



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

2026 RIM Grasslands Reserve Phase VII

ML 2026 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/26/2025

Proposal Title: 2026 RIM Grasslands Reserve Phase VII

Funds Requested: \$10,345,000

Confirmed Leverage Funds: -

Is this proposal Scalable?: Yes

Manager Information

Manager's Name: John Voz

Title: RIM Easement Programs Coordinator

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Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

Using the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program, this project addresses the potential loss of grassland habitats from conversion to cropland and accelerates grassland protection efforts not covered by other programs. Working in coordination with 11 Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan Local Technical Teams (LTTs), and 64 local Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) this proposal will enroll 1430 RIM acres (approximately 22 easements), focusing on Minnesota Prairie Plan identified landscapes. This proposal focus's on protecting non-crop moderate to high quality remnant prairies and associated buffer that can be improved through habitat management.

Design and Scope of Work

Since 2019 approximately 2,614 acres and 44 individual easements have been permanently protected under this program. That's 2,614 acres that would have not been protected under the MNDNR Native Prairie Program. In 2025 & 2026 throughout Minnesota an additional 138,700 acres of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has expired. Minnesota was once a land of 18 million acres of prairie. Today less than two percent remains. The few acres of native remnant prairie that remain were once thought of as too rocky or wet for row crops , but not anymore. If the current trajectory of grassland and prairie loss continues it will be devastating to grassland wildlife populations, including pollinator species.

Past LSOHC funding has allowed BWSR to deliver this program to private landowners and permanently protect remnant prairies which are not covered by other programs. It is vital that we continue this effort as landowners are beginning to learn about this program.

This proposal, working in partnership with 11 Prairie Conservation Plan Local Technical Teams (LTTs) and 64 local SWCD's focuses on protecting current grasslands and buffering native prairie that are within wildlife habitat complexes not covered by other conservation programs. There are programs for native prairie such as MNDNR Native Prairie Bank, Federal Native Tallgrass Prairie (NTP) and programs for cropland, but there are no programs for moderate quality prairies that have the potential for higher quality through protection and management. As Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and LTTs review landowner applications for possible enrollment, they may find additional tracts that are native prairie. With this project, native prairie may include CRP or cropland areas to square up parcels. In cases where larger tracts are identified, they will contact the DNR's Biological Survey and Native Prairie Bank staff for a more formal botanical survey of the site.

The loss of native prairie and grassland habitat is arguably the greatest conservation challenge facing northwest, western and southern Minnesota. This proposal aims to protect 1430 acres of prairie and grassland habitat by coordinating and accelerating the enrollment in Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) through private land easements. This level of acceleration is needed to address today's rapid loss of grassland habitat and meet the goals set forth in the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan.

Emphasis will be on grazing these remnant prairies because disturbance is crucial to revitalize and reinvigorate this grassland ecosystem. Other disturbance activities such as haying and burning can be difficult for these sometimes rocky , isolated pockets of grass within large grassland complexes. Haying will be encouraged on buffer areas surrounding remnants through haying and grazing agreements and the cover will be managed as open prairie. This program will work closely with Ducks Unlimited grazing specialists and other certified planners throughout the state who can provide the expertise of outreach, promotion, planning and communications directly with grazing producers. This will create opportunities for effective planning and focus efforts with Local Technical Teams and SWCD staff.

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

Minnesota grasslands provide important habitat for a wide range of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Consistent with guidance in The Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan and Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, strategic site selection will be conducted as well as efforts to minimize landscape stressors and plan for plant diversity and long-term resiliency of project sites. More than 150 SGCN use grasslands for breeding, migration, and/or foraging.

Target Species include: Greater prairie chicken, Eastern meadowlark, Western meadowlark, Grasshopper sparrow, Northern pintail, Northern black duck, Burrowing owl, Chestnut collared longspur, Bobolink, Wilson's phalarope, Sedge wren, Upland Sandpiper, Plains hog-nosed snake, American badger, Prairie vole, Plains pocket mouse, Eastern spotted skunk, Dakota skipper, Monarch butterfly, Poweshiek skipper, Regal fritillary and Rusty Patch bumble bees.

