enhancing wildlife habitat, and restoring degraded ecosystems. These priorities inform feasible corridor expansion sites, emphasizing areas near permanently protected habitats, public hunting lands, and regions with Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), endangered, or threatened species. Projects promote vegetative diversity, safeguard Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands, and use strategic easement sizing to maximize wildlife benefits.

Measurable metrics track progress. For instance, keeping land disturbance below 25% supports high water quality and habitat integrity, guiding forest and grassland protection. Wetland restoration projects achieve quantifiable water storage goals while creating habitat complexes that connect corridors. Metrics like miles of shoreline protected, biological integrity indices, and stream connectivity ensure comprehensive habitat improvements.

The BWSR scoring system prioritizes projects that strengthen habitat corridors, form complexes, and reduce fragmentation. By aligning local and statewide priorities, the program drives strategic, measurable progress toward connected, resilient ecosystems.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Other : Locally developed comprehensive watershed management plans developed through BWSR's One Watershed, One Plan program

Explain how this proposal will uniquely address habitat resilience to climate change and its anticipated effects on game, fish & wildlife species utilizing the protected or restored/enhanced habitat this proposal targets.

Protection from land conversion will ensure habitats for game, fish and wildlife species remain on the landscape in perpetuity. High diversity native plant restorations and enhancements of existing habitats will result in resiliency to pressures from changes to the climate and non-native vegetation in Minnesota. The additional water quality benefits from CWF projects in the same sub-watersheds as OHF easements mean maximized benefits for game, fish

and wildlife species and climate thanks to in-stream, riparian, wetland and upland habitats protection, restoration and enhancement.

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

Northern Forest

Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

Prairie

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

Southeast Forest

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

Describe how this project/program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife, and if not permanent outcomes, why it is important to undertake at this time:

This easement program will deliver a lasting conservation legacy by permanently protecting and restoring critical habitats for fish, game, and wildlife in priority areas statewide. Guided by the local watershed planning process, this easement program targets high-value waters and targeted areas where focused efforts yield measurable improvements in water quality and habitat. Leveraging significant Clean Water Fund (CWF) investments to help identify these areas, the program helps to protect priority areas permanently.

Locally led, multi-jurisdictional partnerships align with regional plans like the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and watershed-based stewardship strategies, ensuring projects reflect LSOHC priorities. These collaborative efforts pinpoint areas where permanent protection maximizes benefits for wildlife. Examples of these projects include habitat corridors in the Shakopee Creek restoration (ML25 - Kandiyohi County), Swift-Coulee stream restoration (ML22&23 - Marshall County), bluffland habitat protection in the Winona-La Crescent watershed (ML23 & 25), and prairie corridors in the Des Moines River watershed (ML23). By securing conservation easements, the program safeguards diverse habitats statewide, enhancing biodiversity and water quality.

The urgency of this work stems from local prioritization done to identify areas with the greatest impacts to improve water quality and wildlife habitat. Demand for these easements is shown by the rate at which new easement applications continue to be submitted. By strategically aligning local and statewide priorities, this easement program ensures outcomes that support Minnesota’s long-term conservation goals. This targeted, collaborative approach guarantees a measurable, permanent legacy for the state’s natural resources.

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 the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species. A summary of the total number of forest land secured under easement through this appropriation will be reported. We expect sustained populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these easements are secured. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes.*

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.*

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 forest 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 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.*

What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this proposal?

Clean Water Fund

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.

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 carryout oversight, monitoring, and inspections 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 \$10,000 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
2026-ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspections every year for the first five years; then every third year.	Corrective actions of any violations.	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General's office.
2026-ongoing	Landowner Responsibility or Limited Enhancement Funding	Maintain compliance with easements.	Manage habitats for diverse habitat benefits.	-

Provide an assessment of how your program may celebrate cultural diversity or reach diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

Each watershed planning effort includes a public engagement component. BWSR is actively working to address diversity, equity, and inclusion as an agency; as part of those efforts, BWSR is encouraging direct involvement and engagement of Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) and diverse communities in local planning. For example, the local planning process will be used to identify potential RIM easement locations. BWSR will look for additional ways to ensure equitable use of funds to benefit BIPOC and diverse communities. Being a statewide program, rural communities and areas of the state with lower annual income thresholds will benefit from from this program in several ways, including financial benefits. RIM Easements not only offer financial benefits for landowners, but they also require outreach, monitoring and maintenance which help maintain and grow rural jobs and economies.