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

Without permanent protection options, these remnant and existing grasslands are under great threat of conversion to row crops. Under the strategic direction provided by the Minnesota Prairie Plan, and recognizing that a new wave of grassland loss is upon us, the RIM program is realigning its targets and priorities. This realignment will ensure that a gap does not exist between programs, and that a private landowner interested in permanent protection of their grassland or prairie has viable options. Funding from this proposal will provide an acceleration of targeted acres enrolled.

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

Native prairies are often part of large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, and wetlands. These complexes will be the top priority for this project using the MN Prairie Plan framework. A preference will be given to protecting expiring CRP with enrollment of adjacent remnant prairie as identified in the MN County Biological Survey. This focus on expiring CRP will fill a niche that cannot otherwise be filled by the Native Prairie Bank program. LTTs will help guide restoration strategies such as prescribed burning, conservation grazing and woody tree removal to be used to restore the conditions of moderate quality prairies. In addition, the LTTs will identify remnant prairie sites that are not listed on the MN County Biological Survey and update the survey accordingly. By utilizing the LTTs, parcels will be targeted for protection and resulting acres will be tracked and reportable.

Recent genetic diversity research was conducted on Greater Prairie Chickens by the MNDNR to understand how birds move through the landscape using a new approach called landscape genetics. It found that prairie chickens in the northern part of the sampled area, near Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge, are not very connected to prairie chickens in Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties to the south. Connecting these areas with high quality habitat would allow more genetic mixing, potentially reduce stress and mortality and eliminate the need for birds to travel long distances to find suitable habitat. This "follow the chicken" approach has worked remarkably well in identifying, targeting and protecting areas that have positive impacts on a wide range of species of greatest conservation need.

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

Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

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.

This proposal directly relates to four priority actions in the MN Climate Action Framework: 1) accelerate forest, grassland and wetland restoration, 2) Store more carbon, 3) restore and expand habitat complexes and corridors, and 4). increase water storage and infiltration and manage drainage. Restoring and protecting habitat with RIM easements.

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal?

Forest / Prairie Transition

Protect, enhance, and restore rare native remnant prairie

Prairie

Protect, enhance, and restore remnant native prairie, Big Woods forests, and oak savanna

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 program will focus on key parcels in need of protection and restoration using a ranking process and input from LTTs. Without permanent protection options, these grasslands are under great threat of conversion to row crops. This project focuses on LSOHC priorities by ensuring that key core parcels are protected while increasing participation of private landowners in habitat projects, and by restoring and enhancing grassland habitats.

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed during the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat availability within a certain region is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife within that region. This would have a positive impact on both game and non game 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 habitat for migratory and unique Minnesota species ~ *A summary of the total acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed during the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes. An increase of native grassland habitat availability within a certain region is expected to increase the carrying capacity of grassland-dependent wildlife within that region. This would have a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these complexes are restored.*

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

Environment and Natural Resource Trust 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?

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement into perpetuity. BWSR partners with local SWCDs 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 document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are calculated at \$10,000 per easement. This value is based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship covers costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and any enforcement necessary.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2023-Ongoing	Landowners Responsibility	Maintain compliance with easement terms	-	-
2023-Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspection every year for the first 5 years; then every 3rd year	Corrective actions on any violations	Easement action taken by MN General Office

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

A portion of this funding request will be used to contract with the Conservation Corp of Minnesota (CMMI) to encourage young adults from diverse backgrounds to become engaged in conservation, involved in community, and prepare for future employment. See attached CCMI letter of support.

Activity Details

Requirements

Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?

Yes

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 food plots for wildlife are an allowable use on RIM easements and must be part of an approved Conservation Plan. Under this proposal no food plots would be allowed on remnant prairies which have never been cultivated (only areas that buffer remnant prairies). Food plots on narrow buffers, steep slopes and wet areas are not allowed but may be offered on any potential surrounding grass buffer on prior cultivated lands. 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 and/or abandonment 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.

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?