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, which includes 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.

BWSR recently updated the 1W1P Operating Procedures policy to require local partners to invite Minnesota Tribal Nations with reserved lands or rights in the planning boundary to participate in the planning process.

Activity Details

Requirements

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 or on lands to be acquired in this program?

Yes

Where does the activity take place?

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?

Yes

Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:

In certain circumstances, wildlife food plots are an allowable use on RIM easements as part of an approved Conservation Plan. Food plots on narrow riparian buffers, steep slopes or frequently flooded areas are not allowed. RIM policy limits the total acres of food plots planted. 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. SWCD partners request seed tags for food plots to ensure seed is insecticide free. As part of the SWCDs inspection process they review sites to make sure food plots meet the conservation plan requirements which include prohibiting the use of food plots with insecticides.

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this proposal either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?

No

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?

Field roads or vegetated access routes are necessary on some easements and may continue after easements are secured to allow for management activities.

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 access routes may be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g. fire breaks, berm maintenance, access for management). 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 through LSOHC in the past?

Yes

Are any of these past appropriations still OPEN?

Yes

Approp Year	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
2025	\$2,691,000	-	-	-
2023	\$3,269,000	\$67,600	\$3,201,400	2.07%
2022	\$2,358,000	\$1,168,100	\$1,189,900	49.54%
Totals	\$8,318,000	\$1,235,700	\$7,082,300	14.86%

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Easements recorded	June 30, 2030
Restorations complete	June 30, 2034

Budget

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$518,900	-	-	\$518,900
Contracts	\$97,500	-	-	\$97,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$8,865,400	-	-	\$8,865,400
Easement Stewardship	\$300,000	-	-	\$300,000
Travel	\$17,500	-	-	\$17,500
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$168,200	-	-	\$168,200
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	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
BWSR Engineering Staff	0.24	4.0	\$137,700	-	-	\$137,700
BWSR Easement Staff	1.51	4.0	\$381,200	-	-	\$381,200

Amount of Request: \$10,000,000

Amount of Leverage: -

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%

DSS + Personnel: \$687,100

As a % of the total request: 6.87%

Easement Stewardship: \$300,000

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 3.38%

Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable?

Yes

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 & oversight remain relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount. More funding means the ability to fund larger size easements which are more cost-effective than smaller easements.

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 30% 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 relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount. More funding means the ability to fund larger size easements which are more cost-effective than smaller easements.

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?

These funds will pay for staff time spent on new easements associated with this project.

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 \$10,000 per easement for 30 easements. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship covers costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and enforcement. We anticipate 30 or more easements with this request.

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:

No

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 and annually reviews and updates 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?

Steel posts and signs to mark the easement boundaries.

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	450	475	450	150	1,525
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	450	475	450	150	1,525

Restoration/Enhancement Acres of OHF Acquired Lands (Table 1a.1)

	RESTORE		Total	ENHANCE		Total
	Lands acquired in this proposal	Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)		Lands acquired in this proposal	Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	-	-	0
Total	0	0	0	-	-	-

Restoration/Enhancement Acres Breakdown of Existing Protected Lands (Table 1a.2)

	RESTORE		ENHANCE	
	Lands acquired with OHF	Lands NOT acquired with OHF	Lands acquired with OHF	Lands NOT acquired with OHF
DNR Lands (WMA, State Forests, etc)	-	-	-	-
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	-	-	-
Easements	211	-	-	-
Total	211	-	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$10,000,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$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	75	400	250	400	400	1,525
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	75	400	250	400	400	1,525

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$10,000,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$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	\$6,666	\$6,315	\$6,666	\$6,666
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	\$13,333	\$7,500	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$3,750
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

7500 feet

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes - Sign up criteria is attached](#)

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

Local partnerships set priorities by looking at multiple information sources and local values. Commonly used data include water quality trends, biological indicators (fish, plants, aquatic species), land disturbance and associated pollution loading, habitat quality including MN County Biological survey, current land ownership status, stream stability, forest health, future risk of land conversion, demographics, recreational value, and more. Targeting is selecting conservation projects, practices, or programs that address the priority issue and and specific placement on the landscape.

Partnerships set measurable goals to gauge their pace of progress. For example, they can easily measure progress toward their forest protection goals with the land disturbance indicator. Once they have reached the goal for a subwatershed, they can move on to the next. Another example is each watershed plan is required to have a quantifiable water storage goal, which can be met with wetland restoration and protection. Other indicators in watershed plans include water quality, miles of shoreline protection, index of biological integrity, and metrics for stream stability and connectivity. These will be addressed through CWF-supported projects along with permanent protection.

BWSR will established and will continue to adjust a scoring and ranking system to evaluate easement requests from partnerships with approved watershed plans. The scoring and ranking approach will incorporate plan priorities, the degree to which projects are paired with CWF dollars, and progress toward measurable goals set by local partnerships. Additional criteria will be set based on statewide datasets and priorities to maximize habitat benefits for game, fish and wildlife.

RIM - Integrating Habitat and Clean Water

“RIM – One Watershed, One Plan”

ML26 Request

This BWSR easement program targets projects prioritized in local watershed management plans in addition to addressing OHF’s statewide goals. By focusing on locally identified priorities, BWSR secures easements in areas with the greatest potential for positive environmental impact. This program is dedicated to protecting and restoring critical habitats.

All current funds have been committed. New easement applications have not been accepted since September 2024.

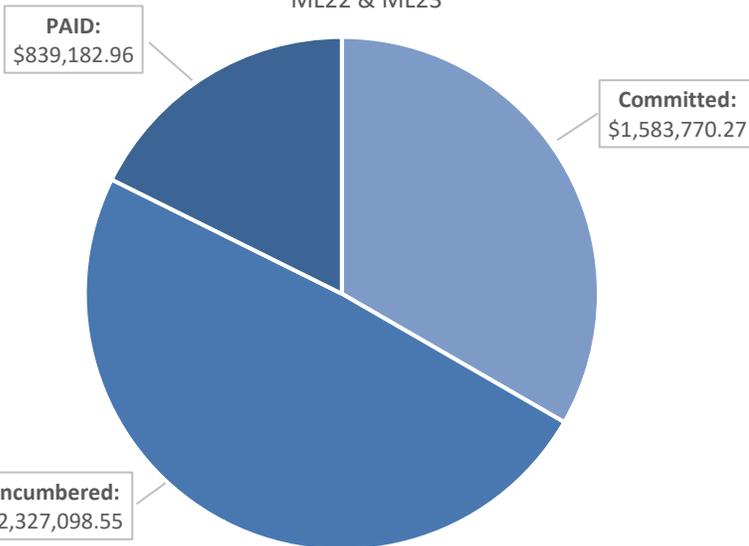
- \$2.691 million from ML25 expected to be committed to new easement projects by September 2025.
- ML26 proposal would provide permanent protection and restoration on 1500 acres across 25 easements.
- \$10 million request



Funding History and Accomplishments

Integrating Habitat & Clean Water

Phase I & II
ML22 & ML23



Committed = Easement funds assigned to a specific easement application
Encumbered = Easement agreement signed by BWSR & landowner
Paid: Easement payment made to landowner
Available = Funding for new easements = \$0

ML22

- \$2,358,000
- 811 acres (exceeded work plan goal by 581 acres)
- Available for new easements = \$0

ML23

- \$3,269,000
- 585 acres (exceeded work plan goal by 20 acres)
- Available for new easements = \$0

ML25

- \$2,691,000 (available July 2025)
- Estimated 400 acres of permanently protected habitat
- All ML25 funds to be committed for new easements before the end of 2025.