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program which has over 7,450 individual 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 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 or improved 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 minimal use trails, if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (e.g. firebreaks, berm maintenance, etc). Unauthorized trails identified during the monitoring process 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 the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program which has over 7,450 individual 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 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	\$3,375,000	-	-	-
2023	\$2,747,000	\$239,145	\$2,507,855	8.71%
2022	\$4,536,000	\$4,295,220	\$240,780	94.69%
2021	\$4,354,000	\$4,099,630	\$254,370	94.16%
Totals	\$15,012,000	\$8,633,995	\$6,378,005	57.51%

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Enroll 1320 acres into the RIM private land easement program	June 30th, 2030
Final Report Submitted	November 1st, 2031

Budget**Grand Totals Across All Partnerships**

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$1,011,900	\$200,000	-, DU Private	\$1,211,900
Contracts	\$68,800	-	-	\$68,800
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$8,700,500	-	-	\$8,700,500
Easement Stewardship	\$220,000	-	-	\$220,000
Travel	\$91,600	\$5,000	-, DU Private	\$96,600
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$221,300	-	-	\$221,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$23,800	-	-	\$23,800
Supplies/Materials	\$7,100	-	-	\$7,100
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$10,345,000	\$205,000	-	\$10,550,000

Partner: Ducks Unlimited

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$700,000	\$200,000	DU Private	\$900,000
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	\$75,000	\$5,000	DU Private	\$80,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$70,000	-	-	\$70,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$845,000	\$205,000	-	\$1,050,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
DU Private Land Grassland Specialist	1.75	4.0	\$700,000	\$200,000	DU Private	\$900,000

Partner: BWSR

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$311,900	-	-	\$311,900
Contracts	\$68,800	-	-	\$68,800
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$8,700,500	-	-	\$8,700,500
Easement Stewardship	\$220,000	-	-	\$220,000
Travel	\$16,600	-	-	\$16,600
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$151,300	-	-	\$151,300
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$23,800	-	-	\$23,800
Supplies/Materials	\$7,100	-	-	\$7,100
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$9,500,000	-	-	\$9,500,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Easement Staff	2.09	4.0	\$311,900	-	-	\$311,900

Amount of Request: \$10,345,000

Amount of Leverage: \$205,000

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 1.98%

DSS + Personnel: \$1,233,200

As a % of the total request: 11.92%

Easement Stewardship: \$220,000

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 2.53%

Total Leverage (from above)	Amount Confirmed	% of Total Leverage	Amount Anticipated	% of Total Leverage
\$205,000	-	0.0%	\$205,000	100.0%

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:

No leverage source listed.

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.

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 & oversight remain relatively 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 VII of an ongoing program and 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 includes costs covered under the SWCD MJPA, \$2000 for staff time per easement acquisition.

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 and 24 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 cover costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and any enforcement necessary.

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 will only be used for traditional travel costs.

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 and periodically 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.

Minnesota DNR grants staff previously reviewed and approved DU accounting methodology for Direct Support Services, which are calculated and included in DU staff costs. DU Direct Support Services constitute approximately 8-10% of DU overall staff costs on average among DU conservation staff billing categories. DU breaks out and invoices for Direct Support Service expenses approved by DNR for reimbursement separately from Personnel expenses. In accordance with 2 CFR 200, DU uses the direct allocation method of allocating costs to programs and final cost objectives. This process of allocating costs is accomplished through the use of hourly rates. The direct cost of activities, including direct support expenses, is included in these hourly rates. The rates are comprised of costs for salaries, benefits, office space, general insurance, support staff, office supplies, and other various direct expenses incurred at the regional offices and conservation department at the home office. All costs are assigned to conservation projects (net of applicable personnel and other costs that are non-conservation related.) Hourly charges represent the amount that DU charges conservation projects per hour for each staff member working on the project. These costs represent expenses that directly support the labor cost necessary for the development of a specific water/wetlands conservation project.

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	0	1,430	0	0	1,430
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1,430	0	0	1,430

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	1,430	0	1,430	0	0	0
Total	1,430	0	1,430	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	0	-	0	-
Total	0	-	0	-

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

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	1,430
Enhance	0
Total	1,430

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	-	\$10,345,000	-	-	\$10,345,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	\$10,345,000	-	-	\$10,345,000

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	0	572	0	858	0	1,430
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	572	0	858	0	1,430

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	-	\$3,627,000	-	\$6,718,000	-	\$10,345,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	\$3,627,000	-	\$6,718,000	-	\$10,345,000

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	-	\$7,234	-	-
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	-	\$6,340	-	\$7,829	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Parcels

Sign-up Criteria?