Outcomes – Benefits to Minnesotans

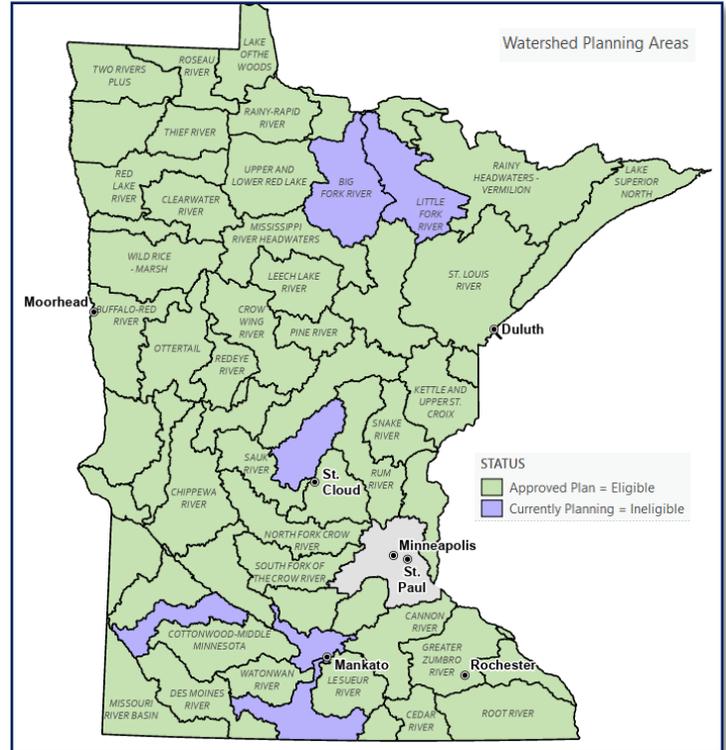
- Permanently protects and restores wildlife habitats to sustain thriving ecosystems.
- Strategically targets watershed-based priorities, complementing existing CWF projects.
- Enhances hunting and fishing opportunities through enduring wildlife complexes.
- Drives job creation and economic sustainability in Minnesota.

RIM Program Demand

- Demand continues to grow as additional 1W1P plans are approved.
- Landowner interest in permanently retiring marginal land while retaining ownership rights is high
- Provides an opportunity to protect expiring CRP.

Leverage

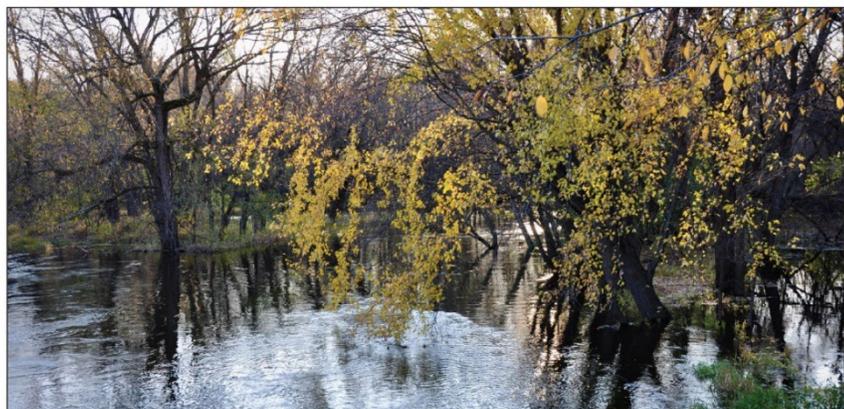
- Legacy Funds - Clean Water Fund projects are in the same priority locations.



BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

2024 August Snapshots
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New RIM easement program option exceeds initial goal, offers flexibility



CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

A new option within the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program will help landowners establish conservation easements that address resource concerns identified in local comprehensive watershed management plans (CWMPs) developed through BWSR's One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program while maximizing benefits for both habitat and water quality.

revenue generated by the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment supports both the OHF and the CWF.

"Each fund has a primary goal: habitat or water quality," said Julie Westerlund, BWSR One Watershed, One Plan coordinator. "While many of these projects have a primary purpose, they can achieve multiple benefits if they are strategically planned and implemented. RIM-1W1P offers an opportunity to

A RIM-1W1P easement involving two Meeker County landowners will protect more than 100 acres, including 8,000 feet of shoreline along the North Fork Crow River. Another Meeker County segment of the North Fork