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

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

Through a combination of eligibility screening and a scoring and ranking process, each application will be assessed on its potential

to restore functions and values (optimize wildlife habitat benefits) and to provide other landscape benefits. Each site is

considered on its benefits to the surrounding landscape, as well as the site-specific features which highlight the benefits of selection

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

May 23, 2025

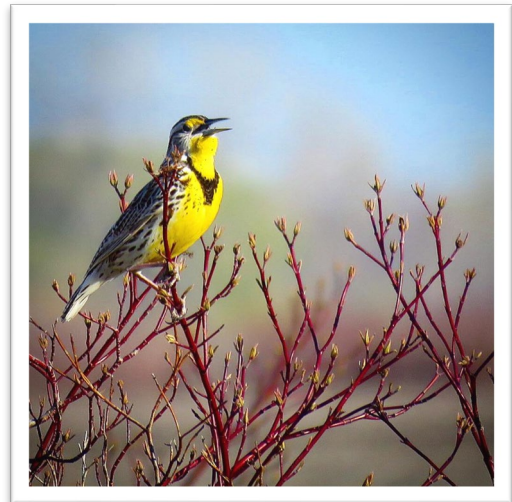
RIM Grassland Reserve

ML 26 Request

- \$10.3 million for conservation easements to permanently protect 1,430 high-priority grassland acres.
- Partnership with Ducks Unlimited, MN Prairie Plan Technical Teams, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts to graze prairie remnants through certified grazing planning, outreach, and coordination.

Grasslands at Risk

- In 2025 and 2026 over 138,700 acres of CRP will expire in Minnesota, including some remnant native habitats.
- Loss of native prairies has significant implications for over 150 Species of Greatest Conservation Need that rely on grasslands such as greater prairie chickens, meadowlarks, northern pintails, and many butterfly species.



Project Benefits



- Helps implement Minnesota's Prairie Conservation Plan
- Provides habitat cores and corridors for a wide range of grassland-dependent wildlife including endangered birds and butterflies, protecting species genetic diversity
- Creates and sustains Minnesota jobs

For more information

John Voz, Easement Program Coordinator
Board of Water and Soil Resources
(218) 850-4283, John.Voz@state.mn.us

How the Program Works

- Partnership of:
 - BWSR RIM Program – in partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and private landowners, has worked to protect and restore wetlands and uplands on private lands since 1986
 - Ducks Unlimited – program outreach and delivery expertise from on-the-ground grazing biologists working directly with producers to promote the program and write conservation grazing plans

- Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan Local Technical Teams – expertise that guides the program, helps rank applications, and coordinates conservation grazing
- Focuses on non-crop moderate quality native prairies including buffering adjacent cropland (expiring CRP) that can be enhanced through restoration activities.
- Achieves restoration through prescribed burning, woody vegetation removal, grazing, haying and planting of local ecotype seed in areas buffering native prairie.

Funding History and Accomplishments

2019-2022 – Funds fully committed

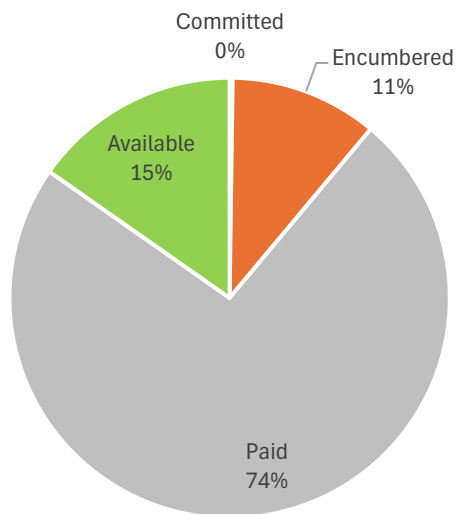
- \$14,399,000 received
- 43 easements completed & encumbered
- 2,900 acres

2023 – In progress

- \$2,747,000 received
- 3 easements encumbered & committed
- 80 acres in process
- \$2.2 million in easement payments still available
- Current landowner interest could fully commit remainder of easement payment funding before 2026



Landowner Easement Payments



\$14,900,000 Total

Available: easement funds available to fund new easement(s)

Committed: easement funds assigned to specific easement(s) – application submitted

Encumbered: easement funds encumbered for specific easement(s) – agreement signed

Paid: easement payments made to landowners